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

My good pal, Ronn Fradin, jumped to my side. Tears streaked down his cheeks as he pleaded.

"No, Bernie. You can't live it all behind you. The fun, the games, the outbursting; and especially think of how you'd be missed!"

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

"Bernie who?" was a good question. I had been in comic fandom since the early issues of Jack Kirby's <i>Legion of Super-Heroes</i> and this was featuring "All in Color For a Chance!" I printed a number of strips with my own money and distributed them on the Super Hero Calendar in '62, four issues of <i>Another Man</i>, and eight issues of <i>Superb</i>. I also printed a number of strips with other people's money and distributed them at very high prices ( Comic- Book Retailers members one and two and Outside members one through four) get a few bucks from interested fans in '64, coughed up a couple bucks of my own and then together the first NY Comicon.

Fradin tried to comfort me.

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

So much for my close friendship with Ronn Fradin.

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

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

My head was held low as I drifted into the Tripp residence. Artie would definitely know what to do. Good of Artie.

"I'm glad you're leaving fandom, Bully, you're the only person I know who's a bigger crook than I am. Wanta buy some Polanoid shots of Superboy?"

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

Walking towards the door, I noticed another great NY fan— popping� the luggages off my <i>Cherry</i>, good ol' Len Wein. Len was the very same fellow Ronn and I bastered from the first concom. We mistakenly believed him to be a crook. He showed up anyway to distributeled sheets telling his side of the story—and he stole a few comics.

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

Len, sporting his usual frosted and frizzled brow, shook his head slowly as if to say "I'll help," and proceeded to shove his jacket handle into my mouth and out the back of my neck.

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

"Bernie who?"

I only left fandom that day—Blue Cross cancelled my policy also.

"Today Mr. X makes his living from crooked deals and shady living; but he is a fan. He collects comics, reads fanzines and even contributes a Loc or two. He has been a fan ever since I invited him to the first Comic Convention in 1964. He returns to the cons regularly (in some cases he has attended comic conventions in other states) and fills 'em clean of whatever he light—fingers."

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

I've accepted his offer to help him get these articles published for my own release and warn you to be on the lookout at fan gatherings. You work hard for what treasures you bring with you— make sure people like Mr. X don't fleece you. It's important we all realize X does exist—measure his words well and catch him—for his end is near.

Bernie Bulkin

Guerrilla Warfare at Comic Conventions

By Mr. X

Guerrilla Warfare? Comic Conventions? Did you read that right? Sure you did, and I'm here to explain the best way to attend your next comic convention.

I never pay an entrance fee at conventions and this year's NY Comicon was no different. As I turned the corner before the admission table I stalled a wallet high in the air. I let it dip open to reveal a shiny metal badge. As I noticed the table I flipped it closed and talked quickly. "Do you have a Hugo Gnuck on registry here?" The young girl flipped cards, riffled papers, poked through mail envelopes and generally got lost cool. I hoped Hugo wasn't registered. This famous inventor and first editor of <i>Anime</i> Stories had unfortunately passed on. She said he wasn't regular but I could talk with a convention official if I wished. I twitched my lip, took my Lone Ranger badge (equivalent) back into my jacket and said, "I'll just see for myself. If Lieutenant Aaron arrives, tell him I'm inside."

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

The next go is as easy one to pull off, but you need a friend to work with you. I've pulled this one off a number of occasions and the results are always rewarding. Your friend should carry a portable tape recorder and keep referring to you as "Mr. Manning" (or whatever alias you know, will not show you). We picked Ronn Manning because he lives in California and not too many folks know what Ronn looks like. It's easier in other states where less pros are present—a full beard and you could assume anyone's identity. Once a few fans realize that Ron Manning is standing near them the autograph hunters come out of the woodwork. They don't care if you're the Batman Strangler—they just want your autograph. The bashed fans usually lead to a dinner invitation and a good meal in the hotel gift—guraged.

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

There are bits of kids at these cons and that give me a chance to do little film-promo: I carry a load of grip maps at a used book store and then bring them to the con with me. I lay them on a dealer's table while I look through some of his wares. Almost immediately the top wary cover has caught a young 'un's eye and then I get a cut of all that extra convention money he
saved all year. I don't ask any identification of age and I make a good buck on the mark-up. You can pull this money maker all day if you work quickly and keep your prices fair enough so no one raises a stink.

Aside from a hustler: The NY Comicon has gotten so large that this year's event had a couple of guest stars. Bookers (NY. ladies of pleasure --- yours) frequent all conventions sizable attendance in town. They are tipped by hotel personnel, but some bell boy pulled a summer this year. There that I spotted were strolling around by the admissions table outside the dealers' rooms. The hard looks on their paste faces didn't loosen a bit when they saw what kind of conven-

Two fans met by the entrance to trade stills. One of the girls turned next to a pudgy thirty-something fellow and admir-

She said, "How's your like to come over to my sister's place for a while,hey honey?" He lifted his jowly face and puffed, "Does she have any Republics?" She eased herself back into the night and with her next pickup goes the message of the NY. Comicon.

the great atomic aftermath and fresh fruit festival

j. ian schumieister

David Chamberlain said in Nuff said Newsletter number 3, "I was going to do a Bernie Bubs checklist, but then I couldn't remember what Bernie Bubs ever did, even though he says it is in a book. Can you tell me what he did professionally?"

Who's the hell is David Chamberlain? It's just this type of thinking that turns me off to many fans. Here this clown hasn't seen my name in a comic book, so he thinks I don't exist. Well, I don't have any "professional" background, but I guess I'd better put these rumors to rest. I started as copy boy with the old New York Herald Tribune. My by-line (appearing after Harvey Pisk) was featured in a series of articles on small-time crime in the Tribune. From there, I freelanced to the men's magazines. I wrote any number of stories under various by-lines. I have written copy for Doug, Dave, and Bernbach advertising agency. I'm presently working for Time-Life. So who the hell is David Chamberlain?

You told me before that this was the first time you were ever interviewed. You mean to say no one ever approached you about it before? Well, I've always nursed a secret desire to be interviewed ever since they kept overlooking me at Garden Lord's Rocket's Blast/Comicon. Eh, let me explain that a little better. I was one of the first seven or so young 'uns to write Love in regard to his letterbox on early Mystery in Space. With this response, he issued a carbon copied 2 page called The Rocket's Blast. I think two of my stories appeared in the first issue --- he paid me 25 cents apiece. A few issues later, he went to mumps and the zine began to take shape. I joined a dits machine (the in year in those days to reproduce art and script) so I copied the origin of Atom out of the current issue, ran it off on dits, and it was included in RB as the first artwork supplement. I also ran off an original feature of my own --- "Wanted Dead or Alive" which featured my drawings of the popular stars of the day --- G.G. Love, Steve Ferrin, Rick Wagner, and a few others. This took two installments. Then came the

"Spotlight on the Pros" series, which contained humorous articles about my visiting pros like Infantino, Dinkle, and the whole bunch. I also did a few things called "Professional Ponderings" about local pro-graph. Another series ran for quite some time in the RB --- self-written features on noted fans who worked for the RB. I guess I must have watched at least forty issues go by and Love never request

a feature on me once. This is not to say that I'm still not writing for a letter from him. I figure there were a few other fans in my way on the RB-CC circuit and I expect a request from him shortly. But until then, I'm happy to be interviewed.

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

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

What was the first fanzine that printed your work?

Well, I was in science fiction fandom for a while before Xero and Afterego came onto the scene. In this fandom, I did some stories, articles, and artwork for Buck Coulson's Pampus and a number of others (Nuisance of Fantasy, Twilight Zone, etc.). For comic fandom, I issued my own zine, Comics Heroes Revisited a few months after Afterego 1, so there wasn't any one else to write for in those days. DRB had a good article on the Sub-Mariner/Torch battles and it also reprinted an original Human Torch advertisement from the fifties. I traced onto this the dito master myself. I also remember the person at Marvel who gave me permission at the time, a gal named Trudy Ross. DRB had a long article on comic history by Rick Wagner. About this time, I went to interview Jack Kirby. I sent a sample of the completed interview to Bilios White for publication in the early Comicon/Reader. I was thinking of writing an article around the interview, but White published it as is in CG 9. There are a bunch of other zines that carried opinion articles and artwork by me but I don't recall any of them. Can you explain briefly why you left fandom a few years ago, this time the truth (see "Rick Laughing," in this lot)? I grew up in fandom and I was getting tired of it. That was
before all the news was pumped into it, such as the new areas of photo-offset, the grab new artistic talent, and some really dynamic features...

How and why did you get back in fandom? Gordon Lane asked me to contribute some type of article on early fandom. Instead, I wrote a long letter to him about some subjects that might make a good article, he split the letter in half and printed two installments of "Don't Look Back, Henry, Your Ship is Slowing." Good of Gordon! I love strikes tightening into my favorite tight-lips - I'm one of my favorite people and now, do I admire his energy.

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

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

How about a little info on the first NY Comic Convention that you organized? I could go on all day with a subject like the con, but I'll sum it up quickly. There are so many things that went on behind the scenes for the first ever comic convention that I'm trying to write up a long (twenty-thirty handwritten pages of notes on one article about the whole silly trip. Let it suffice to say my cohort Ron Frankin lent a supporting shoulder as did Arta Trippe. Ethan Roberts got us the hall (Workman's Circle, 4th Ave., and 14th st.) and about one hundred and fifty folks showed up. Steve Ditko dropped by and Flo Steinberg, Stan Lee's secretary, came by on her own time to enjoy the gathering. Lee sent over a fellow named Dave Treadwell to answer questions relating to Marvel. Marvel supported us every inch of the way. DC stuck original art in our ears and told us to get lost. Tom Giff (creator for Lone Ranger) also stopped in to chat and give a speech. It only lasted a couple of hours, but it proved to be a lot of what (disbelieving fandom that a convention was possible. The Academy of Comic Book Art and Science, Marv Madani and company) spent the rest of the year trying to discredit our con, since they were planning one for 1960—although known facts does everything thing first. Some fans at the first con were Phil Seuling, Howard Rockinger, Bill Thalling, Claude Hedd, Dick Lupoff Larraloy and, as a whole bunch of the greatest fans in the world.

What do you think of the present con? They're run very well and I try to get to at least one day of activity each year. The dealers' tables are filled with riddles and, although I've heard it all a thousand times, the speeches and panels still manage to hold my interest.

Well, my favorite team up would have to be Wonder Woman and Super-Monkey!

Neal Pozner?

I thought you said you were Neal Adams!

The Fe

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

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

Do you still buy comics? Any favorites?

Yes, I still pick 'em up. The Kirby stuff is easy and enjoyable reading. I also dig some of O'Neill's Batman stuff. And, of course, I always get a kick out of a book called Neal Adams. Who has influenced you the most? My writing style is poor, so I won't blame anyone for that, but I've always felt my humorous approach to things is due to Steve Allen. I've always admired his wit and humor, so much so that I've patterned certain traits of my own after his youth. I suppose I retain a few of these up to this day and just don't realize it.

Do you still feel the same way about the end of comics as you did when you wrote “All Hail! The Comic Book Is A Dead!” which appeared in The Collector 217? Did I write that? You must have confused me with another Bernie Bubin.

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

Well, I appreciate the fact that you felt an article on me was worth your time. In fact, I’ve enjoyed sharing some of them with your readers. Thank you.

Art by Bubnis with Pozner

The Fe

Do you think the Dingbats are a part of fandom?

All I know is the Dingbat would have to be to some extent fandom.

Graphic Opinion

Report by Neal Pozner

Graphic Opinion is a political comic strip currently running in the Long Island paper. Two columns every Sunday. It was originally pro-
posed and conceived by Tom Plate, who was editor of the View-
point section (Editorial and political opinion) as well as the Sun-
day "Ideas" section, (Newspaper's Journal of Opinion) at that time.

Plate came up with this political comic strip idea for the new Sun-
day syndicate. He saw two purposes in it: 1. To attract readers, and 2. to have good art in addition to good articles in the paper.

He thought the best way of combining the two was in the comic strip format, with a political or sociological comment.

Plate pointed out, "What can you do graphically in a newspaper? You can have photographs, but Life tried that, and it failed be-
cause people watch television now. You can have illustrations. Newspaper has a lot of them. Fine, but the illustrations are nec-
essary to the text. How do you make an illustration of primary importance? Well, one of the most popular features in any paper is the comic. Take the comic concept, give it a political bent, and put it in your political section (which supposedly your reader doesn't read anyway, politically-minded people are reading).

"Having a strip like that is good. People can take only so many editorials and signed opinions. You get tired of reading. And, if you have something that expresses opinions dramatically and differently, it has enormous potential for grabbing a reader, be-
cause of this very fact."

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

He wasn't looking for artists of the type that work for under-
ground comics, because Plate felt they would be over the head of most of Newsday's Long Island, middle-class families. They were foreign, too, very little in touch with their audience, an art of which you wouldn't EXPECT to see in a comic strip. For example, Plate said he could have done a strip called "Racing Pig," and have him sitting with his beer belly in front of his color TV in his split-
level home. "You can do that," said Plate. "And accept the 50, 000 cancellations that come along with it." The comic just HAD to be what subscribers expect it to be.

Plate chose several artists at Marvel because his friend at Esquire had worked with them and said they were very fast, an impor-
tant consideration for newspapers. An additional factor was the budget, which compensated hiring young artists who were trying to make their mark in the industry and would be happy to make a little extra money. His friend also thought they were sim-
patetic, so he looked at the things in Esquire, and thought some of the artists were close enough to some people except from comics that they could respond to them, as opposed to other more experimental artists.

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

It was hoped there would be two other political people (Trimpe and Englehart), one sociological commentary person (Larry Smith), and the fourth a cultural commentator. They have been unable to loc-
ate that fourth, and so have been using Vucic's. Herb Trimpe is doing a strip called "The Eternal Soldier," which for the most part comments on the events of war. Recently he has started branching out and is commenting on other aspects of politics. He is considered by Plate the most "solid" (in terms of looking comic) of the artists.

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

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

Gary Vucic is a staff artist at Newday, from the University of Illinois. Vucic was described by Plate as "an artist that was growing up, looking at comic books (I had this image of Super-
man . . . , and recognizing that it was all a bunch of hogwash. Superman represents,长相—cheek, the fact that we've been doped by the whole concept of America the Beautiful, apple pie, and the whole thing. Kid Kool is a symbol of kids awareness in breaking this decep-
tion."

His art is very illustrative, but Plate feels he's gotten the feel of the medium yet, and has to be worked with.

In addition, Newday is using political cartoonist Ramin Luria's syn-
dicated comic strip, "Mr. Politician," as a back-up feature, in case
Vince's doesn't work out.

Both Pate and John Walsh, former editors of the Ideas section, (Pate is now an editor at "New York" magazine) believe this format has tremendous potential and is distinctly different from the political cartoon idea. "The political cartoon is a one-man job," says Pate, "but there is a more ongoing process involved in a political cartoon. It's more complicated than a political cartoon. You see, the political cartoon is a one-man job. You don't have a lot of people working on it. But this is a team effort, you have a lot of people working on it. It's more complicated."

Walsh says it has brought varied reactions from the staff. "A lot of people don't like it because the session is heavy enough with opinion and cartoon endings, and so we think we should impose a control. There's no comic strip on somebody."

The format is a success now. Pate thinks, since it is accepted, "I had a difficult time selling it at "New York", but a lot of opposition from the middle and high end of the staff. But we've been able to work it out and it seems to be working well."

"Love is Strange" is copyrighted 1972 by Nelson, Inc., "The Phantom of the Third World" is copyrighted 1972 by Steve Engeseth.


Two thro' the sunlit meadows
Wander with footstep slow,
Watching their linked shadows
Longer and longer grow.

Twoneath the linden tree
Laugh, and are glad and gay;

Bees in the branches flitting
Mutter the hours away.

Out of the bugone bringing
Dreams of an old delight.

Love is awake and singing
Songs to my heart tonight.
"Sure, that's my ad/what of it?"

The dealer picked up the booklet, and quickly paged through it. "Why, everything in here's on the up and up. I never did nothing that could be called, from any angle, illegal."

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

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

"The Stranger matched the sale list from the dealer's pudgy hands. "Okay, then, I'll read it to you. Let's-"

"NEW! Original, one of a kind stativ and figureines done by all your favorite comic book artists! These range from two and a half to six inches in length, and vary in circum-

ference. They are of a plain, unpainted color, and each one is different! The material used varies in color and consistency, and is of a soft, pliable nature. These figureines took up to

two days to make, and are sure to be the pride of your collection! Only fifteen dollars for each of these individuali-

ed figureines! These are in the modern art vein, and you can spend hours looking at the piece from all angles, forever

finding new and different forms! "Sorry, we are unable to give you choice of artist, but we can guarantee that each is

the product of a staff member of either Marvel, DC, or Warren."

The man sat at a large, well-made desk, and added figureines on a calculating machine, cackling to himself as he did so. As the list of names grew, sweat beaded upon his greasy brow, and the laughter took on a higher, tenser tone. The

man's eyes glowed slightly from amidst the mounds of fat that was his face, and he grew more and more intent upon

the tape that coursed from the machine. That tape represent-
ed his earnings for that week, four figures already, and he

scowled the list with a feeling that bordered on physical

pain. His droolings were belying the sound of heavy footsteps coming behind him. He whirled in the padded swivel chair, and paled as he saw the intruder. "The Phantasm Stranger! Why have you come here? How did you get here?"

Yes, I knew what you meant. You've spent thousands to make thinthouse airtight, and you want to know how I managed to gain entrance. Sorry, pal, that's my secret. As

it is in reserve."

The man in the chair looked into the face of the Stranger,

and felt his old confidence again. He had been shaken

when the Stranger made known his presence, but now he

felt in control of the situation. After all, wasn't he the

greatest comic book dealer of all? Weren't there servants,

or at least the faithful old Igor, waiting outside the study

door, waiting only for his call to rush in? What had he to

worry about?

"Look, Stranger, why're you here? You've always been a straight dealer. I've always treated my customers

good, given them everything I promised them. You have no reason to bother me, am honest businessman. So

why're you here?"

"You're right, fat man, legally you're in the clear. You've managed to stay on the right side of the law, though

you've come awfully close to crossing it. But now, legal or not, you're gone too far. The Strangers have counted

into a fantastic issue, rage pronounced. "This latest ad-

vertisement of yours is too much."

"That night I followed you," the man said through gritted teeth, and he happened to see you leaving. I first saw

you from a distance and that familiar walk of yours

attracted my attention. I didn't think it was you until I

saw the greed shining in your eyes. I thought maybe you

had golden bullion in the bag you were carrying! You

see," said the Strangers, "greed has been your downfall in more ways than one."

"That night I followed you, and was able to get good look at the bag and its contents. For a long
time I was puzzled about your plans. I could think of

no reason why you would want such things. I never

dreamed you capable of such inhuman deception."

"The Strangers made a move for the greasy dealer.

"And I intend to prevent it..."

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

"No need to bother, punk. I took care of him on my way here."

"His strong arm pinned the dealer's arms behind his back, and held them deep into the rings of fat that covered his middle. He shrieked again, this time a ferocious sound that conveyed no other message than pure fear.

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

And the Phantom Stranger was gone.

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

And in the weeks that followed, every order for the figureines was returned to the sender, with a free Golden Age comic thrown in for good measure. Another disaster, indeed, prevented, and fandom would never know what it had to thank... "THE PHANTOM STRANGER."
How did you first become interested in art?
I used to trace comic books. That's how I learned. I used to paint comic books and cut them out, put them on a milk carton. The bottom of the milk carton was like a frame. I put them all on my wall. It was covered.

How did you first become interested in comics?
A cousin of mine used to read a lot of comics. When I'd go to his house, I'd steal his.

What did he say about that?
He said, "Bring them back." Yeah, I'd bring them back... all cut up.

Did you read the pulps or the comic strips?
Just the strips. My favorite then was Moon Mullins.

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

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

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

Were you a fan of their stuff?
I bought them for a job for about a year. I went down every week and bought everything and everything. So they finally said, "We'll keep you here and give you a job."

Did you go to any art schools?
The High School of Music and Art and then the School of Visual Art.

Hogarth taught there, didn't he?
Yeah, he's retired now, but he was a great influence on my work. I took anatomy under him and he told me to go into comics. I used to see some of the Tarzan originals he did. They were beautiful. I have a book by him, Dynamic Anatomy, that's like a bible to me.

Do you still use it for reference?
Sure. That and Bridgeham's books.

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

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

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

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

What was the first thing you were paid for?
That was in elementary school. I won a contest on "Keep Your City Clean."

It didn't work.
The City gave me twenty-five dollars. I was eleven years old. It was printed in Junior Scholastic. That was the first time I'd been paid for art... and I've been getting twenty-five dollars ever since.

Do you prefer to use your own pencils?
Yes and no. When you have to lay out a story and pencil it, it has to be approved. The pencils are rough at first, and then you tighten them up. Then when they are approved, you have to go over them.
with ink and be certain that the same quality comes out when it's used. That's a lot of work. It's very time-consuming. You feel awfully proud of the end result, but it's a lot of work. When you have done all that work and you have to do it all over again, you get a little bit bored. There's nothing to do. It's not creative, but it's easy.

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

You know why? Because he's Wally Wood!

How do you think Steranko felt when he was doing Shade? He wrote, penciled, tinted and colored them.

Steranko came out with some pretty weird innovations in comics. In his interview, he talks about how he used to do effects to a great extent. They were very creative, not just in the story, but in the art as well.

Cubists, for instance, are a genius. He worked hard and he got to where he is today by hard work.

Steranko used movie effects to a great extent. Slow motion, pan back, etc.

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

What do you think of Barry Smith? He has greatly improved as every artist should, with time. But I think he was being overworked. As for his Ghastly, let me say this about that, and let me make it perfectly clear: Every artist who saw German number 1, said, "I wish they had given it to me." Barry Smith was very fortunate to get that assignment.

The thing is, Smith has developed his whole world of Coons.

Right.

And now that's all he can do.

I hope I don't fall into that trap. Because once you have a character, everything else begins to look like that character. Your work seems to be very muddy. It can fit almost any setting. And then, you used to put the stars in your stories.

Yeah, I got that out of there. I got a cable from overseas from an artist who wanted rights, or something like that. I won't mention any names.

Why did you do it?

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

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

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

Did he comment on the finished story?

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

Many of the Spanish artists are doing almost photographic work.

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

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

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

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

In the years when I was studying Foster's work, I knew how restrained it was. Compare his work to Raymond's Flash Gordon. All his characters were beautifully posed. They posed beautifully; when they weren't falling off the wall. When one of Flash Gordon's figures fell, you could see dead weight. I wanted to come around and really show it in succession, where he's falling gracefully, and finally just hits the ground and blood spouts out!

Are your pencils loose or tight?

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

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

Oh that was done because I wanted to show power. It wasn't meant to be an exaggerated piece of art. I mean, you wouldn't find somebody who looked like that.

If you did, get out of the way! How old are you?

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

That's too old. Would you like to go back in time, to when you were younger?

No.

You don't regret anything in your past?

Only one thing. But that's not printable.

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

None whatsoever.

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

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

Don't let Warren give you freedom to do what you like!

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

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

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

Is it still around?

They're not doing too well these days.

Castle of Frankenstein?

No.

Skywald?

Next question.

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

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

Yes. I sometimes tend to over-exaggerate muscular structure. They told me to tone down, become more subtle. I tried, and I got this figure just right. Then I said, "Let me put in this biohazard here," and when I put in that one, the other biohazard looked a little too weak, so I strengthened that. Then the shoulder had to be a little thicker to balance with the biohazards. Then the arms had to be even more subtle. I had to work with the biohazards and the arms. I tried. Yes, I do have problems.

Do you do any commercial work outside of comics?
right there, but there was no room. Everybody was in
the way.

How do you feel about doing sketches at Con?

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

Who are your favorite artists?

One of the most recent artists to hit the comics
field, Esteban Maroto. My all-time favorite is Al
Williams, and I really dig Frank Frazetta.

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

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

Why were the Warren awards instituted?

Because Warren wanted them instituted.

How would you describe Warren?

First of all, he is a man, he is 5'9", he weighs
130-145 pounds, he knows what he wants, goes after
it and gets it. Period.

What do you think of underground comics?

They're great, but they let an artist do anything
he wants and get away with it. Some of the stories
are crap. I have a favorite: Richard Corben.

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

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

Do you follow comics now?

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

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

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

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

I pen the page first, naturally, and then I go over
it with dirty water. Then I clean it up with clear
water and sometimes go over it again with pencil
smudges. There's a thing called white gesso, which
I also use as wash; I use the Mattox tray of tones sometimes, and I'll even use
charcoal.

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

I really don't know why. I'm sure they were
out 


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

No, I'm not in favor of censorship. If the story calls
for nudity, then the artist should follow the story.
What about the scenes where the nudity is thrown in as
a come-on to the kids and has no bearing on the story?
That I don't approve. When it's not called for, it should
not be done.

What did you do as Managing Editor for Warren?

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

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

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

What did you think of the story of the first hero for
Lies?

I liked it.

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

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

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

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

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

Maybe that's what he likes.

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

No. Just like any other artist Black or White, I've had to
gain experience from one company to the next doing my
work. And when you have talent, and want to use it, and
the company recognizes that talent, then it doesn't matter
what race he is.
Letters have been edited to fit into available space. Onward...

Jeff Anderson
3760 Beechgrove Rd.
Grove City, Ohio, 43123

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

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

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

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

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

Oriental Stories. One oriental story, "The Purple Eye of Ehril," appeared in Spicy Adventure under the pen name Sam Webber. All is well, a neat little fanzine that needed more material in it. May I suggest some spot illos, some fiction, both graphic and text, and a try at cramming so much material into the same space.

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

Ted Hagen
4101 Treasure Circle
Tampa, Fla., 33616

It was with inadvisable anticipation that I opened a brown envelope that arrived with today's assortment of junk mail. It contained Wlad's More junk mail! Naa!!! Absolutely fantastic is an inadequate expression of my exhilaration. Wlad, if fandom's delight!

Since I cut my reading teeth with Siegel and Shuster's Superman, I must take exception with Duffy Vohland in regard to his copyscape concerning the "more adult" Superman stories. Jerry Siegel rolled Hercules, Robin Hood, Sir Galahad, and Sherlock Holmes into a super space-age identity in 1938 for the younger reader. Superman, THE super-hero, is a prime, just as McGuff's Reader was for a hundred years and still is a prime for tomorrow's fans. Parents buy The Three Musketeers for infanteel youngsters, but the kids buy his first Superman and Green Lantern, Spider-Man will soon follow. Superman is transitional. I could go on to write a substantiat thesis concerning the comic book as a class room reading aid.
but this is scarcely the time. It is not that I disagree with Duffy, I merely want to point out a reader–topic–age (maturity) relationship which exists in regard to this one publication. I think what Duffy means about those mature Superman Family was that he is now much more realistic and interesting to older fans than he was in the past.

Klaus Jansen 396 BURNSFORD Bridgeport, Conn., 06606
I finally got my copy of WAC. And... I would like to write an official LoC. Now, the reason I am doing this is because you asked your readers to do it, but because this issue definitely warrants a comment or two... or three. (Christ, sounds like some of my old letters to Julie Schwartz.)

Anyway, I would like to approach this very systematically. Therefore, I will start with the subject that is closest to my heart: my hang, er, no, no. I mean art, of course. The cover was excellent and by no means a hit-down from last time’s cover (which I did not think was that sensational, but was good nonetheless). The little lilo by Jeff Jones was cute, I liked it. Newton’s full-page was a good feature, full of action, and moved very nicely. But I thought the ink job took away from the pencilling. I did not care for Marchesano’s lilo. Vincent has wonderful use of wash, but cannot draw too well. I will tell what he has been told me many a time: spend more time on drawing and not get technique. Fantaccio is a good example of what happens. He’s got a god-avestible style but can’t draw a strip. Those little lilo’s by Selcer literally made page 12 and 13. They were nothing outstanding but were used exceptionally well. I notice that Dave Russell is paying more attention to picture composition than ever before, and it shows All around, one of the best lines I’ve seen in a long while.

Well, we have a Newton–pencilled work this is. Do you think the inks make that much difference? About Fantaccio’s strips, I happened to like them very much. I could see nothing wrong with them.

Gordon Matthews 8 Perry Street, Union City, Pa., 16438
I liked Bernie Bubnis’ column. But not all fanzines are fantastic wonders, Thunk. There are still editors getting purple dittos carbon all over their hands.

I hope you had fun writing your “Rebuttal.” It reminded me of Wally Gonzer’s “Sinfulness.” I don’t think it’s accurate to compare Howard’s heroes (if only by any association to Doc Savage, the Spider, etc. They were of very different classes. Doc Savage, etc. all appeared in their own pulp magazines, and were therefore established as an artificial series, much like comic book heroes. The Howard heroes, on the other hand, appeared (mostly) in Weird Tales as weird adventure stories, and Conan was a series because Howard wanted to write about him; for this reason Conan is more honest than Doc Savage.

Adam Malin 16 E. 2nd St. Freeport, N.Y., 11520
I’ve got a few minutes of free time now, so I thought I’d let you know my opinions on WAC. Generally speaking, it was one of the few remaining GREAT fanzines. And these days, that’s a rarity.

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

WAC was light, easy reading, filled with good fan stuff. I’m more bored onomatopoeias now, but once in awhile it’s nice to know that for fifty cents there’s still dependable ol’ Wonderful World.

Roger Schoolcraft 2005 Eberleigh Rd., Fullamieve, Va., 26537
You said in your editorial you were not afraid to take sketches from Adams, Jones, and Weighston. I disagree. I have had my collective ear filled to the brim with sketches. I’d rather have a fan drawing pencilled and inked than a pro sketch, despite the fact that Neal Adams did it.

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

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

I will say this. Jon Penner’s article on E. Howard’s ‘Lester Heroes’ was good, as well as Klaus Jansen’s accompanying art. How about an in–depth one on Conan himself? I don’t mean Thomas’ version, nor Carter’s or de Camp’s. I mean Howard’s. Have an artist of yours read some Conan stories by Howard and allow him to come up with his own version.

I’m glad you published that Aquaman full–page by Dave Cockrum. It was beautiful. I’m also glad because Aquaman (an old favourite of mine) is seldom seen in fanzines. He’ll probably be seen even less now since buscomics has been shelved.

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

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

Ron Sorella 2592 Victory Lw., Mediaford, Ont., 97501
The only thing I disliked about the zine was the size. With the quality of art and written work you had in issue 6, you really should have had it 8 x 11. If you went to increased size and retained the quality of work you displayed in number 6, you really would have been tops in your class of fanzine. And that includes Fantastic Fanfare, which is currently tops. There were several reasons why WAC was so good, the largest being the quality of the written work. There was no half-baked article to be found. Indeed, “Duffy’s Tavern” was the least intelligent, and his column is usually the highlight of the zine it appears in. Certainly the highlight of the zine had to be Gordon Matthews’ “Article.” I have been looking forward to such a column ever since. I entered fandom; an article not devoted to just comics, but something a little better. Nowhere was the 25 cent price hike mentioned, or the fact that Stan Lee shaped his beard, or that comics are drying, or other such facts (?) that always up the fanzine. The only thing that disappointed me was the article’s shortcomings.

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

I’ll be sure you’ll enjoy the interview with Bub this issue if you liked the Dave Russell piece. Check it out and let me know, OK?

WE ALSO HEARD FROM:

Bernie Bubnis generally commented on the issue, knocked Gordon Matthews and Duffy Voland for their articles, and blasted me for my “Rebuttal,” which he called nit-picking and not fair at all. We’ll put it this way. If I had seen “Article” in another zine, I would have written an LoC which would have been identical to “Rebuttal,” my feelings being so strong. Instead, I used my comments as follow-up article. Is there really that much difference? Robert Greenberger sent a short Loc in which he praised last issue. Dave Hartman said “Article” was a bunch of shit and would rather see Mike O’Red draw the Hulk than Herb Trimpe. I’m forced to disagree here. Trimpe, while not a good illustrator is a more—adequate storyteller. I think this is why that issue with Trigg’s layouts and Granger art was such as improvement. Steve Mattingly liked the issue, but thinks Gordon Matthews should be thrown out of fandom with ideas like the ones he expressed in “Article.” Talk about freedom of speech! Shepard! Dave Russell accused me of lazy editing and called me a cackler. Hub!??

John Penner called WAC, one of the best bargains in fandom. Neal Fugate was impressed by the art of Klaus Jansen.

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

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

Why, just because WAC won’t have another issue in the near future doesn’t mean you shouldn’t send me Locs on this.

First of all, I’d really like to know what all of you thought of this issue. And secondly, if WAC ever returns, I’d like a letters section. OK? OK?

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MEMO:
TO: The Editor
FROM: The Publisher

I THINK IT STINKS!
HERE'S MY PUBLISHER'S NOTES:

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

"Hey, you're Neal Preston, the brilliant editor of SHAZAM! "

"Wow man, why are you publishing Neal Preston's fanzine?"

"For the money. What else?"

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

"How right you are! When we first met, I found out right away that Neal was a very modest fellow. He told me so himself..."

"Yes, Neal Preston. A prince of a fellow, and a really sweet guy..."

"Come to me with quite a pressing problem. [Yeah, my fans wasn't working! - N.P.] He had already fully laid out over half of his upcoming issue of The Wonderful World of Comics. [You've heard of that, haven't you? - N.P.] He didn't have the personal finances available to publish it himself..."

"[I.e. I was broke! - N.P.] Quite unfortunate. That's not what you said to ME!"

"[That's not what you said to ME! I asked you. - N.P.] Realizing it would be a shame if WWOaC never got off the ground due to these financial problems, I decided to publish it..."

"[After I kicked his ass in, that is.]"

"Wow man, that's really nice of you. You should hear MY side of the story..."

"Too bad you're such a moose..."

"Huh? What do you mean?"

"Punker man, don't you know WWOaC still has a two thousand dollar deficit from the last issue."

"Oh..."

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

"Boo!"

Neal