

# RONNIE...Duh !

by Jeff Singh

## Asked and answered!

### OH BOY, the art of Archie !!!

Oh boy...the art of Archie... I love this topic and am so excited by it but then I have come to the realization that there is so much meat on the bone here for me that it is going to be difficult to write plus I have a number of other important things I want to write about that could probably take me to the submission limits easily. So I'll start writing what I want to write about and see where this goes and at what point I am out of space!

I loved Archie comics growing up, who didn't. They may not have been cool like the X-men or Batman but they were ubiquitous and universally appealing to all ages and genders. It might not have been easy to find a Marvel or DC comic but

you would have to have been actively trying not to bump into Archie to miss them at the supermarket or just about anywhere you went. I think that alone would make an interesting article on how Archie distributed its comics and what kinds of print runs they had. Perhaps for another time. Archie and Jughead's antics were my favorite when reading as a youth but as an art collector, it is all about the girls now. So, Betty or Veronica...I think the title of my article answers that one definitively for me. Why? That is a complex answer that I am not sure I want to figure out completely and could probably keep a shrink in business for a decade on that one! The shorter and more tangible answer is that I prefer brunettes and I am attracted to strong, smart and confident women. Betty is certainly a match for Ronnie's temper, smarts and charm but I'd have trouble convincing myself that I prefer Betty as she was always the rival and underdog and lacked that inherent confidence that Ronnie had. The wealth, spending and entitlement that embody Ronnie are a definite put off but not enough to change my choice either. The perfect girl would be somewhere in between?

Veronica in the Style of Montana, Vigoda, DeCarlo and Ruiz by Fernando Ruiz

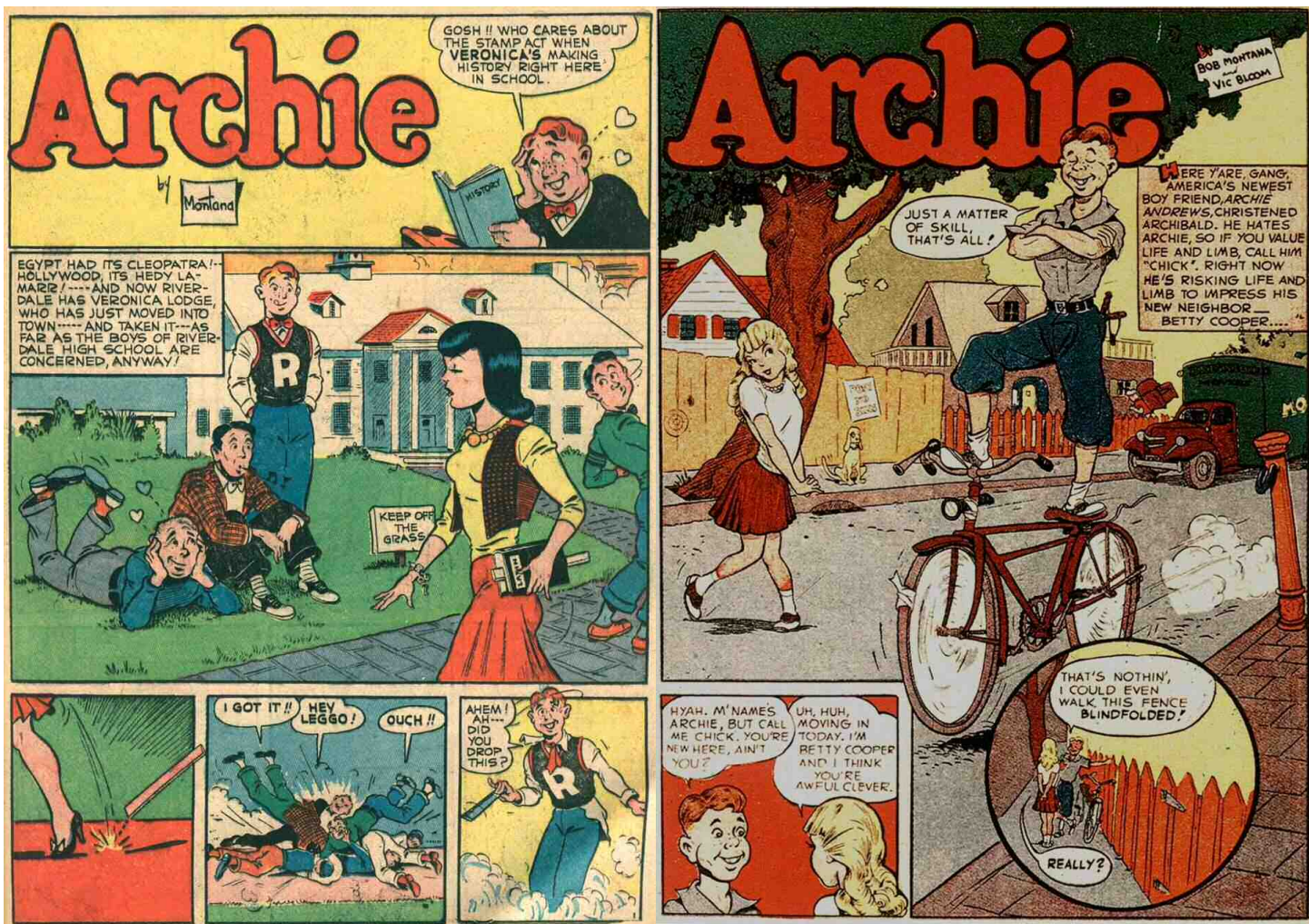


Earlier in my career (yes, it is a career at this point) as an art collector I was having trouble identifying the artists on some of the earlier Archie comics. I had been bothering a few friends who were experts in this to create a style guide for me to help out with this and in the end I decided the best way to get this done was to do one myself and become the expert I wanted to be. To this end I joined forces with our own Archie savant Bob Kopman. This was a pre-pandemic project and we literally went through over 1000 comics pulling images and such to create a format and style model guide. We got a lot of the preliminary work done and all the guides have been completed but they need revision and corrections. We also want to add some biographical information to make this more of a reference project. The initial goal was to print this in parts in the APA and then look at turning it into a book... a book everyone needs but didn't know they needed until they had it. We were on a good trajectory and then this nasty virus got in the way. I have spoken about this before; I lost my motivation to do a lot of things having to work in the middle of all of this. It has taken me some time to get out of that funk and I feel it is time to start up on the project again. We did discuss this but it is too big and too early



to really do anything with this issue but perhaps in future issues you will see more of this. Instead I thought I'd go off on a lighter and smaller topic with some overlap with our project.

Veronica Lodge originally from New York City but residing in Riverdale as the only child of Hiram and Hermione Lodge who are among the wealthiest residents. In her first appearance in *Pep* #26 (Archie started in *Pep Comics* #22 where Betty also had her first appearance) Veronica's father was originally named Burton K. Lodge and was known as "Money Bags" Lodge had moved to Riverdale to keep his daughter from being spoiled. They also mention that they had come from Boston but in *Archie Comics* #1 an alternative background is given as Veronica living in New York City and coming to Riverdale on a date with Archie. Regardless, Ronnie was rich and perhaps a bit of a fish out of water in the quaint town of Riverdale. She used her confidence and wealth to obtain advantage in the wooing of Archie from Betty and that love triangle formed the basis of the story and popularity of the strip. I do sometimes wonder about the love triangle in other comics like *Krazy Kat* and the *Superman/Lois/Clark* as a popular device in comic storytelling. Below are the first appearances of Veronica from *Pep Comics* #26 and of Archie and Betty from *Pep Comics* #22.



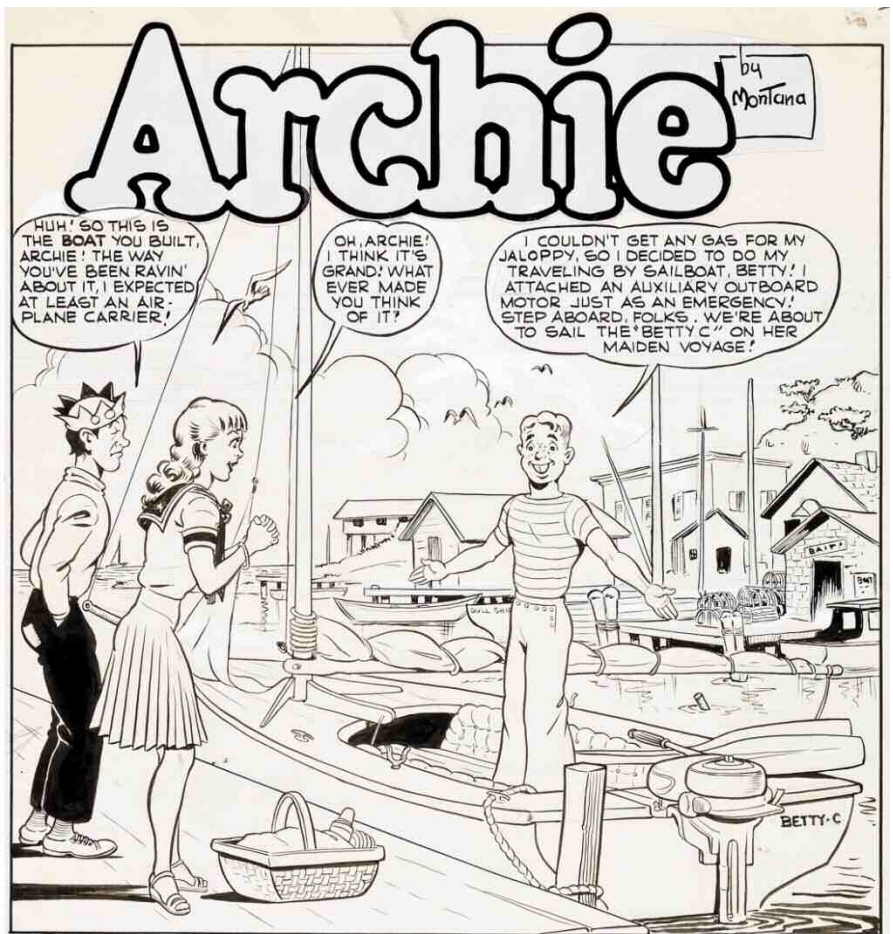
Since I want to show the art, I'll focus on different artists of the 40's to the 60's take on Veronica. This will not be a comprehensive list and will only include artists that I have art by so I'll miss a whole bunch of important ones like Harry Sahle, Dave Berg, Bob Bolling, Dick Briefer, Dick Crane, Joe Edwards, Ray Gill, Irv Novack, Al Fagley, Al Hartley, Red Holmdale, Al McClean, Joe Rosenberger, Chic Stone, Zoltan Szenics, Janice Valleau, Bob White, Bill Woggon, Clem Weisbecker, Ed Goggin, Kurth Schaffenberg and even Neal Adams.



**Bob Montana** is the first up to bat as he was the original creator of the series and characters. As mentioned above they started in **Pep #22** in December of 1941, the same month as the Pearl Harbor attack that brought the United States into World War II. Montana's drew Archie from age 20 until he died at the young age of 54 in 1975. The immense popularity of the comic



created a need to bring on other creators to keep up with demand and Montana moved on to doing the syndicated newspaper strip in early 1946 leaving the rest of the franchise to other



creators. He would return for the occasional cover, story and one page gags but really didn't contribute much to the comic books again. I think he is probably the most distinctive with his early bucktoothed Archie and the way he drew the eyes on the girls. Below are a few examples but first one of my Archie treasures, the splash to **Pep 32**...unfortunately no Ronnie!. The strip I showed earlier is my most recent Archie addition and is also by Montana. The 3 panels are from Archie daily 1952, a one page gag from **Archie Joke Book #2** 1953 and an Archie Sunday from 1962. For me the most distinctive feature of Montana's art were the way he drew the eyes of the girls.





Now I'll just jump in with the biggest name in Archie Comics, **Dan DeCarlo**

Here are two pieces which rank highly in my all-time favorite art I own category. I had ~~enjoyed~~ enjoyed these pieces in the CAF gallery of the previous owner for years and when he decided to depart the hobby, he asked me to make him an offer. How did that go you might ask? See below. I find it easiest to identify the artists by the way they approached the girls. The two splashes below are from **Betty and Veronica Spectacular #26** published in 1964 although drawn in 1961. The second is from **Betty and Veronica Summer Fun #199** from 1972. In my CAF gallery you will find Betty pin-ups to match the two below.



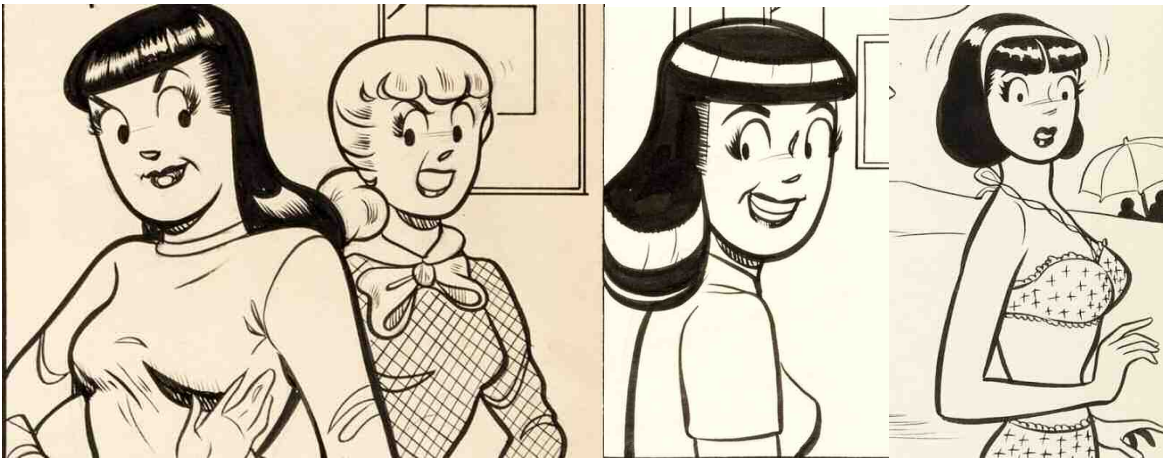
These two are from Pep 129 1958 and from Pep 159 1962. For me the most distinctive feature for DeCarlo is the mouths, the lines for the upper cheeks and the upturned teardrop noses. DeCarlo first

started at Archie in the early 50's but didn't like drawing in the Montana/Sahle house style and so left. He was allowed his own style and so he came back to become probably the most recognized of all the artists to have worked on Archie. He parted with Archie on bad terms after a failed lawsuit around the Josie character he created and named after his wife. His two sons, Dan Jr. and Jim worked for Archie too but both died before their father. He died shortly after losing a law suit against MLJ comics over Josie.



**Harry Lucey** is a fan favorite and many would argue the next most important of the Archie artists. I wouldn't argue against that and have been a fan of his style. The more I look at the art, I might even consider him my favorite Archie artist including how he drew the girls. Jaime Hernandez is a big fan and considers him among his biggest influences. For me the animated style of Lucey and the mouths of the girl and the way he drew Archie are the most distinctive features of his work.

*Archie #82* 1956 *Archie #114* 1960 *Archie Giant* 1964



**Bill Vigoda** had one of the longest career at Archie from the early 40's until his death in 1973. Over the years his style changed. Below *Betty and Veronica Summer Fun 7* 1959 and *Archie 111* 1960. I think for me the way he draws the sheen on Ronnie's hair is distinctive as well as there is a bit of a stiffness and charm to the way he draws the faces. I would show you more examples of his later and earlier works but I really want to keep this part of my submission focused on art that is in my collection and I have identified some gaps I might want to consider filling in the future.



**Samm Schwartz** also had a very long career at Archie. He joined MLJ publishing in 1942 and started on Archie early. He is best known as the "Jughead" artist but worked on many books over his 50 years at Archie. The extra M in his name was purposeful and added by himself to make it more interesting. *Jughead #64* 1960, *Archie Pals and Gals 14* 1960, *Jughead Annual 8* 1960





George Frese was best known for working on Ginger for Archie comics and is often credited for her creations but other sources suggest it was Sahle that created her. He worked extensively for Archie in the early 50's until he died in 1956 at age 45. He had a very distinctive and fun style. Two images from *Archie Giant Size #3* 1956. His Archie looks similar to Harry Lucey.



Tom Moore went to art school and later became a Staff Cartoonist in the Texas Navy. He worked extensively in the 50's and 60's and had a much looser style. More often I am familiar with his work on one page gags that he did for the books. I found he had a much looser and less polished style but great for telling a quick joke.

That was fun, I got to show off a bit of my Archie collection and covered a few big artists and how they drew Veronica. There were a few artists on the list above that are not included in my collection that I'd like to show you a few images of their art. I've picked artists you know better from other projects they have done for other publishers. Here are Irv Novick from *Archie #27* and *#31* 1947, Al Hartley Laugh, John Rosenberger *Pep #192* 1966, *#201* 1968, Neal Adams *Laugh #108* 1960 and Bill Woggon *Archie #23* 1947.

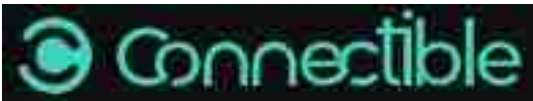


Irv Novick



Al Hartley





I'd heard about Connectible from a few friends who were at New York City Comic Con in 2023 when it was officially launched. I signed up for it and wanted to find out more about it so I could report back to you. I reached out to a friend who put me in touch with Nick Coleman who I had done an art deal with a decade or so ago and knew as a big UK collector specializing in Moebius and Paul Pope art. He was also a CFA-APA member for a very short stint a few years back. Nick was kind enough to give me the pitch for Connectible and I'll pass on some of what I gleaned into a segment. This segment has been read and approved by Nick for use here.

So, here goes... Connectible!!! Haven't heard of it yet until now...well...you soon will be aware of it. I took 2 hours out of Nick Coleman's busy schedule to interview him.

Nick's background includes being a popular fashion designer in the UK in the 90's, going on to wellness products after and then other entrepreneurial endeavours while maintaining and growing his comic art collection. In recent years he has sold off some great art to help fund his vision and Connectible. In Nick's own words, "I've divested some of my most precious pieces to make this work."

The interview transcripts covered over a dozen or so pages, so I am going to summarize and condense things for you.

The idea behind Connectible is to provide a one-stop platform for collectors. They plan to expand beyond comic art to trading cards, sneakers, coins, stamps and whatever else people collect but they are going to work on comic art first as that is what brought Nick to this point. Once they have it working, bugs removed and proven profitability they will move on to other markets. The idea is to allow people to get together and connect in communities and groups. A place with discussion groups, meeting places (including video) and a place to post and host art galleries. A mash up of comicartfans, facebook, discord, the CGC list, comicart-I, zoom, Microsoft teams and other groups but to put it all into one place. The plans are ambitious and it sounds like Nick has a good team working at this and that they are invested to keep working at this and improving it on an ongoing basis. Once people are on the platform and connected the idea is for the community to grow and be a second home where you can break off and do a video call or livestream something on the fly without having to leave and log onto another site or open up apps and programs to do other things.

One of the other big things that Connectible is doing is being an application based platform for mobility devices first and the desktop version/app will be secondary. The idea is to make uploading art as quick as taking a picture on your phone and typing or dictating some text and then posting like many already do on social media platforms like Instagram or TikTok. Currently Nick tells me that people interact with the internet 80% of the time via their phone and this number is higher in younger users and so mobility first was a tenet. For the record I have neither Instagram nor Tiktok and rarely use Facebook so the social media aspect of this is wasted on me but I am not sure I am really the demographic that is being targeted. I also use my desktop computer for most of my online time other than checking emails on the phone. For younger collectors coming into the hobby it will be a place to meet others and to learn about the hobby. It will be a place where those coming in from comic book collecting and may already have a Connectible account for that will find art. Much like Heritage auctions has done and continues to do by bringing in collectors from one field into another; the platform will serve as a similar introductory conduit. Growing the hobby and connecting collectors is the goal of the project.

To make money there are several things that are being considered. Everyone has to sign up to be on the site. Many can use the site for free but if you are start doing commerce there, there will be thresholds at which you will have some fees involved. These might include a subscription fee or if you are a seller a percentage of the sales that would be smaller than eBay or other auction houses. In

exchange for this fee the site would offer things like an escrow service where the buyer pays the site and it holds on to the money until the art arrives and the buyer is happy before releasing the funds. They are looking at verification services for buyers and sellers so you can trust who you are dealing with and that you are dealing with that person. There will be value added for what they hope is an acceptable fee. There will be marketplaces and sales galleries and potentially auctions too. The team wants to add the features people will use so are very open to any feedback they are given and what people think will make their use of the site easier.

Currently the platform is in a testing and building status but one can still create an account to try things out. The first 100 members were considered Founding Members which may incur some benefits in the future but I believe all those spots are taken.

Some of the next generation thing that are being considered are things like 3-d images of the art so you can flip art over on your screen to see the back and look at things more closely with the potential for this to be done in Virtual Reality in the future. They will be using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to match and introduce collectors to one another based on what they collect. The AI might also be able to initiate some trade deals between collectors depending on what is available and what people have on their want list. There is a plan to use AI to look at pages and determine who the characters are on it and to do a relative value analysis based on previous sales data so it will be able to tell your Kirby page was inked by Sinnott and has a great Thing smashing image so it is worth \$XXXXX.XX. These are all things down the road that they would like to do but for now it is still about building the architecture.

On that note, it is being built with cloud storage and serverless programming so it can handle any volume of demand at any given time so if someone with a popular artist does an art drop, it won't crash the system and everything should function the same with thousands of users putting in orders as it would if no one else was on line and you were going to buy something. Built for Purpose and Product Market Fit were terms that came up often in our conversation and apply here as they are designing the website to be as intuitive and user friendly for comic art fans and when they expand it to other collectibles it will be tweaked to meet their unique and emerging needs which might be very different.

There are plans to have content added including educational and historical videos about comic art for those newer to the hobby or those that are expanding their horizons. Nick knows Jonathan Ross who is a UK celebrity interviewer and the largest collector of comic art and movie memorabilia in the UK. He will be doing some of the content for them but others are planned. The videos are to be edited and to be in the 20-30 minute range to make them more digestible and approachable.

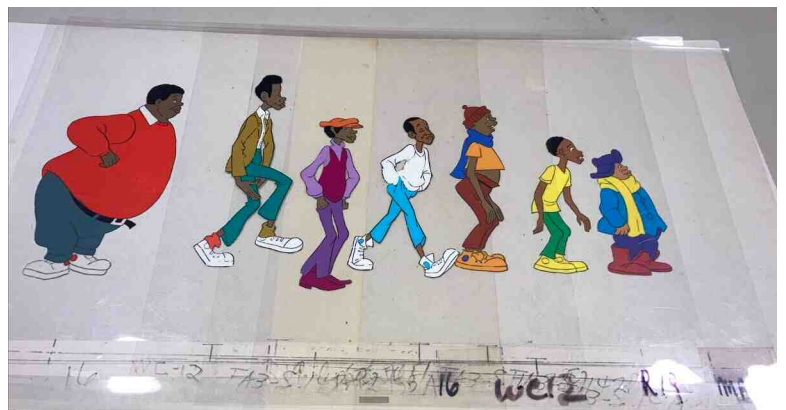
We did spend a fair bit of time talking about Comcartfans and what Connectibles is doing and how there is room for more than one player on the playground. Any competition drives the other to be better and in the end it is the collectors that benefit from improvements and innovation.

To that end, I will try out Connectible. I will be very open to see what they can do and where it will go. As I said, I am not terribly interested in social media now nor do I want to look at my phone for comic art images but this might all change if I find it more fun and easy to use my stance might change. For newer, younger and more "plugged in" users, it is probably going to have more appeal but in the end if no one comes, there is nothing to build and grow. I am looking forward to seeing how this all goes as well as changes that are coming from CAF as they upgrade and modernize. It will be an interesting time in the hobby.



Esnipe is one of the many sniping tools that can be used for eBay auctions. I have been using them from the very early days and like the platform and I am pretty sure they have saved me many thousands of dollars. I know there are others with smaller fees or monthly or yearly fees but I have been happy with the service so I never looked at other similar services. I use

them less and less often not because I don't like their site but because I look at eBay less and less and so buy there less and less. I had an interesting interaction with them that I want to share with you. Normally if you win, they deduct points from your account and you buy points to cover that. It works out pretty cheap and I think the maximum they charge is \$10 regardless of how expensive an item is. If you are bidding at the same time live, normally they don't charge you. This is how I got to talking with Michael, one of their lead support guys. I was bidding on a Fat Albert animation cel. I am trying not to go down the animation cel pathway and only get a few cels from some favorite shows but there



is the potential that I go a bit deeper than I want here. Anyway the auction was at \$68 and I wasn't sure I'd be up at 1:40 to watch it close so I put in an esnipe bid of \$301.11 or something like that to be executed 6 seconds before the ending. It turns out I was awake



and so with about 40 seconds left I put in a bid of \$401.12. There was a bit more bidding at the end but I won it for \$172. I got a notice from esnipe I had won and they were deducting points. I sent an email to support about this and provided them with my phone number. They looked into it and refunded me the points (about a \$1...if I'd actually looked at how much it was I probably wouldn't have wasted the time but I am glad I did). I later get a call from esnipe in California and one of the senior support guys is calling me. We get to talking for about 20 minutes about esnipe and the process and how they work. It was interesting enough that I will share what I learned with you. I spend a lot of time thinking about auction bidding strategy so some of this was useful for me. The first thing he says is that I potentially paid an extra \$70 to \$80 to save a \$1 by bidding too early. It gave time for others to bid. If I had waited and not revealed my hand, there might have been less bidding and my snipe win would have cost me less. I have included the bidding history below so you can see. It is true, I might have saved some money or it might have worked out the same, I will never know. I use the 6 second bid at esnipe to make sure that I get my bid in. Michael told me that they have built in redundancy so they actually bid from 3 or 4 places at



**Fat Albert Filmation Animation Hand Painted Cel**  
Episode 3, Russell Donald Bill+

Winning bid: **\$172.49**

Shipping: **Check item description and payment instructions or contact seller for details.**

Bids: **17**    Bidders: **6**    Retractions: **0**    Time Ended: **Nov 26, 2023 at 10:20PM PST**    Duration: **7 days**

Hide automatic bids     Show automatic bids    [Learn more about bidding](#)

Bidder	Bid Amount	Bid Time	Action
<a href="#">comixfan</a> (1480)	\$172.49	26 Nov 2023 at 10:20:20pm PST	<a href="#">Leave fee</a> More at
<a href="#">2***k</a> (337)	\$169.99	26 Nov 2023 at 10:20:51pm PST	
<a href="#">1***1</a> (160)	\$111.00	26 Nov 2023 at 10:20:48pm PST	
<a href="#">1***1</a> (160)	\$92.00	26 Nov 2023 at 10:20:29pm PST	
<a href="#">1***1</a> (160)	\$82.00	26 Nov 2023 at 10:19:36pm PST	
<a href="#">1***1</a> (160)	\$80.00	26 Nov 2023 at 10:06:24pm PST	

the same time to ensure that no bids are missed. They have a zero miss rate at 3 second or longer time frames. People wanting that 1 second bid have a slight chance of missing out but rarely. He shared some statistics with me. The difference between a 3 second and a 1 second bid is negligible over millions of transaction but a small amount. When you jump from 3 seconds to 5 seconds there is an appreciable increase in cost in the range of 4% or so on final bidding price and when the interval is pushed up to 10 seconds that is even greater. Now, on an item that is so inexpensive and if I only do a few a year, not a big deal but overall it might add up so keep that in mind. I subconsciously do this at Heritage live auctions. I don't bid on items I want to win until the very end and usually as the clock ticks down. No sense in bidding up early. It is why I try to watch live or have a phone bid (or both) for auction that are important to me and why I avoid proxy bidding. Armed with the esnipe statistics I will be even less inclined to leave early bids or proxy bids at auction sites. We talked a bit more about some of the nuances of esnipe and he was very interested in hearing consumer impressions, reasoning and feedback. Take from this what you like, it has made me rethink things a bit.

### Comic Art Travels



In recent years I have tied travel to my comic art collecting as many of you are already painfully aware of from my previous APA submissions. Meeting friends and traveling to see art has opened an entire new alcove in the nooks and crannies that are my collecting experiences. Visiting with friends that are both new and old and putting personal interactions into the context of the art collecting has been incredibly rewarding. It helps me to see how others collect and to understand them. In doing so, I suppose I am probably looking to find answers to these same questions in myself. My most recent adventures took me to two places I would never otherwise have gone. The first was to the very northern part of California to the often inhospitable but breathtaking high deserts and plains along the Warner Mountains. On the way home from this place, I stopped in a hunter infested Bruno's in Gerlach, NV to have some of their world famous Ravioli...a local anomaly. The slogan for Gerlach is "Where the pavement ends and the west begins". This is about 2 hours east of Cedarville, the small, one stop-sign village that is closest to where Bruce Haley lives. I also believe it is

where the tumbleweed goes. I have never seen so much of it in my life and when I got back, I had to pick tumbleweed off of the front of the rental car before returning it. I was there in late October and while the day I arrived it was still warm, the wind was biting and the promise of winter coming was fulfilled on my last day there as they started to get some snow. Perhaps I got out just in time. Truly a magnificent and unforgiving part of our continent and where the Haleys thrive.



I've known Bruce for about 20 years, maybe longer. Bruce has been at this a lot longer than I have and is about a dozen years or so older than I am although he looks much better for his age than myself who the years have been much less kind with. Perhaps there is something to mountain living. The only time we previously met was at a Big Wow convention in San Jose circa 2010 I believe. Big Wow was also my first meeting with Bill Cox but that is an aside that might come up again later. Let's see where this goes.



Bruce is the comic art world's version of Dos Equis' world's most interesting man. Born in California and raised in San Francisco Bay area where his father was a police officer for several decades and then growing up rurally, Bruce carries a diverse upbringing with him. He has been all over the world. A tour in the military followed by several years as a police officer and SWAT team member followed by other odd jobs and a prolific and successful career as a self-taught professional photographer are only the beginning of his accomplishments. Bruce was also a semi-pro motocross bike racer for years, an avid outdoorsman, volunteer firefighter, a dog lover, a father, a husband and all around great human being. His photography was often war correspondence focused having spent years embedded with the Mujahideen in Afghanistan during their war with the Soviets and the

anti-government guerilla groups in Burma...he has seen it all. He now prefers the seclusion and peace of the mountains. His property sits on a mountain slope punctuated by a turn of the previous century farmhouse, garage ports for his Jeeps, sheds for bunnies and chickens and several other structures. This new landscape has been the focus of his most recent photographic essays including a third volume on its way from the printers. Inside the cozy house lives Bruce along with his son Brendan, wife Debra and the pack of dogs of which Bruce is the sometimes leader. No comic art on his walls, only 19th century oils but there is a treasure filled room on the second floor that is neatly cluttered with bags, backing boards, mylars, packages, portfolios and art. Our own



Michael Finn, who has also visited with Bruce, calls him the recluse on the mountain. Bruce admits that even some of the locals who pretty much keep to themselves refer to him as the hermit on the mountain. He has explored, climbed, hiked, off-roaded and photographed the back country and surrounding areas so extensively that even the locals who were born and raised here defer to Bruce's expertise in these matters despite him having only been a resident for a decade. Bruce is the most modest and humble of people and unless someone told you he was a photographer or art collector, it is unlikely he would volunteer that information nor would he talk about his collection despite how extensive it is.



I visited with Bruce for a full day with two half days on either side. It was almost a four hour

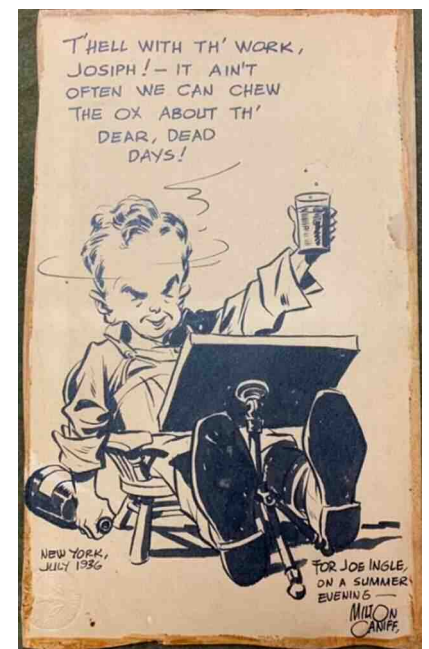


drive through some beautiful and at times alien landscape from Reno, the nearest airport. In addition to overloading my brain with comic art, we managed to go off-roading up the mountains that tower over his property as well taking a tour of the valley he lives in which is aptly called Surprise Valley. Not comic art related so I won't go into detail but needless to say, it left quite an impression which is not easy with me having grown up an hour's drive from Banff, Canada.

Haley is a private collector and you won't find a presence for him on CAF nor will you find any social media presence. He does reach out to other collectors and his group of friends is quite large. He often helps out others who post inquiries on groups he clandestinely belongs to, so one of those helpful gremlins in the background making the hobby a better place.



It would be fair to say that Bruce has the most extensive, diverse and obscure comic strip collection I've ever seen. It has been sometime since I saw Jordi Bernet's collection which I recall being massive but I suspect Bruce's is larger in terms of strip art. I know of a few other big European collectors too with big strip art collections but again I suspect Bruce would be pretty tough competition for them but who is competing anyways...it is about the love of art and there is a lot of love for art at Casa Haley! As we went through drawers, piles and stacks of comic strips that made me feel completely inadequate in my collecting, we kept unearthing rare treasures and gems that I'd never seen or heard of before. So many times this happened it reminds me of when I first really got into strip art collecting and didn't know my ass from a Mutt and Jeff. It was very energizing to see this art and to be reminded of how much more I still have to learn. Not only breadth of collecting but depth. The number of *Tailspin Tommy's* and *Annie Rooneys* that Bruce has might eclipse my entire comic strip art collection alone before we even get into the bigger strip titles like *Terry and the Pirates*. There are some great specialty pieces Bruce has including a few things he has allowed me to share. One is Milton Caniff's personal bottle and tumblers that Milt travelled with for drinking which includes the original 50's TWA tags. There is also a special certificate given to George Wunder for the service he provided to the US military though his work on the *Terry and the Pirates*. Such cool stuff. For the Caniff fans in the group there is also the raciest of the Male Calls, Dickie Dare and Caniff ghosted *Dumb Dora* signed by Dwyer. So much other great stuff but not my beans to spill.



He tells me that there is also a documentary being made about him and his career as a photographer. Here is an interview I did with Bruce via email after our visit but much of the material was covered during our in person discussions.



**Tell me how you found comic art collecting and what were your first pieces?**

I was born in 1957, and at a very young age I was buying Marvel comics out of the spinner racks, along with the first issues of Warren magazines like Creepy and Eerie and Gilbert Shelton's Wonder Wart-Hog, etc., off of the stands. By 1967 I had been fully brainwashed by Stan and was a good little Marvel Zombie. I amassed quite a collection of comics, but around 1973/1974 my interest tapered off - I was in high school and my main focus at the time was motocross racing. And to be honest, although it sounds like blasphemy to many collectors, what was happening with Marvel and the newer artists in the early years of the Bronze Age just didn't resonate with me, so after all of that time and all of that dedication, I just stopped buying comics.

Fast-forward to 1990 or 1992, and I was spending a lot of time in London. I remember that one winter day I had left the British Museum around dusk and was walking back to where I was staying, and I happened to pass the Forbidden Planet comics shop. In the window were large posters of Simon Bisley's work on "Slaine the Horned God," and I stopped in my tracks. I remember thinking "Wow, is this what comics look like now?" The painted art was so good that it reminded me of the '60s again, when I was collecting fantasy and sci-fi paperbacks just for the Frazetta and Jeff Jones covers. So I went inside - and that's when I re-entered the world of comics.

Not long after that I was on eBay and just by accident saw some Biz art for sale, and bought my first piece of original comic art. I had never even thought about owning the originals before; I hadn't the faintest inkling that it was even something that could be done, or was offered. It makes sense when you think about it, but I had never even considered it before - and I had never been to a comics convention, and didn't have any friends into comics either, so the notion of OA never really had the chance to penetrate into my psyche prior to that.

**How has sourcing your art changed in the past 20-30 years? Where did you get most of your art from in the beginning compared to now? Why comic art and not other fine art or photography when it comes to collecting?**

In the beginning it was mostly eBay, back when it was the Wild West and there was comic art galore to be had. Obviously there's much less opportunity there now, but if you keep an eye on it you can still find the occasional gem amidst all of the color guides and forgeries and amateur porn drawings of Velma Dinkley and Wilma Flintstone.

Through several decades of collecting I've bought from most of the dealers and some other collectors, but I would say that the majority of my collection has come through eBay or the auction houses.

As to the "why" of it - I'm not sure how to answer that, to be honest. Once I opened the Pandora's Box it just sucked me in and the addiction grabbed me and has never loosened its grip. And unlike many (or most?) OA collectors, my collection is not nostalgia based and never has been. With probably 90+% of my art I was either not alive when it was first published, or I have never read it in published form.



**What else do you collect? I recall some rocks, jackalopes and Heritage packaging. :>)**

I suppose it depends upon how you define the word "collect." In my own mind, I suppose my comic art is the only thing that I would consider a true "collection" - and yet as you've seen when you visited here, I have quite a large book library and massive amounts of music, and I think most people would consider those to be "collections" just based upon sheer volume.

**How would you describe your collection and your collecting goals?**

If I had to describe my collection, I would say that it looks like it should belong to multiple different people with very different ideas of what they want! I admire those who can adhere to a laser-focus, and I've attempted that at varying times, but at this point in my life I've given up entirely.

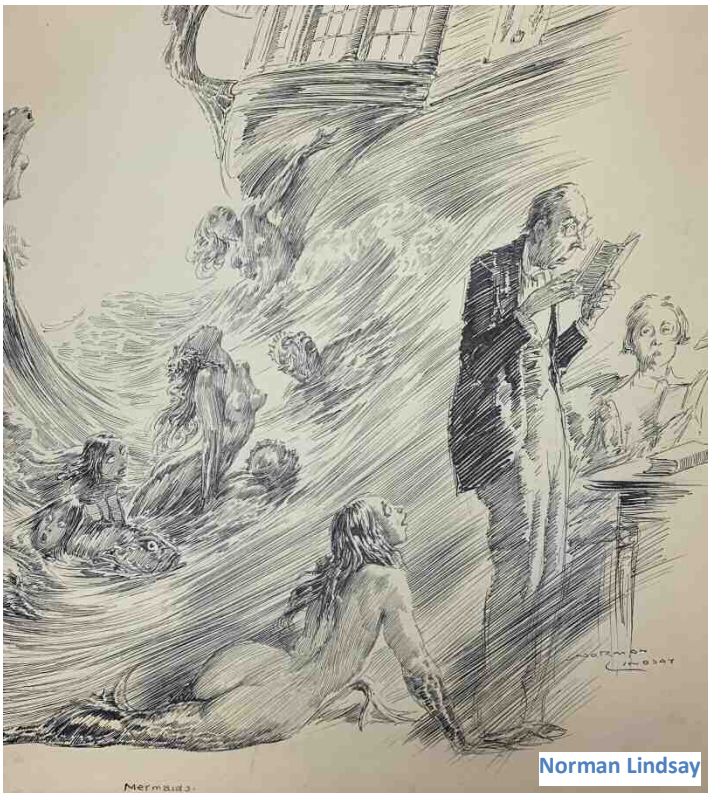
Now if I'm pinned down for a description I just say "historic" - meaning that you can trace the history of the cartoon medium right here, with comic strip and comic book and illustration and editorial and political art, from the 19th century to now, from people like Arthur Rackham to Herriman and McCay and Foster and Raymond up to King Kirby and on to newer guys like Tradd Moore.

As far as collecting goals - I suppose that I do see and feel a few gaps here and there that need filling, as in examples of artists I like whose work is not yet represented in my collection, or where I would like better examples from someone, that sort of thing.

**What are the three pieces you are most proud to have found and own?**

That probably changes depending upon the day or hour that the question is asked!

**How about the three rarest?**



That would be extremely difficult to narrow down as well, since I have a lot of early strip art where perhaps only a few examples have survived, or I have only seen one or two examples surface in several decades of collecting. One of the aspects of the hobby that I have focused upon is finding the earliest examples I possibly can of both artists and titles. I love burrowing into Platinum Age art especially.

I also have a very large amount of Golden Age comic book art, and many complete stories as well. It pleases me that so much of this art has survived, when it was for the most part considered so disposable back then. Imagine considering a Lou Fine "Black Condor" page as something to be casually tossed away!

For "rare" I often point out that I have the first comic book appearance of "Thor, God of Thunder" - I have the original art for the first appearance splash page from *Weird Comics* #1, published by Fox in April 1940. I'm very happy that it survived from an historic standpoint, and I'm pleased to be its caretaker - but it is also the butt of many jokes from me, because Thor's anatomy on this splash is absurdly wonky and the art is pretty awful from an objective standpoint, even by early Golden Age standards. Pierce Rice was never the greatest Golden Age artist to begin with, but this splash lowers the bar considerably.

So for the collector who just paid 130k for the infamous Liefeld Cap, who now has bragging rights to something that is considered one of the worst examples of the comic art medium, I can say that my splash gives it a run for its money! I'll put Pierce's Thor side-by-side against Rob's Cap any day!

**If you could go back, what would you collect differently? Similarity, what advice would you give to yourself starting out from the perspective of someone that has weathered decades of collecting?**

I'm not one to spend much time looking backward - what's done is done. Like most OA collectors, I have regrets about many things



that I've sold through the years, but there's nothing to be done about it so I don't dwell much on it at all. I've shifted focus a few times and sold off pieces that in retrospect I would love to still have in my collection, but I can't complain. We're all just fortunate to have the cash flow to be able to play in any part of this sandbox, and to be temporary caretakers of these objects that we love.

As for advice for newbies - this is being written for the CFA-APA, so I hardly think anyone reading this would qualify! But seriously, I think this hobby has a long learning curve, so you can either just dive off the deep end and learn by experience, as I suspect most of us have done, or you can proceed with caution and discipline. The latter might be best, but I doubt that most of us who were gripped by "the fever" have done all that well in the discipline department.

***In addition to the classic strips and golden age art, you collect a lot of newer artists. How do you find them and what makes you decide which ones to collect?***

I have a voracious appetite for the hobby that time and age don't seem to dampen, so I'm always on the lookout for something new to like; unfortunately for my wallet, however, that usually translates into something new to buy as well!

Basically I look at everything on CAF and rep and dealer sites and etc. etc., the new and young artists, and just see if something stylistically catches my eye. There are a lot of artists doing interesting work these days, if we keep an open mind. Obviously the Felix stable is a major success story in how to select and market new talent.

***You developed quite a network of friends and contacts in this hobby, how important do you think that is to your enjoyment of the hobby but also as a resource for when you need help?***

One of the major side benefits of this hobby are the friends I've made through the years. I've usually lived in rural or remote places and have rarely gone to any conventions, so the groundwork for these friendships has begun through emails and phone calls. Occasionally a collector such as yourself will make the trek out here and actually visit me. Michael Finn has been here twice, and even brought his wife the second time.

There is a small group of collectors who I email with pretty much on a daily basis. We find things for each other, discuss upcoming auctions, discuss the merits of pieces, do detective work, and etc. etc. It's great fun and I love it, although I do have a whole other "real life" that needs time and attention as well!

***Despite you not collecting any Archie art, this is an Archie themed issue so I'll ask Betty or Veronica? If you prefer you can answer the Star Wars vs. Star Trek question instead!***

Definitely Betty - no question about it. Imagine trying to keep high-maintenance Veronica happy during a marriage! That would drain your bank account, with no money left for original comic art (unless you got her old man's dough as part of the deal, but he doesn't seem all that anxious to part with it).



***As a professional photographer, you have an eye for certain things and details. How much do you think that lens shapes your interest in what you collect and conversely, does comic art shape how you find and take photographs? Perhaps even on a subconscious level?***

As I mentioned before, I don't collect out of nostalgia - there's a focus upon rarity and early examples, where "rare" and/or "early" will often trump artistic merit, but for the most part my decisions to buy are usually based upon the art itself. The good part of that, and whatever I can consider to be "my eye" and the role that it plays in my collecting decisions, is that very often there is some small thing in the art - even with artists I greatly admire - that will be a deal-breaker for me. And it can be really small - often something as simple as the way a face or nose is drawn, it just hits me the wrong way and I can then easily pass over that piece. This happens to me all the time - it might be an

otherwise great piece by a master like Raymond or Foster or Kirby, but then I see one small aspect that bugs me, and I can then move on. Given my wide-ranging collecting interests, this is actually a really good thing for my wallet.

As for comic art having an influence in my photography career, I've always tried to mention Jack Kirby when I've given talks and interviews, etc. Being young and immersed in his "Kirby Tech" certainly planted the seeds for my love of industrial photography, the wonder and awe found in vast mechanical landscapes and the idea of bringing beauty to the complexity of machine form in two dimensions (especially since I was aware of Jack long before I knew of the Precisionists).

*We talked extensively during my visit about curation, storage, preservation, organization, conservation and ultimately disposition of the collection when the time comes. I'm curious to your thoughts on these topics a few days later. You have given me a lot to think about too. Having seen your collection it reminds me of my collection on a smaller scale a few years ago which I loved but also felt lost to some extent. In recent years my collection has shrunk but gained some purpose and direction and it is something I feel more satisfied about but seeing so much cool stuff makes me rethink those goals and approach and maybe I should go back to getting all the stuff I like and forget about the artificial rules I put in place to guide me. I am not sure one can do both and I suspect the answer lies in the middle but probably closer to one side than the other depending on the individual.*

Well, as we discussed and as you saw, I'm definitely not as organized in the storage aspect as I would like to be! Honestly, just by sheer volume it's sort of overwhelming now. I've been mulling over various ways to better utilize the space and thus have better organization - so that I can actually find any specific piece in a relatively timely fashion. That would be nice.

As for ultimate disposition of a collection - I think we are all concerned with that, or at least we should be, as we are only temporary caretakers of these one-of-a-kind items. I have a family, so I hope to just die and dump this massive lot of books and music and art on them! Actually I plan to be around for quite a while yet, and hope that things work out in the long run where I can pass my OA collection down to my son on a stepped-up basis, and he can consign it all to an auction house and make some dough out of it.

*You have a large focus on rare and older pieces. There may not be a lot of collecting momentum for those pieces but they are historically important. We talked about how the Lucas museum might change the public's collective acceptance to sequential art as a legitimate art form and how important these pieces will be. Perhaps you could talk a bit more about your thoughts here.*

I think we are to a certain extent already seeing the beginning of this, as sequential art gets more attention both in the museum/gallery/fine art worlds as well as in the wider culture at large. Obviously the Lucas Museum could be a huge game-changer, but that remains to be seen.

If you weren't alive in what we collectors know as the Platinum Age and the Golden Age, then few people realize just how influential those



Dumb Dora ghosted by Caniff

early comic strips and comic books were, and how much they contributed to popular jargon and cultural references of the day. This is our history, and an important aspect of it at that, and we are custodians of the originals that planted those seeds.



I can only hope that increased acceptance of the sequential art form will spur an increased interest in the entire history of the medium, which in turn will increase the amount of scholarship on the subject. And if taken to its logical conclusion, should it mirror the trajectory of the fine art world, then our collections (or portions of them) should be worth more money!

**Any words for Michael Finn?**

Not that you could print in a family-friendly publication like this!

Seriously, he's one of my best friends, even though I know that he's just waiting for me to die so he can inherit my two huge Black Cat splashes!!!

After leaving Bruce and with the mountain in the rear-view mirror, the snow later fell that afternoon and so my timing couldn't have been better. I headed to Reno so I could spend a night in a hotel that was spitting distance from the airport so I could walk over early for my 6 am flight to Houston. Tom Coker picked me up and we headed back to his place in his older Toyota Tacoma pick-up truck. I'll stick to the original art themes of this trip too but suffice to say the weekend was full of authentic Texan food, alcohol, live music, thrifting and adventures. That first evening we had a few drinks and looked at Tom's art both in portfolios and on his walls. There was a lot of quality stuff to see including a Wally Wood EC cover, Byrne X-Men DPS and a Dave Stevens Rocketeer Pin-up. We were up until 5 am talking about art and drinking. I think I get by on little sleep but Tom beats me. He got up early to take care of some work material before we went out



for the day. We met up

Richard and Michael of BedRock Comics for lunch and then headed back to their main store to hang out for a bit and see some art on their walls including EC splashes and a Frazetta painting. I am not a comic book guy anymore but I couldn't help geeking out over the boxes of high and in many cases best graded copies of the Marvel Mystery run and other key Timely comics. I bought a few manga books and after having Bruce give me a few of his photography books I knew I was in for some trouble getting home with the booty. I figured I'd just mail a box to myself and that

let me go a little crazy at the comic shop sale. In the end I bought a new suitcase I checked in that made the most economical sense for getting all the crap I bought home.



That second evening we met up Tom's girl, Tiffany, and went to a trendy high end night club that had some interesting Halloween costumes and dancing. The parking lot might have been the most impressive part of it all. There were over a half dozen Lambos, a few Ferraris, more McLaren's



than I have seen before in one place plus a few other super cars. Not my thing but still impressive. The next day we planned a road trip to



Austin to see some live music. Stopping in the local Buc-ee's gas bar to load up on snacks for the trip...I mention this only because it was impressive. Probably 40 fuel pumps but the equivalent store space of two side-by-side Walmarts and all they had were snacks and some food...in Texas they do everything BIG! It was packed. We experienced some cool music at the world famous Continental club including the son of the lead for the Texas Tornados doing his father's songs and a hillbilly punk band called the Hickoids that left us deaf for about 24 hours. We hung out with the band out behind the club after the show for a bit before heading back to the hotel for some late night dominoes. That got shut down by security who told us 2 am was too late to hang out poolside so we called it a night. The next day was thrifting and hitting some local comic and record shops. Austin has a really cool alternative vibe to it, much like Portland and that totally works for me. In addition to adding some new western and casual wear in my wardrobe, we ended up with a few new comics and Tom added a few new items of vinyl to his collection.



Frito Chili Pie

The Austin Books and Comics was a fantastic store. In my recent tours of comic shops this one ranks right up there with some of the best. It is no Beguiling but what is? A really great shop that had lots of everything including classic strip art reprints books and indie books. The two books I wanted to find they did not have as I wanted to give Tom a copy of **Crisis Zone** and I was looking for the Patrick McDonnell Superhero book but none to be had. We came back and the following day we met up with a few art collectors for a dinner near Tom's place at another fun spot. Some pretty big collectors and some interesting ones came out for a few hours. No art as we were eating again but lots of good conversations and getting to know some new people. For those that don't get the chance to go and hang out with other collectors of art, you really should as it is the most fun you can have...talking about stuff you like with people who like the same stuff or slightly different stuff but get everything you talk about. It was a lot of fun.



Steve Lawrence, Joseph, Tom, Will T, Jeremy Stone and myself

bars by the time the whole 5 days were over. I am alive, I have some new stuff and I have a story to tell...that is my definition of a successful trip.

What I haven't told you about and I'll keep it short was how fun the trip was. My diet went out the window and we ate so many things and in the best places like Texas barbeque at Smitty's in Lockhart, Tx. Chicken fried steak at the Gristmill in Gruene, Tx, mexican breakfast tacos at Korra in Austin, TX, frito chili pie and the Pit Room in Houston, TX, beef jerky, gumbo, jerky, pork rinds, salt water taffy and just about everything else Texan we could. Tom being a native knew all the best places and the food was incredible. We saw a fair bit of live music too and we must have spent time in about a dozen



Jerry and I

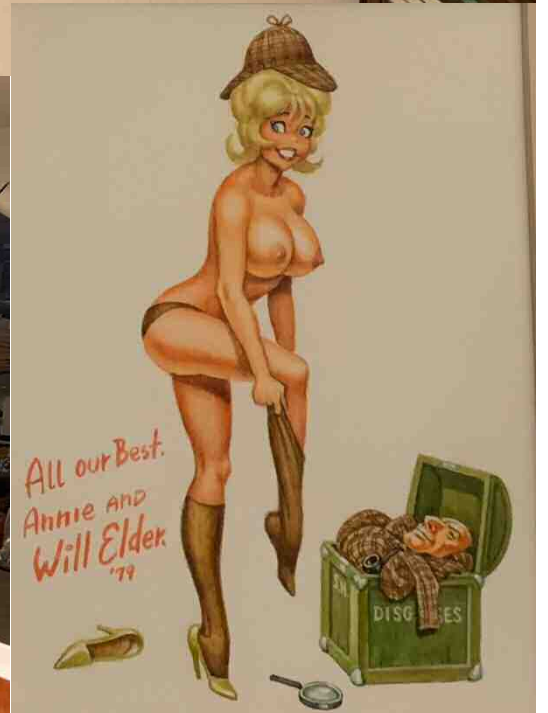
huge Sherlock Holmes and Arthur Conan Doyle collector and this is where most of his interest in comic and illustration art stems from. To that end he has or has had things

A month prior to this trip, I did a trip out to Portland to visit with a few friends and attend the Rose City Comic Convection and then to Vancouver to see my mother and sisters. The trip started out as using Rose City to get me to Portland so I could spend time with Brett Bjornsrud and Jerry Margolin, both long-time friends and both I have visited before on a trip to Emerald City Comic con a number of years before Covid. I arrived in Portland on a Wednesday evening and took an Uber to visit with Jerry first. I don't recall how I first met Jerry but it was online. He is a



Godwin



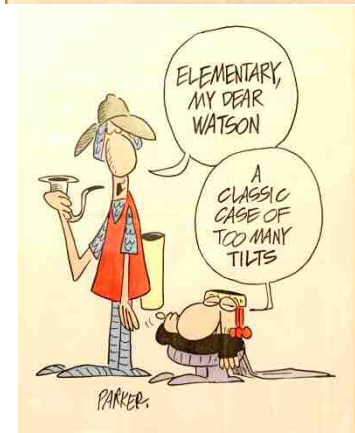


like the Peanuts with Snoopy wearing the detective cap and writing Hounds of the

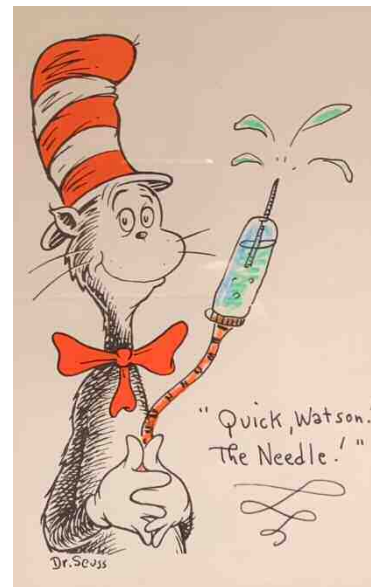
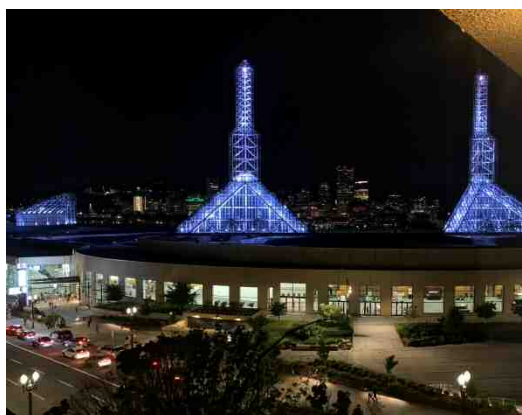




Baskerville which Jerry had something to do with being created after he reached out to Sparky and got him on the phone. Jerry was very good at getting to meet and know artists. He was good friends with Will Elder, Gahan Wilson and quite a few others and has many pieces in his collection from them. I have permission to share some of Jerry's treasures with you and I decided to show you the specialty pieces he has had done by various comic artists you may know. There is so much more to his collection and we didn't even hit the portfolios, just the art on the wall. His wife has always been very accommodating and their house is filled with displayed art. She told me she once did a talk at a Sherlockian conventions about living with a collector and called it *Living in a Museum*. Rightly so. You can see Jerry and I have very similar art hanging styles with a disdain for empty spaces! We hung out for a few hours and then I took another Uber to my hotel. On Friday about noon Brett came down to meet me at the hotel and we did a walking tour of part of Portland, it is a very walkable city. The homeless issues we hear about on the west coast were there but not really as bad as the news often makes it out to be...an issue none the less for those unfortunate people. We decided to walk to the old Asylum food truck area and stop at a few comic shops on the way. The food trucks and a beer were a great lunch and start to the day. We went to Excalibur Comics first which was a bit more of a traditional comic shop that had a solid 90's feel to it. Lots of back issues and wall books and no CGC books that I recall seeing. That is one thing I like seeing at comic shops, comics you can read so the slabbed books are a real turn off for me. We asked about original art as I always do when I go into a shop...I am such an art fiend. From there we went to Future Dreams which is in the basement of a warehouse and it is a like a holder's dream. Stacks of books and other



material all over with some organization. On the wall they had two giant original art pieces which were copies of a Miller Dark Knight image and Elektra, each about 12 feet high. They had boxes of unbagged comics to flip through which was fun, I am trying to

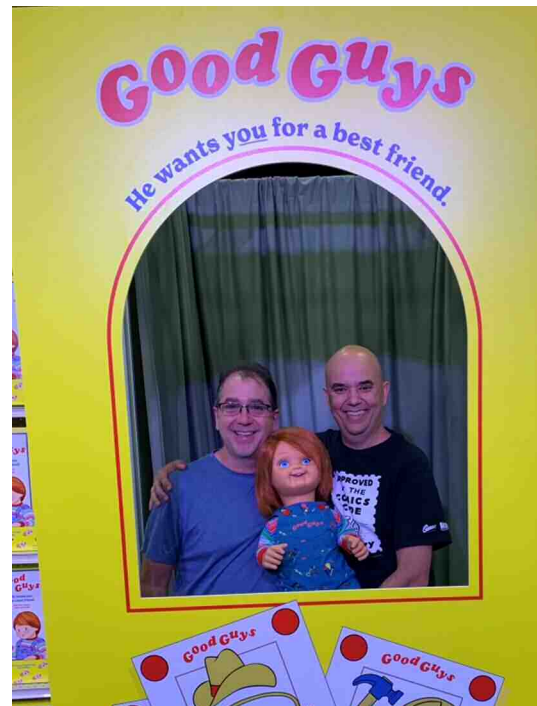




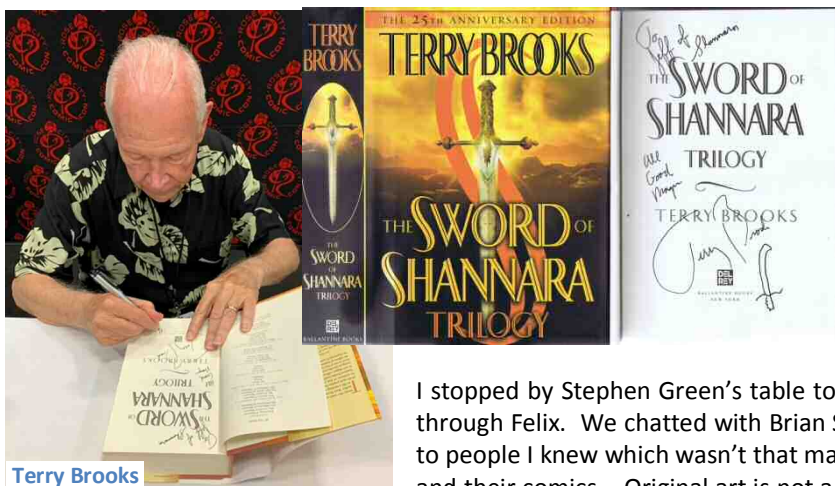


remember the last time I could flip through Marvel comics from the 80's and 90's that were not in bags. From there we walked up to Floating World Comics which I had been told was a must visit. It was in a large indoor shopping mall that had a lot of vacancies but the store was in a busier section. It was very well lit, bright, clean and organized. It was my kind of store as it really focused on independent and LGBTQ2SA material. Personally I like stores like this promoting the comics for the next generation of readers. Superheroes are not dead but should be relegated to a smaller section of comic world but that is a whole other discussion. I like the store and I came back on my last day to get some stickers. After leaving we went back to the hotel and got changed for dinner as we planned a tasting menu at a smaller restaurant

which wasn't too far from the food trucks we started the day at. It was a great meal and after we went to a bar to watch a few live bands and have a few beers before calling it a night and Brett stayed down that night. We got up on the Friday and the comic show didn't start until later in the day so we drove to Powell's books for their opening. I believe it to be the largest bookstore in the world but even if not, it is pretty darn big. What I liked most is that we were there about 5 minutes early and there were a few dozen people waiting to go in. It is so great to see people in book stores and to see a book store being busy. We ended up buying a few things and checking out their rare books collection. I bought Brett a copy of *Crisis Zone* and something else I think I have forgotten already. We decided to do a tour of other comic shops so we drove to Taste Cat, Books with Pictures and then on a bit of adventure to Vancouver to I Like Comics where they had a number of original art pieces on their wall. They were not for sale and owner of the shop was setting up at the convention so we couldn't discuss them with anyone but nothing that we really needed to have. From there we drove back to the Hotel and spent the day at Rose City convention which was across the street from the hotel I picked which was one of the convention hotels. The convention was fun. It was typical of the average medium to large convention. Mostly non-comics and a lot of craft and other vendors. The artist's alley was good and had a really good guest list for the show. For me the biggest thing at the show I wanted to do was to meet Terry Brooks who wrote the Shannara Trilogy which I read and reread so many times as a youth. It was a favorite and I incorporated a lot of what was done there



Brett, Chucky and I



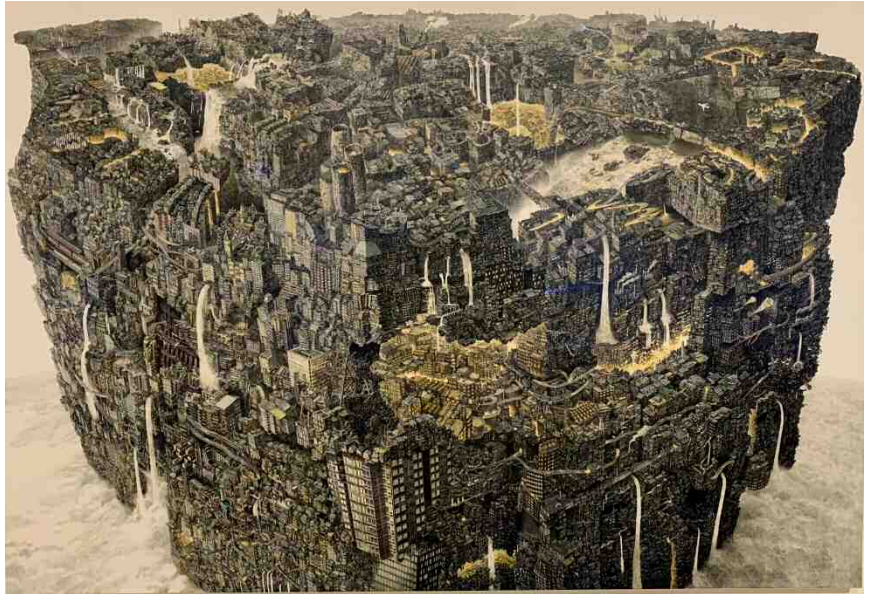
Terry Brooks

into my game play when I was Dungeon Master. I geeked out over that one. I got him to sign a copy of the Trilogy in hardcover I have had for some time. I still have my original copies of the second and third books but have lost the first one to the years. I had him dedicated to Jeff of Shannara and asked him to draw a little sword which he obliged. It made my day!

I stopped by Stephen Green's table to talk about the Corto Maltese commission he did for me through Felix. We chatted with Brian Stelfreeze for a bit and I handed out a few decks of cards to people I knew which wasn't that many at this show. It was fun seeing the West coast dealers and their comics. Original art is not a big thing up here. I asked one dealer if they had original



art and his response was if they have it, it will be in the bin and it is alphabetical thinking original art was the title of a comic. That made me smile. That evening we had a nice rooftop dinner and then I said good bye to Brett. He was kind enough to gift me with a cool Casey Ruggles strip and I had brought him a Frank Godwin illustration as a gift.



The next day I had more time before my flight and so I took a walk over the Saturday market which Portland is famous for. It is an outdoor event under one of the bridges but sprawls out from there into a few streets. It was a lot of fun. I ended up with a few t-shirts, a new belt and a few hats and had the best tamales I've ever eaten. I actually spent more at the market than at the con. I went back to the show for another walk around and then headed off to the airport to fly to Vancouver.

It was a nice visit in Vancouver and it had been about 8 months since the last time I had gotten the Vancouver comic art collectors together so we set up another meet up. About 6 of us were there and it was a fun night. I had also gone to a few galleries in Vancouver and made the trek up the mountain to Whistler to see the Audain gallery which had an exhibition by a cool Japanese artist, Manabu Ikeda, who's art reminded me of manga-ka Matsumoto. I did hit up some Vancouver comic shops and it is a sad state of affairs. Unlike the vibrant Portland comic scene, it looks like comics are dying off in Vancouver. One of the stores was nice but several others were either going out of business or looked like they should. There was one cool shop though. It had been recommended to me by Peter from the Beguiling and it was in a new location. Bright and very much like the Portland stores with a focus on indie comics. They had a small original art gallery and had a nice exhibition of art up by Marc Bell for sale. I have been looking for a Bell for a while and although I came close, I didn't get anything this time. That is it for comic art travels so you are up to date.





Now for the part of the article I was putting off, not because I don't want to write about it, but because of its personal nature to me. I am going to talk about my friend John Biernat who passed away peacefully on September 14, 2023 after having a recent diagnosis of inoperable metastatic cancer. David did a nice job of summarising the facts of John's obituary in his last *In Memorandum* for Issue #120 so I won't repeat that. Of perhaps interest to us paper hounds is that the kind of cancer John had was rare and usually seen in people that work in the pulp and paper industry. The fact that John spent his entire life around old paper does make one ponder this coincidence. I did talk about and interview John for APA #100 which was before some of you were members and long enough ago that I don't expect anyone to remember what was said...I don't. Email me if you want a copy of the pdf.

I will tell you about the John I knew.

John was many things. He was an avid comic book collector, a collector of tear sheets, an original art enthusiast, a high-school teacher, a comic shop owner, a comic publisher, a father, a husband, a friend and forever a 10 year old boy at heart. Although cantankerous and difficult and often described as an asshole but a nice asshole, albeit a nice asshole, by many who knew him and worked for him, that was never my experience.

How I met John. I knew of the Dragon Lady Comic shop for years but hadn't visited it until much later. Opening in 1979 and finally closing 2012, it was a Toronto staple. At its prime it had 2 locations. The one on the trendy and busy Queen Street was primarily comics and related material and the one on Dundas was old paper, magazines and tear sheets. Over time the Queen Street location closed and the Dundas Street store became a hybrid of both. I had visited the hybrid Dundas store on one or two occasions before it was gone for good and by that time it had changed ownership a few years prior. I grew up in Calgary well away from the comic hub of Canada. I moved to Waterloo, Ontario which is about 70 miles from Toronto when I was 18 and without a car, my visits to Toronto were limited but I was fortunate to have locally Now and Then Books which was at one point the second oldest comic shop in North America and owned by the nicest and most enthusiastic comic collector I'd ever have the pleasure of knowing, my friend later in his life, Harry Kramer. I have written about Harry and Now and Then previously. Southern Ontario is blessed with such a rich and important comic history that few places can rival and is worthy of more discussion at another time. Back now to the Dragon Lady Comic shop. I never met John when he owned it, but I had met a few of his workers and they became friend overtime at a later stage in my collecting but John I didn't even know by name. The Dragon Lady Comic shop was the first time I'd come across the eponymous character's name, and I believe that is all I knew of her - not realizing it was actually a comic character. Fast forward a few years and I am now a comic art collector and becoming more interested in Terry and the Pirates. I have had a few Dragon Lady examples in my collection and I had bought a nice one on eBay locally and went down to pick it up the Dragon Lady shop. That is when I met his employees for the first time. Pictured later is the daily I bought there and wished I still had. A few years later and after having finally

read the run of Terry I had become a much bigger fan. I knew my favorite storyline was when Terry receives dancing lessons from the Dragon Lady so that he can impress April Kane at the big ball. There are only 3 or 4 dailies depicting the dancing lessons and only 2 or 3 at the ball dancing so not an easy find. I had heard through gossip that there was a strip art collector in the Kitchener-Waterloo area who was reclusive. At one of my get-togethers I got the information that this creature of legend was the former owner of the Dragon Lady comics. It made sense. I understood that he was difficult to reach and would only come out of his cave once a year for a small paper show in a forgotten part of Toronto. When I got the heads up that the show was happening I made a point of attending with the sole intention of meeting John. Armed with very little information I went to the show and started asking around. It took a half dozen inquiries before I found him. John was at his booth and was relatively busy but I managed to talk to him. I introduced myself and told him I was interested in Terry and the Pirates original art, and that I had heard that perhaps he might have some, or know where I might find some.



He looked me up and down and then said they are really expensive (this is not the first - or even second time I have been judged to be a pauper) to which I reply that I already know and own several. John studied me again with a bit more discernment and then replied "give me your contact information" which I promptly did, both email and phone number. That was the extent of our first contact. I am going to say that was about 11 or 12 years ago now. About a month later John calls me and gives me a list of about 5 strips he is thinking of selling. He gives me the dates as he has no scanner or phone to take pictures and so I write down the dates to go look them up later. We talk briefly about his upcoming birthday if I recall properly and I also mention to him that my favorite storyline is the dancing lessons one. He tells me that he has a great one and then puts down the phone to get the date to tell me but of course it is not for sale! After I have a chance to look at the 5 strips offered to me and the dancing one I call John back a few days later. The strips were nice but not anything that would add to my collection. Of course the Dragon Lady dancing was beautiful. It was one of the ones at the ball and not the lessons themselves. When I called John back I politely thanked him for offering me the strips but

decline them. I also said to him something to the effect that I will only say this once and never pester you but if you ever decide to let go of the Dragon Lady dancing strip, I will make you a more than generous offer. We say good-bye and I figured that was end of it. About 3 weeks later I get a call from John and he tells me to make the offer. I did so. He tells me he will think about it and it is about another 2 weeks before I hear back and he accepts. We were to meet and I was to bring a big wad of cash and go home with something I'd been dreaming about owning. All was right.



We arrange a time to meet and I go to John's house. A nice, 1930's two story with a developed 3<sup>rd</sup> story. Being a bachelor for many years, John had free reign of the art on his walls and there were Leyendeckers and Sickles placed alongside comic strips everywhere plus the most striking thing to me were large prints of Corto Maltese. Just in case you have never seen my CAF gallery or read my articles before...Corto Maltese is probably my favorite comic character. John and I hit it off. We talked and had tea for about two hours and our friendship had begun. After showing me around including another drop dead Dragon Lady strip he had, we settled down to business. I handed over fistfuls of cash and I got the piece which was framed with 2 two others. It was framed such that all 3 pieces were in the same window on the frame. When we took the frame apart we found that the framer John uses had used two-sided tape on the front of the art to adhere the boards together as well as the mat to the front of the boards! The horror! We did a sirens-blaring run to the framing shop to confront young April (my favorite Caniff female) about the situation. She looked at it and tried to take apart but couldn't. She suggested a restorationist in the adjacent city of Cambridge. We called over and drove over together. The art was left there with the conservator and I went home empty handed. So close....

A few weeks later the work was complete and so we went to pick it up. For about \$1000 the conservator had separated the board from the mat but all the glue and residue remained and the board were also still attached to each other. It would be several thousand more to get them undone completely if we went ahead with them. John was paying for this as he blamed himself and his framer for the situation. I took the boards home with the glue on them and tried a number of things. I finally figured out a technique to get the glue off and separate the boards. Each took about a half hour. It turned out to be a fruitful endeavor as I have had the misfortune of dealing with April's framing on over 50 pieces before she started using proper materials and techniques.

I returned the two extra strips to John and we made a visit of it. This became the format for our future visits. We would sit and have tea and catch up on the personal aspects of our lives. Then we would discuss some art and I'd often bring art to show John including portfolios and new acquisitions. When John liked something, there was never any doubt.... He had the biggest schoolboy smile you could imagine and John liked a lot of stuff! We had so many overlapping tastes but Caniff and Corto were our favorites. We were a fan club of two. These visits would continue on for a decade. Over time I bought a few things from John. I never got a good deal always overpaying but happy to do so as I knew where the money went. On the next page was that drop dead gorgeous Dragon Lady example John finally let go of to me about 4 years ago.







There were quite a few other pieces that I acquired from John during our decade long friendship. I also helped him sell over a dozen pieces over the years, many I wish I had bought myself but couldn't at the time. We did a few interesting trades but the one that was most important to me was I traded John my comic book collection for a single piece of art. I had about 75 long boxes of comics. I found that I was no longer visiting the boxes and the kids never have interest in reading comics but loved manga an anime. At some point I realized what a burden they were and started setting up at our local comic show, Fan Expo to sell them off. Over the 7 years I

set up I managed to sell off most of the keys I had and almost all of my golden age comics. I still had a near complete run of Daredevil and a few other titles but I decided to sell it all wholesale. I came up with a value of what I had remaining and decided to sell in bulk I'd be happy with about 20-25% of that value. I had talked with a dealer about it and I came close to a deal. On one of my visits with John I had mentioned I was looking at selling my collection and described it to him. He was interested. We talked about the value of it and he thought it was a great deal but didn't have the cash. I suggested a trade and this is what came of it. I got rid of all my comics (except for Heavy Metal Magazine and Cheval Noir for the European material), reclaimed a room (and a few walls to hang art on) and this piece. The provenance of this piece is interesting too. It was a gift to John from his long-time friend Al Williamson. It is likely this is one of the



Sundays Al saved from a dumpster years ago. It was given to John as a gift and so he said he would never sell it but a trade was something he could abide. That is the story of how I stopped being a comic collector and transitions to being only a comic reader....and an art fiend.

What was John going to do with 65 long boxes? Well, John still had an incredible inventory of comics from his days at the Dragon lady shop. He also ran a stall at the local farmer's market indoor pavilion selling old paper and comics on the weekends and did steady business there. He told me he had somewhere between 2500 and 2700 boxes of comics so my extra 65 would barely be noticed. When we agreed on the deal, John was at my house and I remember fitting about 16 long boxes in the car with him to take home that night. John was not a small man although his car was. I still remember him driving home not able to see out the passenger side of his car for all the boxes including the one partially on his lap. He made it home safely and I was able to borrow a van to drop off the remaining boxes at his warehouse and pick up the art a few days later. I have never regretted letting go of my comics and the relief I felt was incredible. In addition to friendship, that liberation from comics is one of the best gifts I received from John. The comics become more important in my story towards the end again.

Our monthly visits continued until Covid happened. The lockdowns in Canada were longer and more controlled than in parts of the other near-by countries. I visited John several times whenever the restrictions would allow. By this point he was getting weaker and had more mobility problems as his weight also became more of an issue. He could walk but getting up and moving was sometimes difficult. During Covid we did take out and ate at his house. After Covid we met a few more times but it was becoming harder to get him to commit to dates. Still we continued our routine with meeting up and then going for all-you-can-eat sushi which was John's favorite. Over the past year and a half John's medical problems had become more complex. I helped him get expedited eye surgery locally. Often, when I called, he was too tired to visit or had some pressing medical appointment that kept him anxious and unable to make plans. After almost a year I finally had plans to see John and confirmed with him 2 days prior and we were still on. I did phone on my way in to Kitchener as sometimes John would cancel last minute but I got no answer. I took my chances and I needed to make sure he was OK from my perspective. Just prior to me arriving I did get through to him on the phone and he said he needed a few minutes to get ready. After about 20 minutes at the door I tried the door knocker again and the phone. He answered the phone and seemed to have fallen asleep again. He would need a moment. This occurred for about 2 hours. I was about to call an ambulance for a wellness check on him when he came to the door. He told me that he had not been able to sleep the night before and went to sleep at 4 am. He looked to be in much poorer health than I had seen him a year ago. We talked and I stayed with him for about 2 hours. I was worried about him so I asked more about his situation. He revealed that he had Personal Support Workers coming in daily and had a lot of supports in place. He had something to eat while I was there and drank. I showed him my Corto Maltese page, it was the one grail we both had and it made him quite happy to see it. It is the first Corto Maltese either of us had seen in person. Due to lack of sleep I left him to take a nap and made sure I had contact information for his daughter and son-in-law and planned to contact them about my concerns. In my job I see a lot of people like John who can go home safely with supports and it seemed like he had enough in place that I didn't need to call an ambulance that day but wanted to be sure he was safe. Before I could call John's son-in-law, Steven phoned me. He reported that John had gone into hospital the next day. He had taken a turn for the worst after I left. In short order, John was diagnosed with sinus and brain cancer that had spread. The prognosis was palliative. It would be in pretty short order that they diagnosed a cancer that was inoperable and had spread and the prognosis was palliative. I did visit with John in hospital once and he was better at that time and we had a nice conversation. We visited for about a half hour and then he was tired again. It would be the last time I saw him. I did have the opportunity to see him once more, when he was semi-comatose, towards the end but chose not to, as that is not how I wanted to remember my friend.

During the time when John was in hospital I got to know Steven quite well and learned more about John's journey including a diagnosis of dementia and the subsequent loss of his driver's licence during COVID. John had been making poor business and financial decisions. John was always sharp with me and there were never any bargains with him. He was shrewd and calculated but apparently not with some dealings in his final years. There are a lot more details that are not for public consumption but suffice to say that Steven and Leslie inherited a financial and material mess. While he was still in hospital and awaiting palliative placement Steven and I started talking about John's art. John had always asked me to help the family out with the art when the time came and he had told Steven the same thing about me. I met with John's son-in-law and daughter, and we spend some time going over John's collection. Steven knows comics and knows how to find values and had already spoken with a few auction houses including Sotheby's who were particularly interested in John's large Leyendecker painting but not in the comic art. Other auction houses were and were offering favorable terms. I wanted to make sure Steven had an idea on values and so we walked around and I help identify what each piece of art was on the wall (about 200) and gave an off the top of my head estimate on value. At the end of the conversation I also told Steven that I might be in a position to make an offer on the entire collection. After doing his due diligence on my values and finding them to be fair we came to an agreement. It was something I could do with a loan. It was a big relief to me. John's collection is extremely important and it matters that it gets proper respect. Hopefully I am the right person to do that and preserve this aspect of his legacy. I told Steven I will have to sell parts of the collection to make things work but I will do my best to keep core parts together. I will also do my best to make sure the art that I do sell goes into the right collections. This is important for me. I can't do that with everything but already that has been the case with selected art I have passed on to others. I have become the custodian of this art, which is a greater responsibility than I have as caretaker of my current collection, and I take the responsibility quite seriously.



Other things you should know about John are that his love for comic strips was contagious. He started publishing strip art reprints in the mid 1980's under the Dragon Lady Press. These are among the first collected reprints ever made and they found their way all over the globe. I have friends in France, Italy and UK who fondly remember their copies of these books. In total, these volumes numbered about two dozen. Often they would have a new cover and some new art inside to supplement the books. It can't be overstated how critical these books were in keeping strip art in the public eye and preventing the art form from disappearing into obscurity. Milton Caniff called John "the keeper of the flame".

John also ran comic conventions in the 1980's in Toronto and traveled to others. He would bring in guests like Alex Toth and Al Williamson with whom he was great friends with. Toth would go on to produce well over a dozen covers and pin-ups for John's reprints. I have several of these to share with you as do I have some other covers. He was also good friends with Ken Steacy, June Brigman and Brett Blevins among others. Here is a poster for a 1988 convention John hosted signed by Todd and other artists.

John had the pleasure of meeting up with Milton Caniff on a few occasions over the years. He recalled one of the New York City meetings and he had been at the DC office chatting with Joe Kubert and I want to say Gil Kane, though it might have been another well-known artist and he mentioned he was going to go meet up with Milt. The guys were in awe and when John invited them along they couldn't get their coats on fast enough. John would bring a handful of dailies with him to these meetings and Caniff would write some nice dedications on them to John.



As I mentioned before, people liked John but perhaps not always the way he treated them. He could be mean or grumpy or dismissive but perhaps not always in a purposeful way. Even those that worked for John for decades had the same impression but had learned to accept that how he was and it wasn't a reflection on them and he was a good person. These less positive experiences others had with John were not mine. John was always kind and friendly with me. The occasional joke which was part of his humor but never angry and I never felt unwelcomed. I think part of this is because I entered into our relationship a well heeled collector already and that we shared the love of two more obscure parts of the hobby. We could be friends and I wasn't seen a customer or competitor but someone who could discuss Crepax, Gibrat, Pratt, Herge, Kirby, King, Raymond, Foster and Frazetta with.

So, it is under these unfortunate circumstances that I have come into possession of these pieces. It is bittersweet as they are pieces I will cherish, all the more so knowing from whom they came. I will miss my friend, our monthly meetings, our fan club of two and that 10 year old inside my friend John. It gives me peace of mind that the collection is in good hands and I have been told by Steven and Leslie are also glad it worked out this way as this would have been in keeping with John's wishes.

There won't be enough space to show you all the art I got from John so I am going to show it over the next few issues but will show you the Milton Caniff material this time and perhaps a few highlights.

John's first love of comic strips was Milton Caniff and Terry and the Pirates. We both shared a love of the pre-war years. I liked Normandie Drake and April Kane (Brunettes I guess this ties into the title of his article) while John loved Burma. It was his favorite relationship in the strip and we had many long discussions about this and the Pat Ryan and Normandie Drake affair which was my second favorite after the April Kane and Terry one. So, it is only fitting that I start with one of the highlights in John's collection. The first week of Burma. To put this into context and to tie into some other dailies I will show later, this part of the story line happens after the debutante Normandie Drake falls for the ruffian Pat Ryan and Pat proposes to her and she accepts. That very night her scheming aunt has her kidnapped and shipped far away to prevent this. When pat finds out he is devastated. He gets on a boat with Terry and Connie and just leaves. They are attacked by pirates in one of the greatest sequences in Caniff's run (I didn't buy one on Heritage when they came up) and end up shipwrecked on a deserted island.





5 TERRY

HUNGRY, THIRSTY AND TIRED, THE BOYS FALL ASLEEP ON THE BEACH - HOURS PASS - THEN TERRY WAKES WITH A START...

WHUZZAT?

PAT! WAKE UP!

HUH? - WHAT'S EATIN' YOU, TERRY?

LISTEN, PAL! DO YOU HEAR IT?

HEAR WHAT? - ARE YA GOIN' CRAZY?

NO! NO! - BE QUIET - LISTEN A MINUTE! - DO YOU HEAR IT?

... WHY - WHY - SURE I HEAR IT! - IT'S MAGIC! - SOMEBODY'S PLAYIN' A RECORD OF TH' ST. LOUIS BLUES!

A HANDY TUNE IN A TOUGH SPOT

6 TERRY

A LONELY ISLAND ON TH' CHINA COAST - AN' SOMEBODY'S PLAYIN' A RECORD OF TH' ST. LOUIS BLUES!

OR IT MIGHT BE A RADIO! - ANYWAY IT'S PEOPLE COME ON!

HUH! WHERE GO? HOW COMES? - IS DREAM?

NO DREAM! - WE'VE GOT NEIGHBORS! - AN' IF THEY'VE GOT A PHONOGRAPH, THEY'VE GOT A CAN O' BEANS! - SHAKE A LEG!

YIPPEE! - A HOUSE AND A LIGHT! - RUN, YOU BEACHCOMBERS! - LAST MAN THERE GETS THE LEAVINGS!

I'LL KNOCK ON THE DOOR!

WAIT, PAT! LOOK! - IN TH' WINDOW!

WELL FER MERCY GOO'NESS, AN' NO FOOLIN'S!

PAUSE TO PERUSE



1 TERRY

FOR JOHN - THE BOY BURMA WAS BORN!

Best wishes Mother Corniff April 1966

VEIN OF PLATINUM AMONG THE ROCKS

TERRY, PAT AND CONNIE ARE AWAKENED BY THE DISTANT SOUND OF A PHONOGRAPH OR RADIO, PLAYING "ST. LOUIS BLUES"

RUNNING UP FROM THE BEACH, THEY SEE A HOUSE... APPROACHING THE LIGHTED WINDOW, THEY STOP SHORT...

LET'S ASK FOR SOME FOOD! - I'M STARVED!

WELL! WELL! WELL! WELL!

WHAT'S TH' HOLDUP? HEY! - IS THAT REAL - OR AM I DREAMIN'?

AN' WE THOUGHT THIS WAS A DESERTED ISLAND! - HMMM!

... AND IT'S LITTLE WONDER THE BOYS ARE SURPRISED - FOR INSIDE THE LONELY HOUSE THEY SEE...



2 TERRY

LUVVA PETE! - A PRETTY BLONDE, DANCIN' ALONE TO TH' ST. LOUIS BLUES ON AN ISLAND IN TH' CHINA SEA! KNOCK ON TH' DOOR, PAT!

TRY AN' STOP ME!

HUH? WHO'S THERE?

DON'T BE ALARMED LADY! - OUR BOAT CRACKED UP ON THE ROCKS! - WE'RE HUNGRY BUT HARMLESS!

WALK IN WITH YOUR HANDS HIGH! - IF YOU'RE LYIN' I'LL FEED YOU LEAD!

WELL IF IT WAIN'T ROBINSON CRUSOE AN HIS MEN FRIDAY AND SATURDAY! - GAV YOUR PIECE BOYS! - EVEN IF IT'S PHONEY I'LL BE GLAD TO HEAR SOMEBODY SPEAK ENGLISH!

PUTTING THE PANHANDLE ON A PEACH



3 TERRY

SO YOU WERE WRECKED IN TH' STORM - YOU HEARD MY MUSIC BOX AND HERE YOU ARE! - BUT WHO ARE YOU? - WHERE DID YOU COME FROM?

WHY, WE WERE ON BOARD - 'MATTER PAT?

WHY - AH - WE WERE JUST OUT SAILING WHEN THE WIND PILED US UP! MY NAME IS PAT RYAN, THIS IS TERRY LEE AND OUR CHINA BOY IS CALLED CONNIE!

I GET IT - YOU DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT YOURSELVES - OKAY BY ME! - BUT YOU'D BETTER HAND OVER THAT GUN!

BUT-

NOW DON'T GET HEROIC! - I'M GLAD TO HAVE SOMEBODY TO TALK TO - BUT I WANT THE CANNONS ON MY SIDE IN CASE OF AN ARGUMENT!

YOU WIN, LADY! - HERE IT IS! - NOW THE FAMILY JEWELS ARE SAFE!

DISARMING CREATURE

5 TERRY

WELL, MISS BURMA, THANKS FOR AN EXCELLENT DINNER!

OOO... SMOO MIKE! - ALL FULLISH! - YEAH, MISS - IT WAS SWELL!

- AND WE SHAN'T TROUBLE YOU ANY LONGER, SINCE YOU PROBABLY DON'T WANT YOUR PRIVACY DISTURBED! - IF YOU'LL GIVE ME MY GUN, WE'LL GO!

ARE YOU KIDDIN' ME, BIG RELISH?

NOT AT ALL! - WE'LL MAKE CAMP SOMEWHERE AND LEAVE ON YOUR NEXT SUPPLY BOAT!

THEN YOU AISE SERIOUS! - LISTEN! - I'LL PUT YOU WISE TO SOMETHIN'!

... NO SUPPLY BOATS PUT IN HERE! - REGULAR STEAMERS SHY FROM THIS ISLAND BECAUSE OF TH' ROCKS! - YOU'RE NOT GOIN' ANY PLACE - JUST MAKE YOURSELVES AT HOME!

WHO COULD REFUSE THIS LADY?



Here is another great sequence. Burma trying to get some attention from Pat and in the end having to resort to other methods.





More Burma, the first sequence only has her in the final of the 3 but presents better as a sequence. These have moved on to the collection of a fellow collector but are shown here for completeness. Both sequences of 3 have also moved on to collectors.





Terry gets a kiss from his "sister" that he will never forget and the rivalry between Burma and Raven heats up but when in a pickle they come together as seen in the subsequent sequence of 2 which leads into the death of Raven Sherman.





Speaking of the Death of Raven Sherman, here is the day after they burry her. I have previously bought the dailies from John that lead up to her death. The actual day she dies and her burial are at the Billy Ireland Museum where they belong



Finally, a Sunday with Burma tied up again. There seems to be a reoccurring theme.





Now for the Normandie Drake romance with Pat. I already have a good selection of these, many were from John in the past but here are the new ones including a sequence where he proposes.





In the last portion of the sequence above you see the kidnapping of Normandie and below is Pat's reaction. Below that I have included a Terry I bought a few years ago at auction that nicely ties up this storyline and brings us full circle to the beginning of Burma. The final panel of the devastated Ryan was among John's favorites.



Here are other Terrys by Caniff and after this I'll stop with John's collection for this issue and leave a bit of room for mailing comments. First some action after all that drama and then a Dragon Lady and a Sunday to end it off.









**TERRY**  
AND THE PIRATES  
by MILTON CANIFF

HERE COME THE MEDICAL AUTHORITIES TO EXAMINE THE CHOLERA CASES! HAVE YOU SEEN BLAZE?

NOO, I DO RECALL HIM SCOORYN' BELOW ABOUT AN HOUR AGOO!

THE OLD RASCAL SHOULD HAVE CLEARED OUT! THE BRITISH WILL RECOGNIZE HIM AS CAP'N BLAZE, THE PIRATE!

WOT LUCK! HIT'S RAININ'! WITS UP, BLAZE, ME LAD! ...THIS 'ERE SAIL CLOTH WILL DO TH' DEED!...

...AN' THIS MOP 'ANDLE ADDS A TOUCH!....

...H'LL "BORROW" A SUIT, SHIRT, 'AT AN' BOOTS FROM TH' CAPTAIN!

TH' BOOTS PINCHES A BIT...BUT THIS BE NO TIME T' BEEF ABOUT BUNIONS! NOW T' TH' DELICATE PART!

BLACK BOOT POLISH

MAKE FAST! I WILL EXAMINE THE CHOLERA PATIENTS AT ONCE!

PLEES TO ANNOUNCE ME TO THE CAPTAIN! EET EES PLABAIRE TO 'AVE HEEM BACK EEN 'ONGKONG!

SO SOON I 'EAR MY GUDE FRIEN' RETURN FROM THE SO HAZARD VOYAGE, I COME QUEEK! NOW WE RESUME THE PLAY OF CHESS!

GREAT HEAVENS, MAN! THIS BOAT IS BEING HELD IN STRICT QUARANTINE! THERE'S CHOLERA ABOARD!... WE TRIED TO KEEP IT QUIET! YOU MUST GO BEFORE YOU ARE EXPOSED!

BUT, M'SIEU, I ARRIVE FROM THE FAR SIDE! I DO NOT SEE THE SHEEP OF THE MEDICINE! I 'AVE DES'NEES MY SAMPAN! SACREBLEU! WHAT AM I TO DO? I AM DEVASTATE!

SINCE YOU HAVE NOT BEEN BELOW, I WILL NOT HOLD YOU! MY BOAT WILL RUN YOU TO SHORE! BE OFF! QUICKLY!

6-2

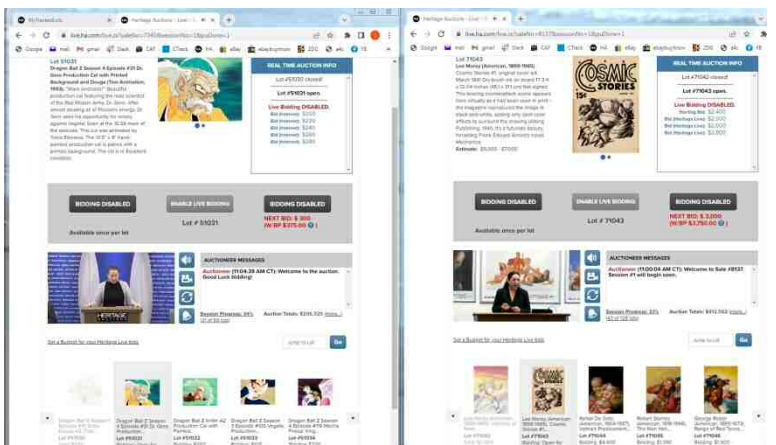


This is a strip I bought early in my collecting featuring an early appearance of the Dragon Lady in the dailies but do recall she started in the Sundays which were not the same story line from day 1. This daily occurs as she is introduced to the storyline of the dailies. I bought this on eBay off of John without knowing who the seller was other than the Dragon Lady comic shop where I picked up the art. Below this are a few other key Terry's I have gotten from John directly.



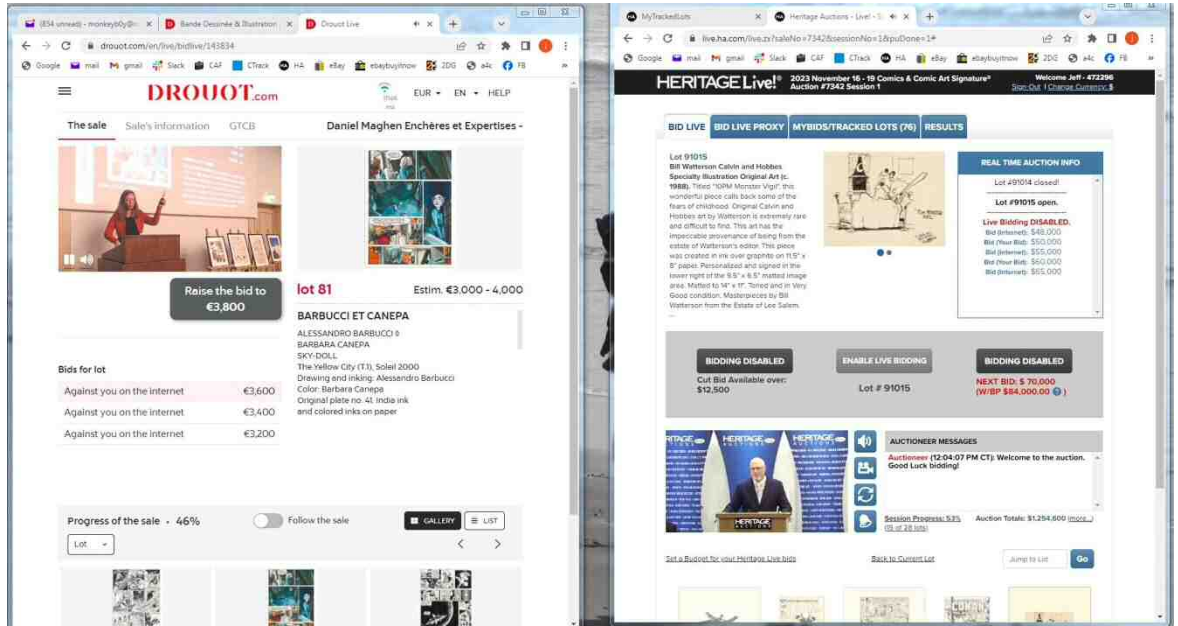
### Auction Bidding

There are a lot of auctions!! Too many!! Since I follow auctions in North America, Europe and Asia there are times when there are simultaneous auctions happening and of late this has happened more than once. Here is the first one, I was bidding and watching two different Heritage auctions at the same time! It is a good thing I have a widescreen monitor. One was an animation art auction that I ended up with a number of pieces from and another for comic and illustration art which I didn't end up with anything from. This was in October.



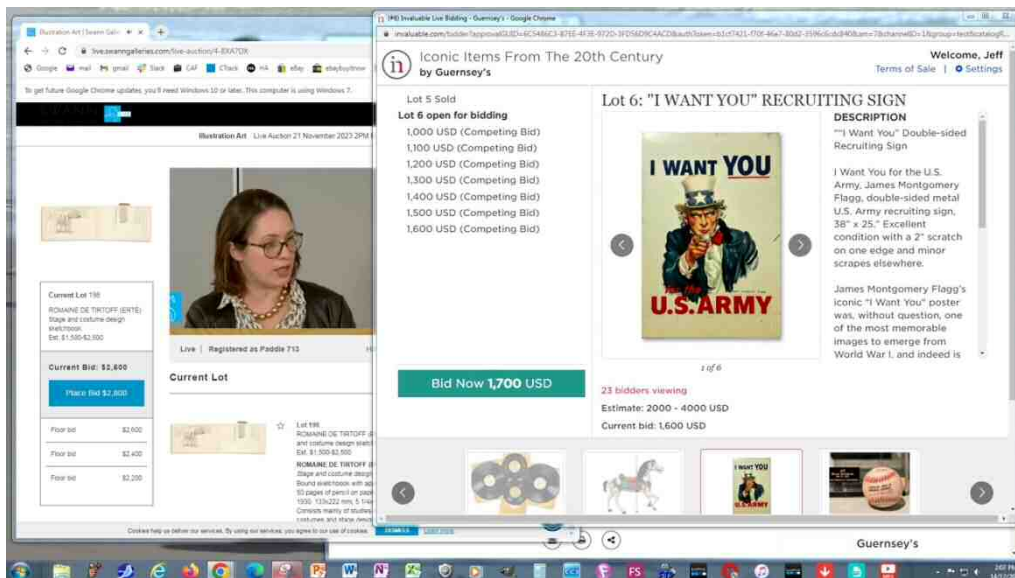


Next, in December I was bidding on art at Daniel Maghen's auction in Paris on the Drouot platform at the same time as I was bidding at a different Heritage auction. I ended up winning something in Europe, a nice Cozey page I'll likely share with you in another issue and some twice up silver-age Marvel art by Colan and a page by Dan Clowes. Although watching them both at the same time, the pieces I was interested in didn't happen at the same time. I was trying to go for the Calvin and Hobbes but ended up not being able to go the distance. One bid over my theoretical maximum. Unless one comes to me in trade, I consider that ship having not only left the port but also out of sight now and I am OK with that. I liked the Skydoll page too but decided to wait so I guess technically I did have two items on at the exact same moment I was going to bid on.



Most recently on December 19<sup>th</sup> I was in a similar situation again. I had seen a Little Nemo Sunday at a New York Auction house that was really nice. It was also in an auction with pop culture items like Elvis's sixth grade report card and Bob Dylan master tapes and this was the sole piece of original art. I thought that perhaps there was a chance for it to slip under the radar. With an opening bid of \$50k and 25% premiums it was not robbery but a chance at a bit of a bargain. I had decided that this would be the one I was going to go for. I describe it as my Thermopylae in my CAF gallery, my last stand and all-out, no holds barred battle to the death (or my maximum, whichever comes first...excuse the theatrics!). Swann Auctions in New York also happened to be having an auction the same day and there was a nice Erte piece I liked which happened to have a Dragon Lady theme to it if I really tried to shoehorn it in. I had phone bidding on Swann set up and was watching live on the left of my computer screen while the Guernsey's Auction was open on the right side of my screen. About 20 lots out it looked like both might be on around the same time and by 5 lots out it looked like it might actually happen. I got my Swann phone call about 3 items before the lot was up and I confirmed some of the terms with the assistant I had on the phone. I jokingly told her I was watching another auction at the same time and it was quite possible they would

happen at the same time. I had my maximum bid in mind for both auctions. The Swann auction went live just as the Little Nemo did. The Invaluable platform used by Guernsey's was lagging a bit so when it opened it was sitting at the \$50k mark. Having done some observing of auction patterns on previous lots I knew if the opening bid is not received they will sometimes start dropping the price. One can hope! So, no bids and a bit of a lag on Nemo while Swann starts up and I am bidding with the phone in my left ear, the site open on the left of my computer and watching the big one on the right of the computer. I am bidding several



times on the Erte as the underbidder and only one person bidding against me. I look over at the Little Nemo and see it jumped very quickly and someone had beaten me to my previously set maximum bid and that is the current high bid with action slowing down. It was do or die on both auctions at the exact same time and at that point Swann seemed like almost a distraction. The increments on the Little Nemo were \$5k. I decided, one more bid above my maximum as I didn't get to bid my maximum. It closed with me winning.

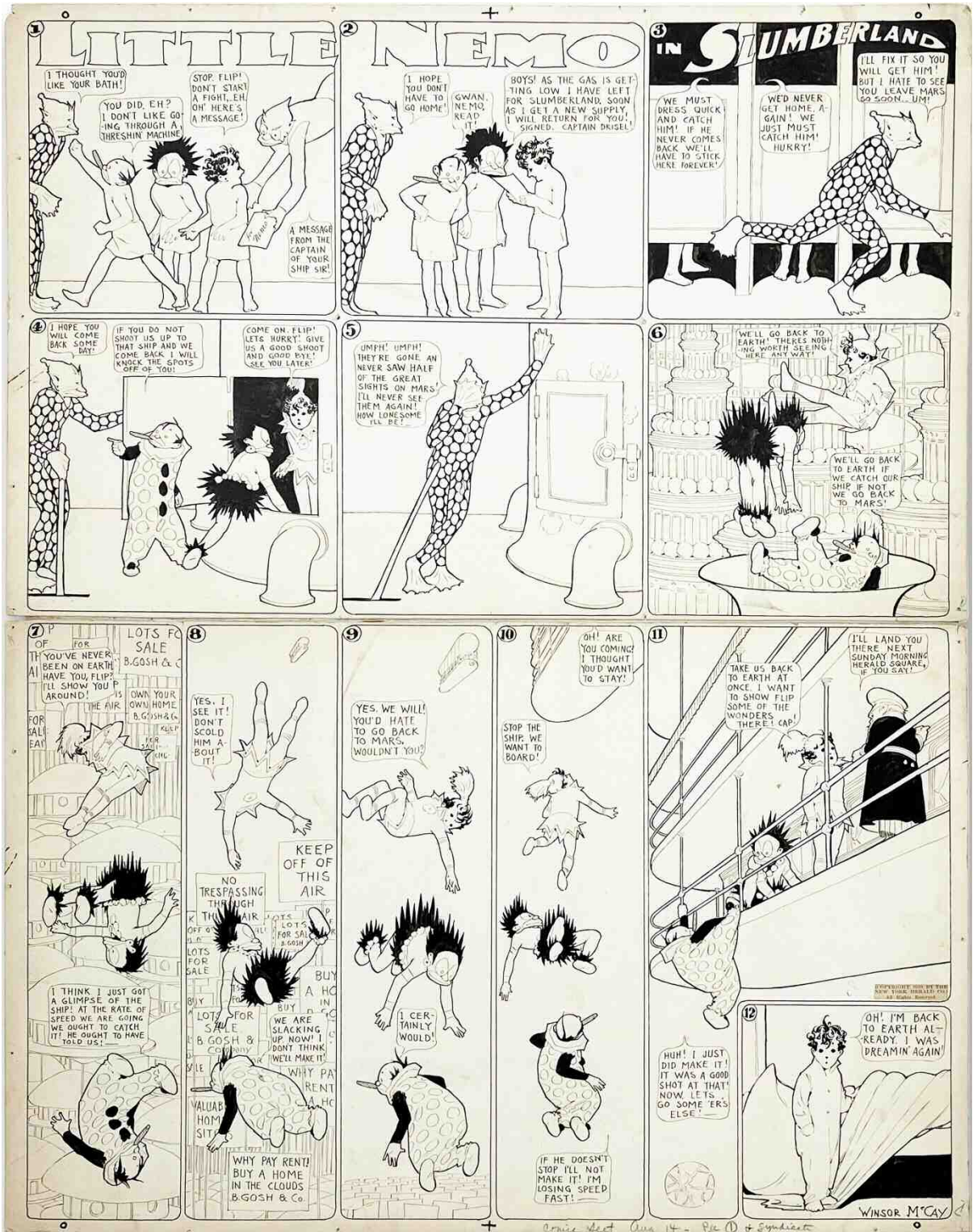


I was still bidding on the Erte at the time and just before I won there was a counter bid. I had hit my maximum there and let it go as the underbidder but having won the Little Nemo. I am going to write that again as bit of a literary pinching myself to make sure I am not dreaming. I own a Winsor McCay Little Nemo!!!! Any regrets or afterthoughts I had about that extra bid evaporated immediately and my only regret is not having put one more bid on the Erte! Hello, my name is Jeff and I am addicted to comic art and I am in the palliative phase of this illness.

My image of the screen shot doesn't capture the exciting moment and it is not because I didn't think of it but rather wanted to make sure I was laser focused and not further distracted at that moment of critical concentration and decision making.

Now, this is not just any Little Nemo and I'd gush about it a lot more but space is short. It is from August of 1910 and is the final instalment in the 17 episode visit to Mars storyline that is quiet famous. It comes from the estate of the family and features Nemo, Flip, Impy, the Captain, the Martian and the Flying strip prominently. This was the one worth making the stand for and I am convinced that it would have gone for substantially more at Heritage so I am under the delusion I got a bit of a bargain.

I also don't want to



give others the impression I have a ton of cash to spend. Not a cent for the Little Nemo nor John's collection will come out of my personal savings, income or funds. These purchases will be entirely financed through the sale of art that is already in my collection. Only through selling art will I allow myself to go after big purchases. Retirement is hopefully in the near horizon and for sure that will be the only way I can continue to add art. I want to talk a bit more about this but out of space but I feel like this might be the last big one for me and I am done collecting art. I mean, I will always collect but there are only a few small holes left to plug and then moving on to the curation and upgrading phase of my collecting. I also anticipate selling art off to fund extra expensed in retirement that were not budgeted for like weddings, big family trips, new vehicles and whatever surprises life throws at us.



## Mailing Comments CFA-APA #120 Our Own Art

**Weston Allen** – Great article, I like the Ozymandis quote and how you turned it into the framework for your article. Well thought out. Those are some particularly spectacular covers you showcased.

**David Applegate** – now a published cover artist! Fun seeing some of your childhood drawings and your later meticulously grid based redrawn images. A great way to learn and to fully appreciate the style and intricacies of different artists.

**Lee Banaka** – nice analysis and review of how supply not properly managed can destroy a market. Too bad the family didn't get more for the art.

**Colin Blanchette** – fun interview. That Sumo commission is pretty cool.

**George Hagenauer** – we had some art going back and forth between us of late. It is always a pleasure to deal with you and I love the cover I got from you on CAF Live by Demetrio Sanchez Gomez. Nice overview of the rise and fall of the newspaper comic strip.

**Satya Chetri** – nice musings on collecting and your approach. You know I love that Blankets page after you had shown it to me years ago. You really should share your SDCC get at some point, perhaps a bit of an article on it.

**Raymond Cuthbert** – Thanks for sharing your art. I appreciate your section on Karl's collection.

**Alan Dion** – Nice interview with Mark. I always appreciate your approach and demeanor to your writing.

**Robert Fairbanks** – Great collection of Frison art and Medusa is a fun theme to pursue.

**Michael Finn** – Thank you for the giveaway. I am really impressed with everything but the coloring of the art was so well and respectfully done for the era of the comics. Thank you for your hard work in not only preserving but sharing these golden age gems. You might feel like you almost alone in appreciating this stuff but you are not and I am pretty sure time will show you were well ahead of the curve in collecting this material.

**Timothy Guerrero** – I love preliminary art. In a sense, that is the true original art when concept first met paper and everything after that was tweaking.

**Micheal Hranek** – Nice to hear more about your artistic output. I was an early fan of Sandman Mystery Theatre as well and connected with Guy Davis a fair bit. One of the few artists I befriended early in my career and he did some truly remarkable commissions for me. Here is my first and favorite of them. I had a number of pages but sadly let those move on to other collections. My friend and local artist Rick Taylor also did a run on the series and I at one point had pages from those. I like your analysis of content vs. total number of pages. I wonder how those same kinds of statics could be compared to graphic novels without superheroes and focus on storytelling as opposed to modern superhero comics where the focus might be on the visuals.



**Dave Karlen** – I love all those old Gold Key comics. Such great covers.

**Michael Kenyon** – Wow. I am so sorry for all the trials you have been through. No need to apologize, if writing and showing the art is helpful for you, we are here for you.

**Bob Kopman** – fascinating overview of the Archie art auctions. I love those Lucey advertisement pages. I keep looking and when they come up, they go for so much more than I can justify so none for me yet. Part of the reason Sabrina might have had a more desirable first appearance is the Television shows but what do I know...perhaps there will be or was a Josie one too.

**R. Gary Land** – It was good seeing you again at SDCC. Nice picture to remind me of it. I'll see you at OAX too. Dogs in comics are fun. I

know you stuck to comics that revolved around dogs and I can think of a few Disney ones like 101 Dalmations, Scamp and Lady and the Tramp. Once you go on to dogs as major secondary characters the list gets big quickly with Snowy and Tintin, Sandy and Little Orphan Annie, Devil (technically a wolf) and Phantom, Snoopy, Wags and Dickie Dare...I think that list could grow to about 20 very quickly. I wrote about cats in comic strips and that turned into a pretty big topic but this one would be huge.

**Joe Latino** – more Ditko history and background...great!

**Jared Michalski** – Nice to see so much of your Sale collection.

**Carlo Michelini** – Your intro sounds like how I'd start talking about my collection. I liked your graphic on your collection. Not something I could do but a fun representation. Nice DD splash and Avengers cover!

**Steve Nam** – Nice art you shared...Still waiting on a good MTG summary of market place and factors☺

**Mark Nevins** – Thanks for sharing your art.

**Michael O'Connell** – very glad to see you are still in our ranks! Great conversation you had with R.C. I am glad you kept the audio files.

**Mike Quilligan** – nice art you shared.

**Rob Reiner** – I enjoyed reading your answers to the questions.

**Benno Rothschild** – fun gift art ideas, both the Valentine's Day and Birthday cards. As to your question in the comments section last time...I don't sleep!

**Stuart Sayger** – Of course this was the theme for you to really show off. Great pieces. I like the Rachel from Blade Runner the best.

**Ron Sonenthal** – I love the climax of your article and the re-inking of the page you had done by Starlin. It is marvelous (pun intended). I like that he put the proper information on the back as this will be a record going forward when over time details are forgotten or not passed on. You did something important here. I am not sure where I draw the line (intended again) but it is not uncommon for paintings to be retouched over the years to repair areas that are not aging well or have been damaged. Over time we will see more and more of this. Hopefully done by professionals and ideally by the original artists like you did here and not some guy that has been in the hobby and has a bit of art in his background re-inking things like Byrne which has recently happened.



**John Stuart** – sorry to see you go but glad you are leaving feeling you have had your say. I'll see you in person again soon. I'd encourage anyone in our group to pick up and read John's book Cryptic Inks. It was a lot of fun.

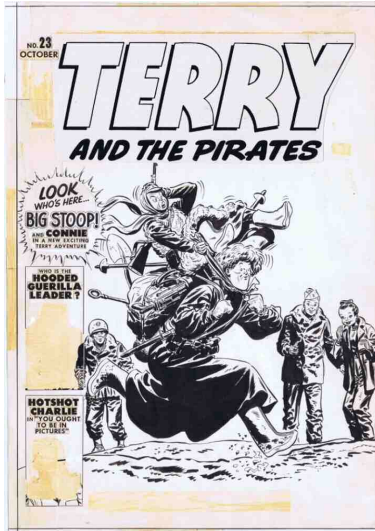
**Aaron Sultan** – ASM #89 cover. Wow! That is a super image and what a piece to own. Congratulations.

**Hal Turner** – wow, you married a very talented artist. Lots of different media and techniques and so well executed.

**Sean Watkins** – you continue to do great things for your artists and the art community. I am very glad you found your way into our ranks. We need you to keep us "hip" as some of us are probably closer to a new hip than being hip!

**In Memoriam** – Such a great and thoughtful piece each time but tempered by the content. It is sad to lose artist and creators and

Whew! Did it, 40 pages and not a line to spare! Since finishing this article, 3 more Terry's showed up. Here they are including two more from the Death of Raven Sherman sequence.



other important people in this hobby but it is important we remember them and their legacy. Romita was a giant. I was lucky to pick up this *Terry and the Pirates* #23 cover by Lee Elias that was on John's wall for the past many decades and comes directly from his estate. I'll always think about Romita Sr. now when I look at it and it will continue on its journey with that legacy forever attached.

Mikey Halperin's death was a gut punch. I didn't know him at all but someone so young taken from us and for reasons that TOO many others have had to deal with. I didn't know Allen well but had met him my few visits to SDCC. What a legacy he leaves too. You touched on John Biernat last issue. I wasn't ready to write about it then but have this time. You will be seeing at least 2 or 3 more issues where I share art from John's collection.

Also, I will be attending OAX in Florida before the submission deadline but won't have time or room to talk

about that so it will be in the next issue of the CFA-APA. See you then!

