

## War, huh, yeah.....What is it good for?.....Absolutely nothing, uhh....

How unfortunately timely our issue on War comics is with the current Russian invasion of the Ukraine going on. I have always had mixed feelings about war stories. They are a great genre to tell tales of valor and courage. They are also an appropriate setting for tales of desperation and despair in human and other dramas. Although there are many sides to every conflict, within a story we are often given the myopic view of the protagonist and the side they are on. This can lead to some interesting views on war. There might

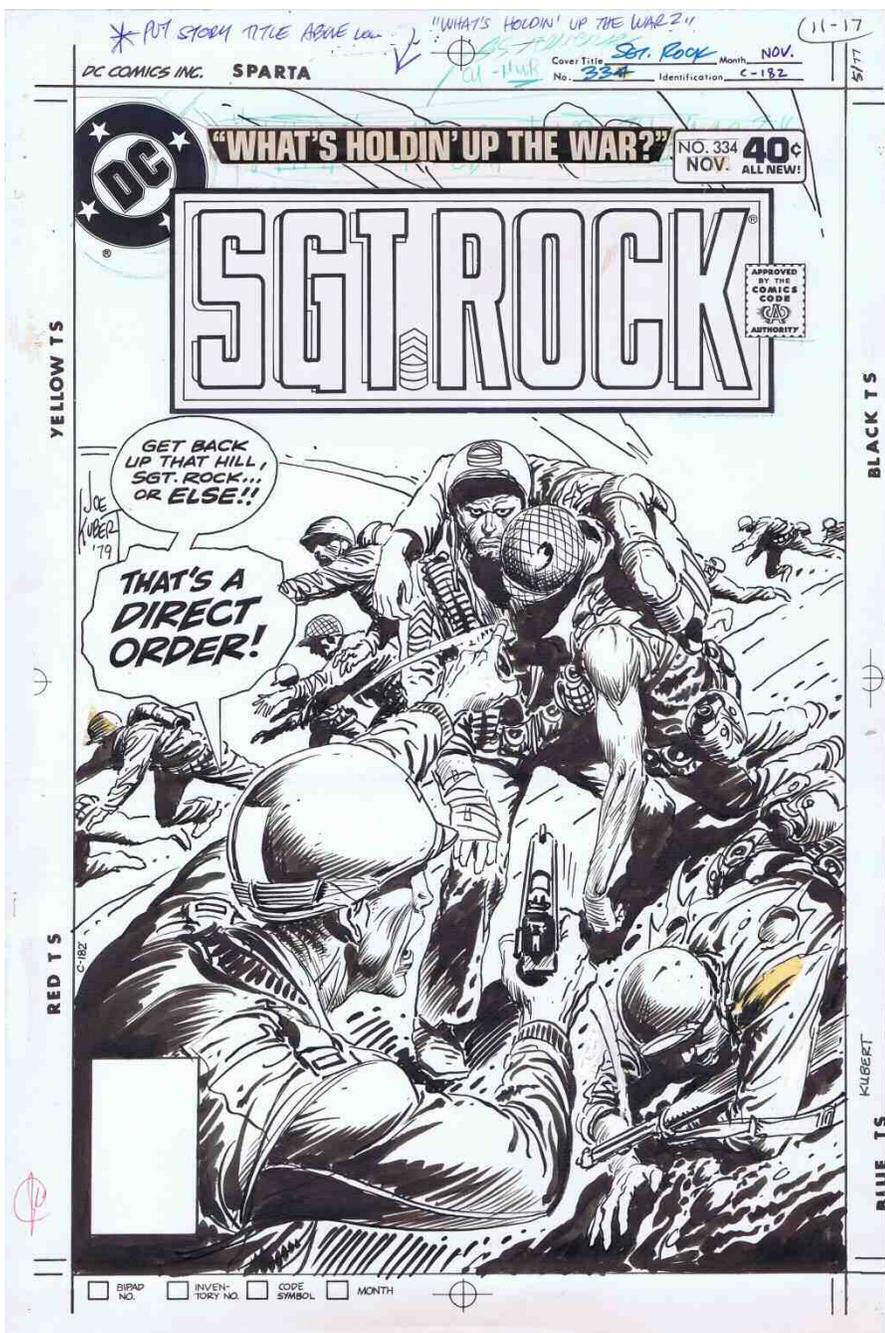
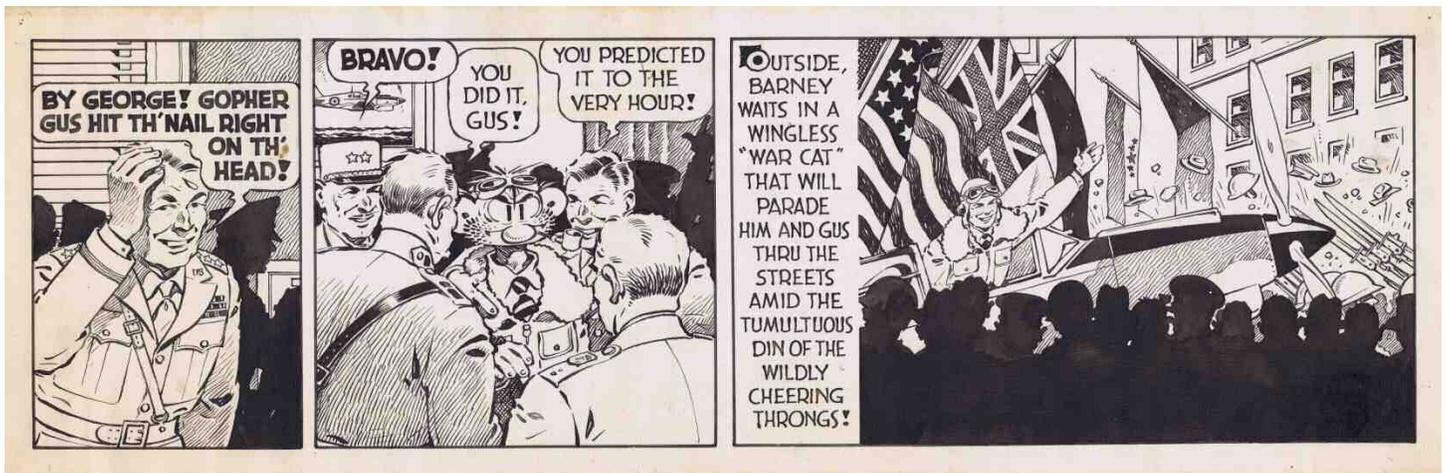
be moments of reflection and realization of the devastation that has taken place but then things return to the conflict at hand. I liked the DC Comics War Stories I read and like the characters they developed including Sgt. Rock. I read the EC war stories years later and really appreciated their different approach to storytelling. Kurtzman was a force of nature. I also liked the Harvey and Charlton War comics I read but they took a backseat to DC and EC. When Marvel Comics released their comic, the Nam, it was a big hit and I was an instant fan. Timely that this comes up as I have added the first 2 pages from Nam I have owned in almost 20 years just this week (I had a few pages early in my collecting but they moved on). The Nam pages will show up a bit later in this article somewhere.

At this point I am not sure what I am going to write about. I have an idea and some ground I want to cover but not sure how I'll get there but I am going to keep writing and see where it goes. Perhaps, in the end, I'll end up discarding or reworking most of this but I think it is important for me to go this route as it will help me sort out some issues. My approach will be to showcase some of the themes in war comics and strips within my collection and in some cases from other collections that



better illustrate a point. Other than a piece or two, I am going to take a different lens to this topic that will touch on both the war and western themes of this issue.

In response to the question, "What is best in life?" Conan replies "To crush your enemies, see them driven before you, and to hear the lamentation of their women." To some the glory is the spoils of war, to others it is the power and strength they gain, to others it



might be the helping of others and to some it will be that they have become a hero and will be remembered. There are probably as many definitions to the glory of war as there are individuals seeking it. The glory of war is a common theme in popular culture including comics. Here is a specialty piece by the other Frank Miller for Barney Baxter. It is a fun strip and I am not sure how it was published but it was published to celebrate V day. Here the conquering heroes are celebrated. A very different strip would have been drawn for those on the losing side.

Courage is a theme that comes up often in comics on war and in comics in general. The survivor, the lone soldier saving his comrades, the hero picking up a bayonet and leading the charge and so many other tropes were the stuff of war comics. Here is a Joe Kubert cover for DC showing the beaten down but never quitting Sgt Rock not only fighting the enemy but his own commander and doing the right thing. Also in the courage theme we could include the courage to be compassionate and care about others, including the enemy. So often war books depict the inhumanity of the enemy and humanity of the heroes. This will tie into what I want to write about later.

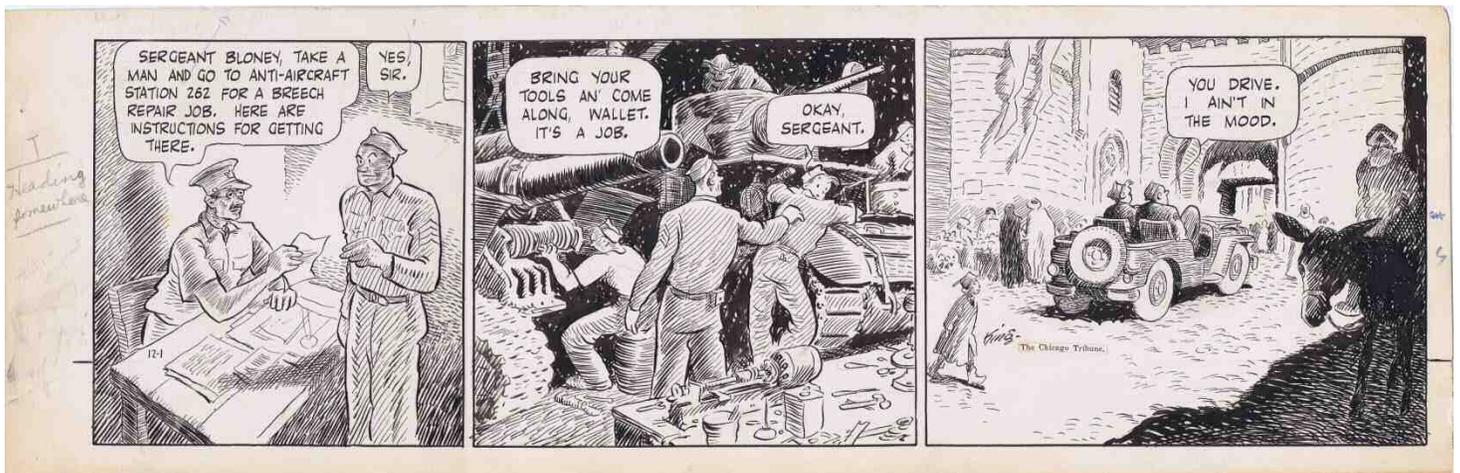
The promise of fame and being remembered is a common theme and motivator for valor. The first page I showed in this piece by Al Avison shows this with the famous Spirit of '76 imagery. When mortality looms so heavy, it is human nature to want to be remembered and at least live on in people's memories. Given the choice of fame or

fortune, I think there are many if not most that would choose the former.

The spoils of war are often depicted in comics. Below is a cover to Spawn Godslayer which always made me think about Conan's definition of what is best in life. Anacleto works in strictly pencils and the tonal qualities he can achieve are truly magnificent. The spoils of war include anything from castles and lands to the treasures and people who can now be subjugated (or liberated...depending on who you ask). Unfortunately, a lot of abuse takes place in reality and not always depicted in comics as the themes are too unpleasant. Below is a page from Vietnam War



Journal by Don Lomax depicted one of those sequences. I think the two pieces are a nice juxtaposition of what the fantasy and reality of treating women as a part of the spoils is like.



I have always appreciated Frank King and Gasoline Alley's approach to depicting the war. The stories told were more about the boys and men who were in the army and the people around them. A more humanistic view from a creator I'd expect nothing less from.

There are other unpleasant themes of war that comics do touch on. The destruction and carnage maybe shown but their impacts on those who live it are often glossed over. Prisoners of war and the people that have been conquered have been approached in comics but are not often pleasant stories and as such are less common. When these stories are published, it is often about the heroic escapes or resistance movements fighting back. Something with hope rather the reality of most of those in that situation. I know...downer material...sorry but I think it will soon get worse as you read on so I suggest bailing now.

Before I get to that a few lighter things. The first are two comic strips done for the military press and only saw publication in Stars and Stripes publications for the GIs. Some were later collected and published like Male Call by Milton Caniff but many have never been republished. I know Bill Ward had some Torchy comics but I don't know if they republished any of the war strips he did like the one I have. I consider that particular strip a spoil of a war in a sense. I came home with that strip from my first San Diego comic con 5 years ago. I got it in a hard fought battle with a duo of brothers who deal in comic art and are infamous for being hard to work with. I managed to come away with the Torchy and great Sienkiewicz piece in the deal that had to involve both of the brothers. This is one of my trophies. I had debated writing about the artists from Stars and Stripes that went on to be or were already famous cartoonists but decided on other topics instead. It would have been a fun project to research and perhaps that will one day still happen.



History is told by the victor. That is one of the spoils of war, to rewrite and frame the events and outcomes and to justify the means.

I have been struggling with the racism themes of early comic art for many years. It is sensitive topic and even if I come to terms with it in the context of today's norms, I am sure in another few decades looking back at this will be viewed differently than with contemporary morals. War and Westerns together as a theme, I couldn't ask for a better segue.

The reason I decided to tackle this difficult topic is we are having a reckoning of our identity as Canadians. It may have made the news where you are but in May of 2021, there was a news report that branded the number 215 into our collective Canadian conscience. 215 bodies of missing indigenous children found in unmarked graves at a single residential school for Indigenous children in Kamloops, British Columbia. This was one school; there were 139 in Canada over the life of the program. The program started in the

early 1800's and had the goal for assimilating the First Nations children. It has been stated that they wanted to "take the Indian out of the child". The most recent school closed as recently as 25 years ago. Although sanctioned by the government, many of the schools were run by the Catholic Church. Since that first discovery there have been over a thousand similar graves found at other schools and this is just the tip of the iceberg. It is estimated there may be as many as 30,000 children who died at these schools and were just written off as missing and placed in unmarked graves. This statistic does not include the incredible impact the erasing of culture, the separation from family/community and the abuse those that survived faced. There is generational trauma here that is unfathomable. I have a profound shame about these events. Although I had no part in them I am guilty by association with a country that allowed this to happen. On the world stage we come across as a free, rights championing and a humanitarian country yet we have this horrible history. Collectively the harm that was done can never be undone. We are making restitutions but they will never be enough. I am at a loss on how to reconcile this so perhaps this article is a small first step for me.

I am not going to pretend to be an expert on North American history and colonialism. I'd like to talk a bit about how First Nations people were portrayed in comics and how themes of war came up in the war on Indians. I'll use some of the common war themes.

Stereotypes are common in comics and other popular media. They serve many purposes. In simplest terms, one can quickly identify a guy in black as a villain, a child as innocent and other such tropes that make it easy to tell a story as we have a collective understanding of that character already. Stereotypes are a common tool of propaganda to dehumanize others. It worked effectively for the Nazis in their attempted genocide of European Jews in World War II. It worked for Western forces in dehumanizing the Germans and Japanese during that same war. By making caricatures and stereotypes, it simplifies a complex people into the simplest terms and these terms are controlled by the agency producing this material. Native Americans have often been portrayed as savages and untrustworthy. They have often been portrayed as less intelligent and having an affinity to alcohol. The goal of stereotypes like this might be making the victims less than human so one does not feel the same guilt in oppressing or killing as they would to people they saw as their equals. Below are some examples. Although maybe not intended to be harmful, harm is done in perpetuating the

stereotypes. Even things as simple as the dime store indian with a cigar...it reinforces the beliefs and the systems that allow this to be



acceptable. It is not. The panel above is from a Twin Earth's Sunday I have by Al McWilliams. The complete Sunday shows the crew finding an empty First Nations settlement and they go into the tents to explore and start to play with possessions of the inhabitants. When the tribe returns and sees the interlopers in their homes, they attack to defend. I'd suggest the way it is told the strip shows depicts them as savages and dangerous as the tribe attacks. Not so much as a mention of their motivation or the injustice the crew did to these people and how they are just defending themselves from people who had not business doing what they were doing. It reinforces the stereotype of Indians as aggressors.



Next is a Betty Boop with Betty in a stereotypical headdress garb of a squa. The Natives are shown with large noses and with cigars. The gag is that the indigenous people did not dress in the traditional clothes they were expected to be seen in. I find it interesting as this inadvertently brings up the Christianization of the people and ties back into the residential schools theme as forced religion and



loss of cultural identity. As with all these examples I will share, they can be looked at with a much kinder eye than my own and considered more innocent but I find the stereotypes and caricatures hard to jarring to just overlook.

Next up is a Red Ryder strip featuring Little Beaver. Although Little Beaver was a brave, cunning and intelligent side kick he was depicted with a strong pidgin English way of speaking and stereotypical attire. Not unlike black characters and Asian characters like Connie from Terry and Pirates, the character would be considered offensive in today's society but at the time this was quite acceptable. Although I am pointing out what is wrong with these strips, they must be looked at with more than one lens and considered in the context of era they were created. Despite being offensive today, at the time I think they were both probably pretty progressive showing First Nations peoples as smart and capable allies as opposed to murderous savage as they often were portrayed. I think Tonto would be a similar example and since I no longer own any good Lone Ranger pages, a mention is all he will get.

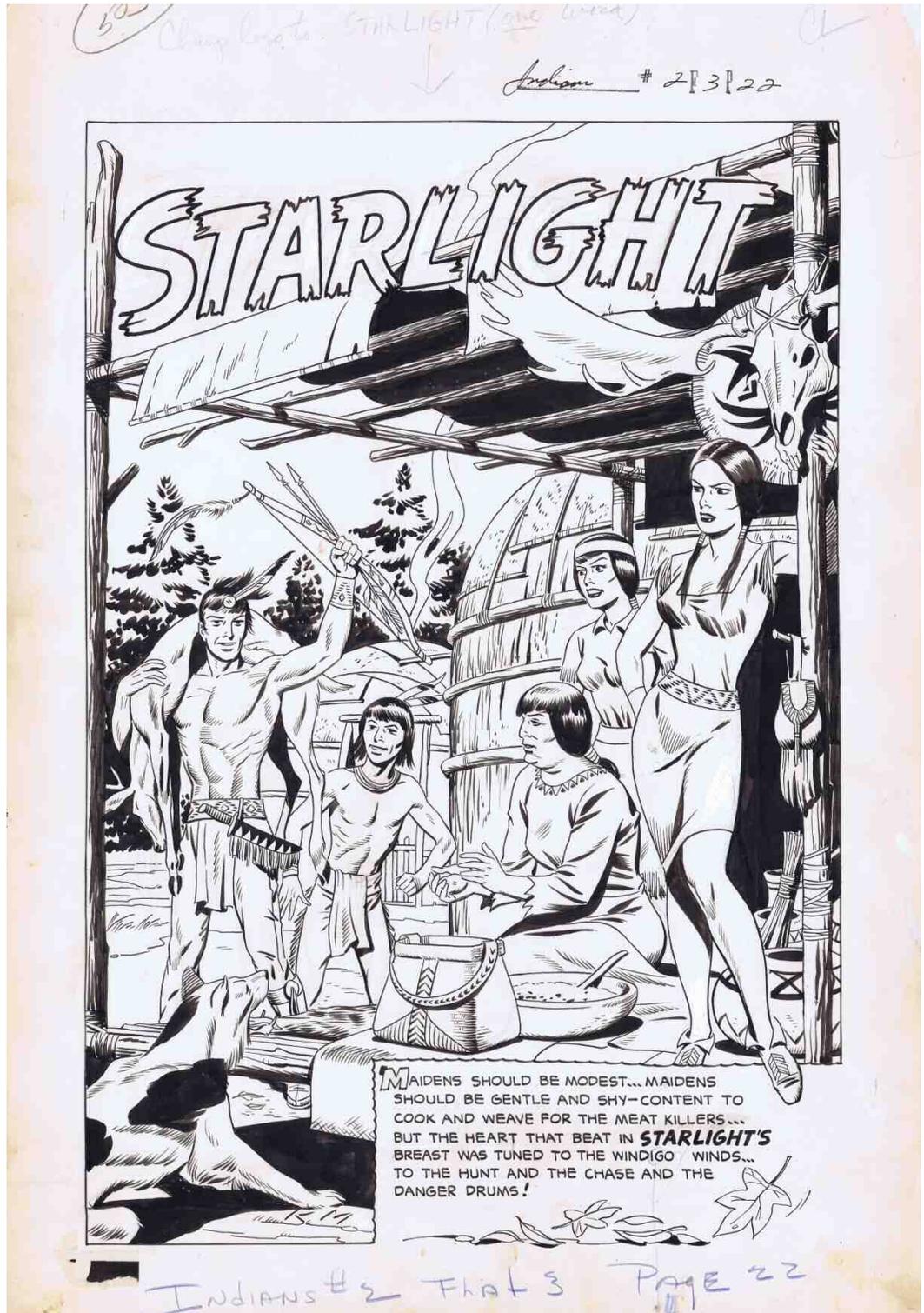
Back to Red Ryder for a moment. I find it a very interesting strip. It was a strip created with a purpose. It appears that the strips creator, Stephen Siesinger had the concept in mind of a huge franchise centered around a new character and strip. He found the artist, Fred Harman to bring the character to life. Through carefully orchestrated and simultaneous development of radio series, films, novels, big-little



books, events, rodeos, promotions and merchandising he developed a huge franchise. Products were licensed including BB guns for Daisy, clothing, sporting goods, toys, novelties and gifts. In addition, alliances were set up with JC Penny where they had Red Ryder Corrals that claimed to be "outposts for dependable American quality and value". They would sell clothes and run educational and sports contests. Red Ryder and Little Beaver merchandising went international too as did the comics. Siesinger is credited with being a pioneer in using this planned, cross media marketing and promotional blitz approach to creating something out of nothing.

Previously is a page from Joe Orland and one of the Gilberton educational comics. Here we see the wild west with warnings about trusting the blood thirsty natives. A stage coach lies looted with dead bodies and who knows what unspeakable acts have occurred at the hands of Indians. The myth of Indian attacks has largely been debunked. The attacks were rare and most interactions with the natives were mutually beneficial and they were often helpful with supplies for wagon trains and the likes. Although I recall westerns growing up and a lot of battles between cowboys and Indians. It was when I first started to read that the ideas I had of First Nations people and the early west were formed. I specifically remembered historical books about the fabled Pony Express and the gauntlet of tribes these courageous riders had to face. Many of the Westerns I saw had conflicts between white men with the good and the bad sides easy to distinguish. Morality tales. When Indians were part of the storyline it was quite variable how they were portrayed. Sometimes friends but more often foe.

Fiction House comics despite all its good girl art was very progressive in its portrayal of women and of other races. The strong female Jungle girls were independent, intelligent and often in positions of power. Comics like Indians featured stories about Indian braves and told stories from their perspectives. There were other Western stories within that were more about the battles and savages but there was some balance to their depictions. Here is a splash from Indians showing a beautiful Indian maiden but also a peaceful village. This piece was signed near the bottom by the artist Ralph Mayo which was not a common practice with this publisher or the Iger Studios.



Since we are on the theme of racial stereotypes I want to talk a bit about my favorite artist, Milton Caniff. I have always like the character Connie. Smart and funny and worthy companion to Pat and Terry. He is portrayed as a caricature with big teeth and ears and speaks English with an accents and misused words. This portrayal has been criticized as being a racist stereotype and I would say it is impossible to argue against that. I have taken a softer view of this given how prominent and important Connie was. I wish he had been portrayed differently but an important Asian character.



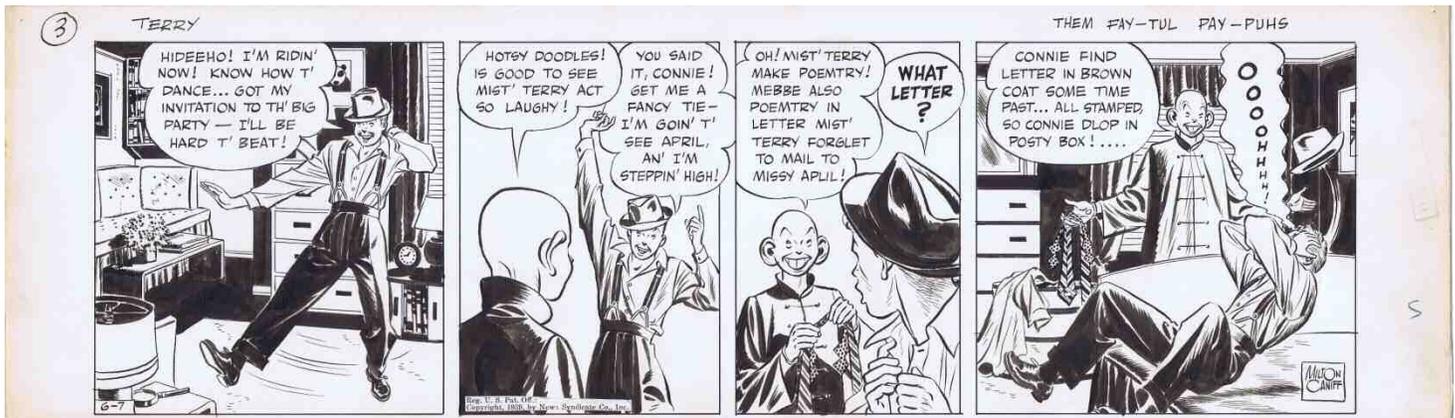
Connie was Chinese and here are some panels from my Terry collection including one noting the elitism in American College fraternities of that era. Milt portrayed the Chinese and Japanese very differently in his comics. Caniff was always respectful of other peoples for their intelligence but depicted Japanese as much more cruel as part of the war propaganda. Here is a panel where they Japanese talk about turning the captive Dragon Lady into a dope fiend. On the next page is a specialty piece that Caniff did to help people "Spot a Jap". Done as part of the war effort, it is very hard to look at this material now. I find it hard to believe it wasn't at least



offensive to many at the time it was published but it was war I suppose. This is not that different from the Nazi's guides on how to spot those of Jewish origins. This is the ugliest thing I will every put into print but does speak to the secondary theme I am touching on which is propaganda and stereotypes. But first, the 5<sup>th</sup> Terry and the Pirates daily which happens to feature our faithful trio of Terry, Pat and Connie prominently. Below that is one that I got recently from fellow



CFA-APAmate Benno from my favorite Terry story line. Here Connie almost looks like the Yellow Kid and I had often wondered if that was Caniff's goal, to have Connie as a bit of an homage to Outcault creation. His earlier images of Connie wouldn't necessarily suggest that but as time and style evolved, Connie and Big Stoop became more cartoony while others characters were drawn with more realism.



# QUICK WAYS TO SPOT A JAP

AMERICAN soldiers must learn how to identify a Jap swiftly among the other Asiatic peoples whom he resembles in some ways. Making the correct decision may be a matter of life or death to the cunning Jap's captors.

And now that the existence of a well organized Jap fifth column in this country has been revealed, all civilians will be wise if they, too, familiarize themselves with positive ways of distinguishing a potentially dangerous Jap from a friendly Chinese.

Milton Caniff, whose "Terry and the Pirates" is familiar to all followers of The Inquirer Comic Section, has used the comic artist's technique to good advantage in pointing out for American soldiers the differences between a Chinese and a Japanese picked up by a patrol. The experiences of Ryan and Terry in many Asiatic countries make them appropriate instructors.

## TERRY AND THE PIRATES



RYAN, YOU AND TERRY HAVE BEEN OUT IN CHINA FOR A LONG TIME... HOW ABOUT SHOWING THE MEN A FEW POINTS OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE JAPS AND OUR ORIENTAL ALLIES!

YES, SIR!

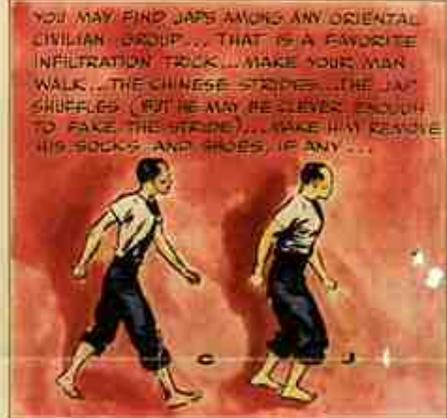


HERE ARE TWO MEN JUST PICKED UP BY A PATROL... THE FIRST THING TO CONSIDER IS APPEARANCE... THE CHINESE IS "C"... THE JAP IS "J"... NOTICE THAT "C" IS TERRY'S SIZE - WHICH IS AVERAGE AMERICAN; "J" IS SHORTER - AND LOOKS AS IF HIS LEGS ARE JOINED DIRECTLY TO HIS CHEST!...

"C" IS DULL BRONZE IN COLOR - WHILE "J" IS LIGHTER - MORE ON THE LEMON-YELLOW SIDE. "C"'S EYES ARE SET LIKE ANY EUROPEAN'S OR AMERICAN'S - BUT HAVE A MARKED SQUINT... "J" HAS EYES SLANTED TOWARD HIS NOSE...



THE CHINESE HAS A SMOOTH FACE... THE JAP RUNS TO HAIR... LOOK AT THEIR PROFILES AND TEETH... "C" USUALLY HAS EVENLY SET CHOPPERS - "J" HAS BUCK TEETH... THE CHINESE SMILES EASILY - THE JAP USUALLY EXPECTS TO BE SHOT... AND IS VERY UNHAPPY ABOUT THE WHOLE THING... ESPECIALLY IF HE IS AN OFFICER!



YOU MAY FIND JAPS AMONG ANY ORIENTAL CIVILIAN GROUP... THAT IS A FAVORITE INFILTRATION TRICK... MAKE YOUR MAN WALK... THE CHINESE STRIDES... THE JAP SHUFFLES (BUT HE MAY BE CLEVER ENOUGH TO FAKE THE STRIDE)... MAKE HIM REMOVE HIS SOCKS AND SHOES, IF ANY...

THE CHINESE AND OTHER ASIATICS HAVE FAIRLY NORMAL FEET... THE JAP WORE A WOODEN SANDAL ("GETA") BEFORE HE WAS ISSUED ARMY SHOES... HE WILL USUALLY HAVE A WIDE SPACE BETWEEN THE FIRST AND SECOND TOES... OFTEN CALLOUSED FROM THE LEATHER STRAP THAT HELD THE "GETA" TO HIS FOOT...



SOMETIMES THE JAP OFFICERS HAVE NONE OF THESE CHARACTERISTICS - MANY OF THEM SPEAK ENGLISH; SOME KNOW OUR AMERICAN SLANG... BUT MOST JAPANESE HISS WHEN THEY PRONOUNCE THE LETTER "S"... HAVE THE TWO MEN REPEAT A SENTENCE LIKE "SMITH LEFT THE FORTRESS" (OR A SIMILAR LINE).



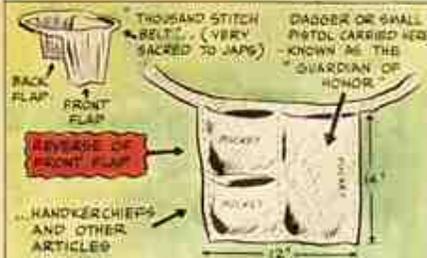
SMITH LEFT THE FAULTLESS... SS-S-SMIT REFT THE FORTRESS-S-S... -OR TRY LALAPALOOZA ON THEM! -THAT'S A PANIC!

THE JAP SUCKS IN ON ANY "S" SOUND - AND HE CAN'T PRONOUNCE THE LETTER "L"

DON'T TRUST ANY JAPANESE PRISONER - THEY'RE TOUGH BARRIES... AND THINK IT GLORIOUS TO DIE IF THEY CAN TAKE AN ENEMY WITH THEM!... EVEN WHEN A JAP IS STRIPPED DOWN FOR JUNGLE FIGHTING HE WEARS A "G-STRING" WHICH IS REALLY A "GROUCH BAG"... ALWAYS REMOVE IT AND SEARCH BOTH FLAPS CAREFULLY BEFORE RETURNING IT!

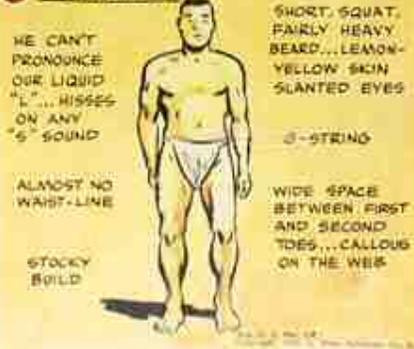


HE DOESN'T RESIST BECAUSE HE'S MODEST - HERE'S WHY...



IF YOU JUST SLAP A JAP'S CLOTHING TO LOCATE CONCEALED WEAPONS YOU MAY LOSE A PRISONER - AND YOUR OWN LIFE... DON'T UNSCREW FOUNTAIN PENS OR TINKER WITH ANY OBJECT THAT COULD CONTAIN ACID OR AN EXPLOSIVE. WATCH OUT FOR GLEEVE GUNS AND OTHER COMIC STRIP GADGETS... THE JAPS ARE EXPERTS AT SUCH STUFF...

TO SUM IT UP, SPOTTING A JAP DEPENDS UPON THREE THINGS: 1) APPEARANCE 2) FEET 3) PRONUNCIATION

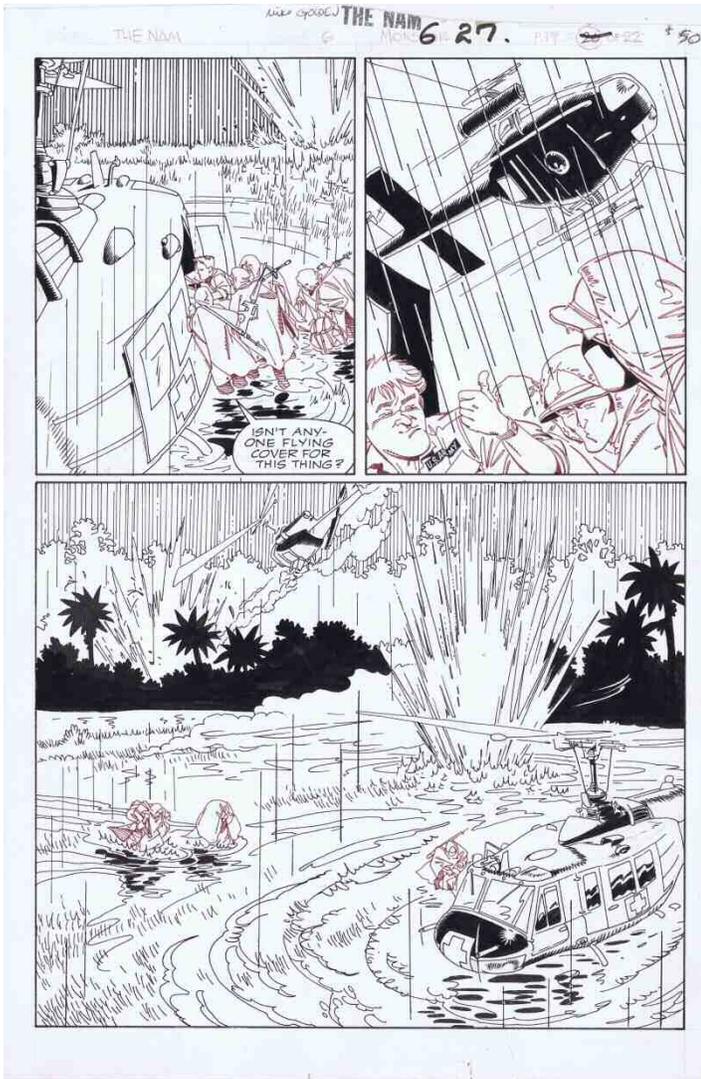


REMEMBER THAT JAP SPIES HAVE FOOLED EVEN THE CHINESE... THEY'LL USE ANY TRICK - EVEN AFTER PRETENDING TO SURRENDER... AND THEY'LL TRY TO POSE AS NATIVES OF WHATEVER COUNTRY THEY'RE IN!



THE JAPANESE LANGUAGE IS A USEFUL CODE IN ITSELF... WHAT THEY WRITE OR SAY TO ONE ANOTHER MAY MEAN YOUR NAME ON A CASUALTY LIST!

As I write this, I realize I am probably not ready to reach any final resolutions, conclusions or epiphanies. It is an unfinished article just like it is an unresolved issue for me. Sorry if you were expecting more. I'll work on it and it certainly helped putting words to paper for this. To cap of this part of the article, here are the Nam pages I promised to show.



Two very different pages both feature the main characters. One is an active battle scene with the iconic helicopter which played such an important role in the conflict. The other are some quite moments before one of the most memorable scenes from the series where the characters go underground in the Tunnel Rat story.

Ok, on to brighter topics. Now that the world is opening up I am travelling again. Here are a few of the comic art related experience I have had since the last issue. I'll have more next time to share as well. I apologize for the all the names I use, these articles are as much for me to remember these things in the future as it is to share with you.

**Heroes Comic Convention** – this was the first convention I have attended since the pandemic and for everyone there it felt like a huge celebration of not just the medium but of the personal sacrifices everyone had endured to get to that point. From the time I stepped off the plane in Charlotte until I got back on the plane to go home, I saw barely a mask anywhere. There were no vaccination requirements for the convention nor any masking

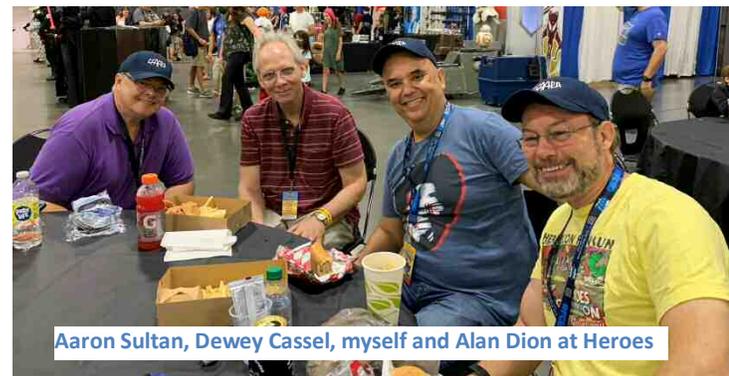


mandate which I was strangely OK with. The journey there was painful due to the airport issues in Toronto but quickly forgotten once I arrived. I met up with Mark Nevins and Satya Chetri from the APA for a dinner. This was the night before the con and we decided to sample some finer dining. Yes, I am showing off my western shirt and my Covid 20 lbs. We ended up having a great dinner after which I went to the Comicartfans party at a bar/arcade. That was great and I met a number of newer collectors who I knew by name but had never seen in person. The pandemic did



Keith Becker, artless artmore, Andrew Kurita, Benno Rothschild and Alan Dion at the Comicartfans preparty, drinking out back.

bring in an influx of collectors to the hobby. After the party I ended the night at the hotel bar with other collectors. The following day was the first day of the con and I went in early to turn my QR code into an actual pass for the show. I went down and there was already a line up so after getting my wrist band I went back up to my room to get my con bag and came back down to join the line. I managed to meet a few art collectors in line including one I knew from CAF as the New Mutants guy, Andre. The dinner for CFA-APA was a lot of fun that night. Although the plan was to be at a large table we ended up at a few smaller tables that served our purposes well enough. There were a few other hiccups but none that could ruin the evening. After dinner, that night was spent at the



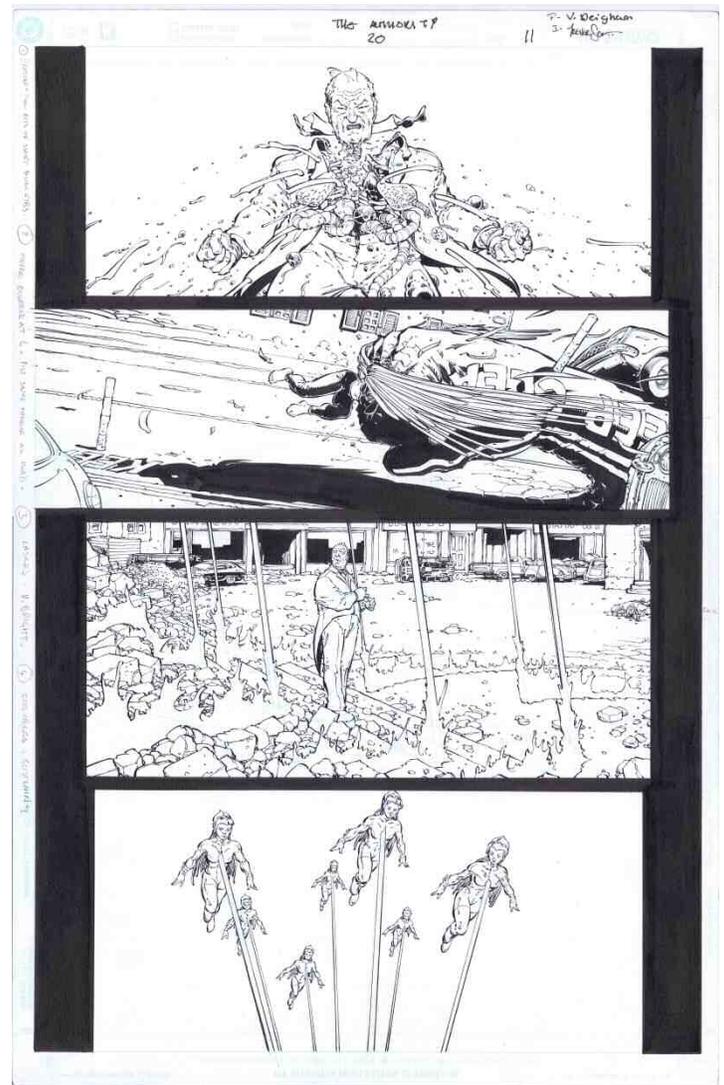
Aaron Sultan, Dewey Cassel, myself and Alan Dion at Heroes

bar again until we closed it again. On the Saturday The next day was the art auction and

another night of hanging out with friends and drinking until they told us to leave. I left the next day to get home. Wait...did I even go to the con? It all sounds like drinks and socializing. The con was there and it was good but the socializing aspect was the most fun and memorable part of the experience. I almost got away without spending too much at the con. I got one Akira commission that turned into two from Steven Beezer. Benno was kind and generous enough to bring me two pieces of art by Bob Murphy. I did bid on a few things at the art auction but didn't win any. Outside the auction was a party and I ran into many friends. It was the first time I'd seen Drunk Randy in almost a decade. I had mentioned to Joe Melchior, who was in attendance, that I was looking for some inked Frank Quitely artwork. He introduced me to Chuck Arnold who is a big Quitely collector. He had to pages from the Authority for sale. We worked out a quick deal and I took them home with me. I have had art by Frank in my collection before including a great Transmetropolitan cover but have not owned any for about 15 years. They all seemed to dry up. I had met Frank at a Toronto convention about 15 years ago where he did a Sheena head sketch for me while I was still in my Jungle Girl phase. In the intervening years I have come to develop a deeper appreciation of Quitely's style and contribution to comics. He really is one of those touchstone artists that has had tremendous influence on many who came after him. I always remember Nick Pitarra once explaining to a fellow comic artist why Neal Adams was so important and he said something like "to these guys, Bill is like our Frank Quitely". It might not have been Neal but perhaps Bill Sienkiewicz, John Byrne or Frank Miller or someone of that importance that he was speaking of...you get the gist of it. Here are the two Authority pages I picked up. I much prefer Frank's pencils inked than his pure pencils that are the majority of his output the past 15 years.



In this sequence, the hero flies towards the villain and then right through him. The bad guy puts himself back together as the hero gets injured and the cavalry arrive. Nice, to the point and demonstrates a lot of what Frank is good at. I am sure you are all aware that Frank Quitely is Quite Frankly rearranged and not the artist real name which is Vincent Deighan. I spent a lot of time with Benno, Joe Melchior, Bill Cox and Micah at that convention. Benno and I along with Bill Cox ended up at a local gathering for some of the newer collectors in the hobby which was fun and a chance to put some more faces with names.



Akira commissions x2 by Steven Beezer

**San Diego Comic Con 2022** – This was my second SDCC. The first time I went, I went with the expectation I would hate it. It would be too busy, too expensive and not worth the effort but I figured I need to do it at least once. My first SDCC was a blast. I didn't find it crowded. Expensive...yes but I did end up with some cool art that time. It was fun and I thought I'd like to go back again. Well, I decided that I am going for the trifecta this year. SDCC, Lucca and Angouleme in addition to Heroes and NYCCC. I got a dealer pass secured and arranged to stay with fellow APA-mate Alan Dion.

I arrived on the Wednesday after another terrible experience in line at the Toronto airport. The 3 hours in line as made more bearable by running into and waiting with my good friend Mike Kirton. We met a few other collectors in that line up too. Soon enough we were in San Diego. Mike and I shared a UBER into the city. We decided to get our Covid vaccination wrist bands dealt with early and we headed to his hotel to drop off my bags and went to get it done. It took literally less than a minute. There were 6 people running the area and we were their only 2 customers. I showed my QR code from the app they wanted us to use and got a band. Next we went over to the con and called up our badge hook up to come out and they did. We went in to test that badges and then headed off a nice seafood lunch. I went back to the hotel I was staying with Alan at which is near the airport. I met Alan in the room and we headed to the show together. Once we got downtown I pointed him in the direction for the covid pass and I went in to get an early start on preview night. I met up with many of my collecting buddies at preview night and it was fun. Later I went to a nice dinner with about 35 collectors associated with Felix comic art. I sat across from Daniel Warren Johnson for the 3 hours and there was great conversation. After that a few of us wanted to keep the night going so we went to a bar up the street a bit from the restaurant. The four of us had a drink and then the bar was closing as it was midnight and it was a Wednesday so we had to move on. Tom and I decided we were not ready to call it a night so we carried on. We ended up outside an Irish pub that had changed ownership recently and still looked like a pub but was a Mexican night club. We asked if we could come in drink and they said sure so we did. It was empty but had neon lights and some smoke machine for the stage while dance music throbbed in the background. I

think there was one or two other couples in there. We sat near the front stage and owner/manager came over to us. Well



dressed, intoxicated younger Hispanic man who we rapidly became friends with. He came by to talk to us a few times. We got a few kisses on the head and were offered prostitutes and drugs, both of which we declined. He brought over a few rounds of complementary beers and tequila shots and we were there for hours. I joked to Tom what we might be in Hotel California. He kept asking us what we wanted and at one point Tom pointed across the room at a neon sign of a naked girl. He went to consult with his co-owner and within a few minutes of negotiating, Tom had a trophy to take home with him. Tom took this back to the hotel to plug in so the other guys would see it when they woke up in the morning. For the rest of the con, Albert had it plugged in at his booth. It is a really fun story and that night defined SDCC 2022 for me.

The next day I got up early with Alan to go to the show. Just before we left I was really feeling the lack of sleep from the late night and decided either to come back for a nap later or nap now since we were so far away. I went back to bed and had a later start to the day. It was a good day at the con. I walked the full show on the first day and came across a booth of a guy selling anime cels. He was in his 50's or 60's and he was there selling his dad's collection. His dad was still living and decided to cash out instead of leaving it all to his



kids which seemed to be a bit of a sticking point with the son who was selling the art. They

had a few nice Miyazaki cels on the wall. After going through all the cells they had which was about 20 portfolios worth, I decided the two Miyazaki cels were the ones I wanted. It was an expensive purchase but it is rare to find these for sale outside of auctions. Here they are. One is from Kiki's Delivery Service and the other from Castle in the Sky/Laputa. I also went back and looked at a piece by Gary Gianni that I had seen at preview night and decided to get as a Gianni has been on my want list for a long time and they don't appear very often. No commissions for me at this show. That day I ran into my best friend from Italy, Giovanni who was in town from



Tom with his Trophy

Milan for the show. We hung out at the show, I helped him find a rare comic he was searching for and we decided to meet up later. This was the night of the Brian Peck art dinner which I had signed up for. I told Brian I would be bringing a friend. Towards the end of the show we caught wind the Comicbook Legal Defence fund was having an auction that evening at a nicer hotel out of the con area. We decided to go check it out before dinner. So we headed up to the hotel and went to the floor they were holding the auction. It was a much more posh hotel than where I was staying. We were too early. We had a little over an hour to kill so we decided to have a seat outside on the nice patio area they had in front of the hotel. They had a live music, a nice girl with a guitar doing covers. We ordered some drinks and a cheese plate to share while we waited. I put in a request for Landslide by Fleetwood Mac with a nice tip and she did a great version of it. The singer turned out to be a trained opera singer and one of the guests who knew requested some opera. So we had a really surreal experience listening to live opera outside a hotel waiting for a comic art auction. Lots of fun and another defining moment of the trip. The auction turned out not to have anything of interest and was quite small. It was also a party for the CBLD and we didn't want to crash that although we had access. So we headed out to meet up the Brian Peck crew. I was thankful for the cheese plate as I had eaten at the restaurant we were going to twice last time at San Diego and I remembered specifically how utterly bad and uninspired their food was. Covid had changed nothing about the place. After dinner we said good night and I wanted to meet up with the guys for another wild night. I got a text from Tom to meet at a Whiskey bar that I had wandered past. I met him there with Satya, Andy, Albert Moy and Frederic from France. I am not a whiskey fan but I had my first expensive whiskey that night. Single malt 12 year Japanese Whisky and it was life changing... and expensive. I came home from the trip with two bottles of Japanese whisky. Although we had a lot of fun there and Tom had this shirt that blended into the seat pattern behind him so he seemed to disappear, it was too expensive to continue drinking there. We decided to find somewhere else to drink. As we wandered on we came across the same bar Tom and I had spent the night at the night before. This night it was packed with a line up outside, live Mexican dance music and bouncers. We spotted our friend and manager from the night before and he got us in. Not only that, he roped off the back section and couches for us in a VIP area. We drank Mexican beer



Mexican Club aka Hotel California

and had a round of Tequila shots on the house. It was a lot of fun and we spent some time on the dance floor. When the band left and the bikers started coming in around 3 am we started heading back to our hotels. After walking with the guys to their place I took an Uber home. I slept in again the next morning.

I went back to the con and Gio and Alan and I made plans to take an Uber over to the new Comic Art Museum. It was quite an impressive building with a great Spider-man exhibition. There was also a Dave Stevens exhibition and a nice *Archie Through the Decades* exhibition. I had actually gone to a panel on the Archie exhibition the day before as well as one on the Best and Worst Manga of 2022. After the Archie panel I got to meet the executives at Archie and asked them a little about the Archie project Bob and I were working on but that has stalled out. Hopefully we will get that going again soon. The museum was great and we had a good time. We took the shuttle bus back to



Scott Eder, myself and Giovanni at SDCC



Marvel Exhibition at San Diego Comic Art Museum

the con. I met up with Gio, Satya, Micah, Scott Eder and his wife for dinner and we headed almost out of town for a Korean BBQ place they knew of. It was great. Toward the end of the evening I started to feel a bit under the weather. I decided I wasn't up for another night of drinking and went home early to get some sleep. I got several texts to come out even at 3 am but needed the rest. That night I had fever and chills similar to what my roommate had described having just prior to arriving at the con. I felt lousy Saturday but got up, put a mask on and went to get some Tylenol, Gatorade and a club sandwich to sustain me for what I knew would be at least a day in bed. The first day was the worst. By Sunday I was a bit better and still spent most of the day in bed but was able to get out on to the balcony and read the last APA for part of the day. Monday morning I was still a bit off but much better and I moved from the hotel I was sharing to another as my wife was coming down to spend a few days with me. We went to the zoo that day which was brilliant. Great zoo with terrible wayfinding. That evening I had access to my first covid test since I got sick. That is one solid positive line that lit up long before the solution got to even the control bar. All our plans changed and we got two separate rooms. On day 6 of my

illness we got our rental convertible and drove to LA. We had plans to stay and hang out with Satya for that part of the trip but didn't want to put anyone else at risk and so stayed in a hotel. We managed to salvage a reasonable trip out of it all and Jane managed to avoid Covid. We flew home a few days later.

**Ohio ComicArtFans weekend.** This is something Bill Cox and I talked about when I was down to visit him earlier in the year. He wanted to set something up to get local collectors together to go to the Marvel show in Columbus and since he had never been to the Billy Ireland Museum, to set something up there. I had given him the business card of a contact at the Museum from my last visit and so he was able to set up a special visit for us all which included a behind the scenes tour of the Museum and access to tour their archives/storage areas which are impressive. I had seen them before on my first visit to the Museum but it is rare they open them up to the public. There were about 40 of us and they put on a first rate presentation. Everything started on the Friday at the Billy Ireland. I had only a very narrow window of time off so I left after work on the Thursday to drive to Cleveland. I met up with Joe Dragunas, his wife and



Billy Ireland Tour

cats and we went out for food and movie. We went to see Thor at a cinema with big, reclining seats and I had a nice nap during part



Mini Dueling Dealers with Mike Burkey, Bill Cox and Anthony Snyder

of the movie which I sorely needed and allowed me to continue my late night travels onto Columbus after the show. I was very impressed with the turnout at the museum and other than a half dozen of the 40 people there, I didn't recognize any of them. That night we all went out for dinner and had a good time. Afterwards the party was in Bill Cox and Mike Burkey's suite. A mini version of Dueling Dealers was done for our benefit. That was a lot of fun. It was a late night and I headed back to my room trying not to wake up my roommate who had called it a night a bit earlier than I had. I was rooming with fellow CFA-APA mate Gary Land this time. The next day there was a original comic art convention in our hotel that Bill set up and there probably about 50 people that attended. Mike Burkey and Anthony Snyder were there along with a few other people who

set up. After that we all went to the big Marvel Exhibition at the museum across the river from the hotel. It was a spectacular exhibition and the original art they had on the wall was very impressive. I debated changing my name legally to Eric Roberts. Gary and I went a bit early to the restaurant we were going to for dinner to have a drink first. It was a very nice night as well. I got some sleep and got up around 5:30 to drive home as I had an evening shift and wanted a nap before I had to work. I did not pick up any art (or viruses) that weekend.

**Toronto Fan Expo.** I have access to dealer passes for life to this show otherwise I would not go. It is everything that is wrong with comics and how comic cons have been usurped by media, toys and everything else that is not comics. My friend Ruben was staying with us for a few days around the time of the con so we decided to go down for the Friday. A lunch was set up lunch for Ruben, myself, fellow local APAmate Bob Kopman and Mike Kirton. That is always a group to hang out with and after a fun lunch we went to the con for a few hours. I dropped off some Scooby Do art I had sold to a local dealer and then we did the con. It was everything I dislike from the crowds to the lack of comics but we still managed to have some fun and run into friends. I did end up with some art from Ferd, an old time Winnipeg based dealer. He had some cool, twice up early Marvel art to Kathy, a teen book written by Stan Lee and illustrated by Stan Goldberg. Fun, inexpensive art. We left the con and went for the dinner get together with my buddy Rob and Mke Kirton again. Sorry, no pictures of this one.

Just a little over 48 hours ago I hosted my annual comic art gathering. It was a decent turn out. We had a total of 25 collectors and it ran pretty late. I managed not to set the bbq on fire which so far has been an annual tradition. There were a few new faces, a few regulars that couldn't make it and a good time was had by all. Fellow APAmates George Hagenauer and Bob Kopman were there along with former APA member Rich Dannys making his first visit. I did a scaled down version of it during the past 2 pandemic summers. 6



Art Gathering 2022

people in my pool area the first year and then two groups of 10 last year. This year was the first time to reconnect with many of the local collectors. I never get to see as much art or talk with some as much as I would like as being the host takes up time but I am so happy to do it. We went to bed around 3:45 which is a few hours earlier than normal. I showed some of the guests a few pieces I picked up in a larger collection that I recently acquired. There will be a future APA segment on that, but not this time.

Cambridge Mini Meet up – I met with fellow CFA-APA member John Stuart, Alan Benard and Don VanHorne, all local collectors in Cambridge, Ontario. I had always wanted to get them all together but it never worked pre-pandemic. I drove out to meet them for a

dinner and then we brought out art at John's house and had a great time looking at art and talking shop. I am hoping that creating these little networks leads to friendships and collectors helping others out.

Next issue I'll probably write a bit about, New York Comic Con, Lucca and Thought Bubble conventions and then Angouleme in the issue after that. I think I might have gotten the convention bug out of my system after that run of shows although San Diego was so much fun this year, I might need to revisit sooner than later.

Sorry for such a mishmash of thoughts and topics this time. I'd love to hear your thoughts on some of the topics so feel free to comment next time.

I don't have time to write full mailing comments but here are a few selective ones. Please don't take it personally if I didn't comment on your article this time. My copy of APA is well travelled. I started reading it in San Diego. It came with me to Ohio and made an appearance at the Original art con there. It made an appearance at the Toronto comic art gathering. I finished reading it just a few days ago in Cuba. It was a great read and thank you to all that wrote.

**David Applegate** – how could you not write a great article this time? I learned a lot about Byrne from you including his stints as a ghost on comic strips. Nice presented.

**Kenn Buchanan** – very touching and insightful tribute to George Perez. Thank you for that.

**Ray Cuthbert** – Well done tribute to Neal Adams. Interesting insight into pulps as well.

**Alan Dion** – I liked Ramona the several times I met her. Nice article.

**George Hagenauer** – great to see you again after so long.

**Wally Harrington** – Nice Camilla page and thanks for the info on Marcia, not a name I knew before and I thought I was pretty well versed in Fiction House artist.

**Bob Kopman** – I love reading about the Hernandez Brothers. Beto is my favorite to read and I like his art better but I'll admit Jaime is the better artist. Nice selection of pages. It was good to see you at the gathering and for lunch and FanExpo.

**Gary Land** – I enjoyed your travelogue. It was good to catch up with you at a few common points along the way. I might see you next weekend in NYC!

**Mark Nevins** – well, at least when you make a mistake, you make a good one. I owned that very Wrightson page for a few years. It is very impressive in person and congratulations on the From Hell page.

**Stuart Sayger** – this was my favorite article this time. I thought your analysis of Byrne and Perez was game changing for me. I had not thought of their art and the change in style they brought to comics in such well thought out terms. I know comics before them and after them were different but couldn't quite dissect it out like you did. You gave me a lot to think about.

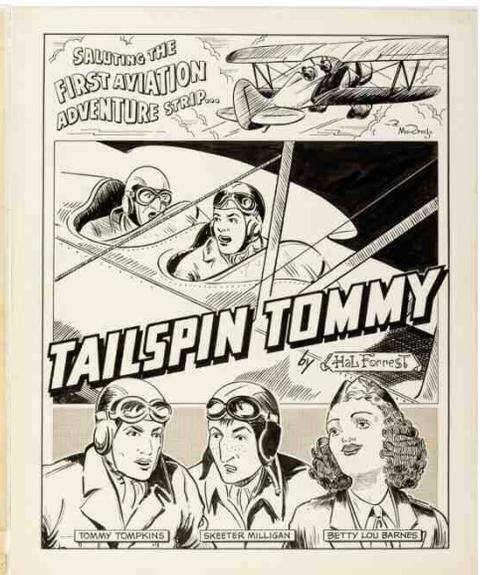
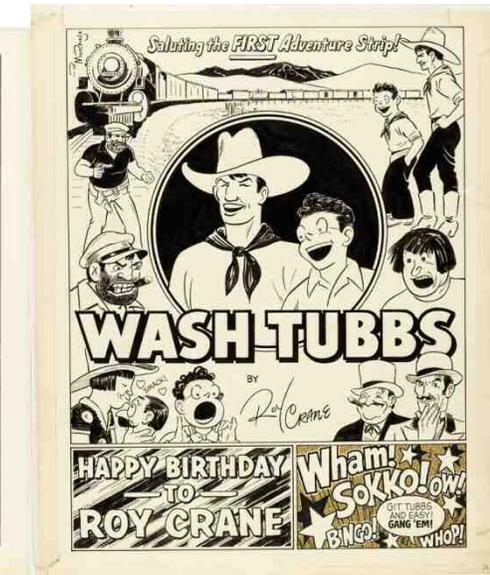
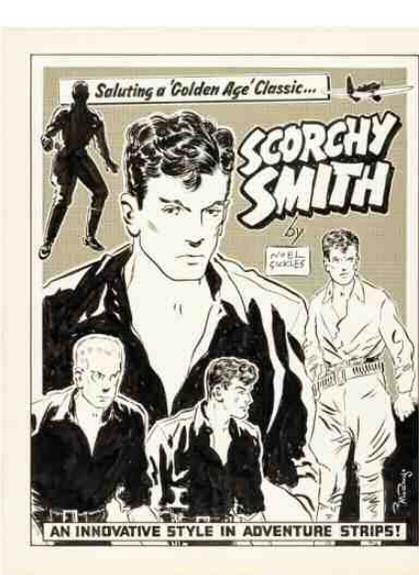
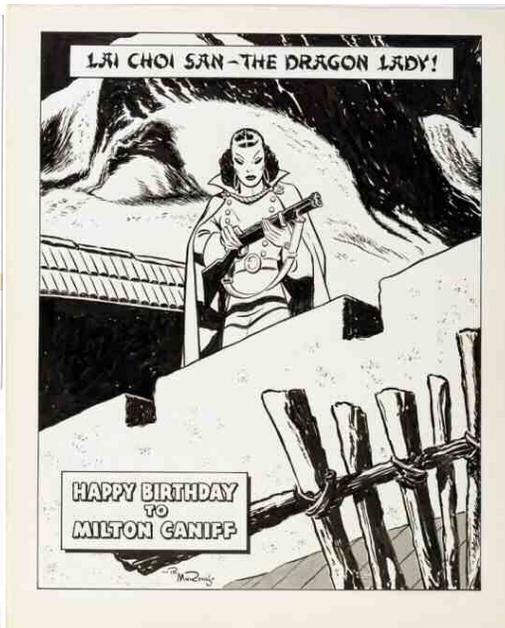
**John Stuart** – It was nice to see you again after so many years. Thanks for being such a great host. We will need to do it again soon.

**Michael O'Connell** – thanks for passing on the Perez page you discussed here to me. I now have some proper Perez art in my collection.





Here are a few new additions since the last mailing.



Oksner Showcase 77 Cover and some Comic Buyer's Guide covers by Bob Murphy.