



THREE ROCKS

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Inside Wendy Pini's Chainmail Bikini

In the '70s the artist Frank Thorne appeared at conventions with women dressed in chainmail bikinis as Red Sonja. Pete Doree celebrated Thorne's birthday in 2009 with a tribute to the "dirty old man" and all his Sonjas, who included Wendy Pini before she launched *ElfQuest*. Pini's husband Richard showed up in the comments of Doree's blog with this response.

[T]hank you, Pete, for a very nicely balanced and upbeat reminiscence of those wonderful, heady days from the late 1970s. Although I could wax outrageously long-winded about the experience, I'll hold that in check and simply reply to something Steve [Thompson] posted (about being intimidated by Wendy's chainmail): I suspect the reason is that hers was the only costume that was made from actual steel.

If memory serves, Angelique Trouvere's used belly-dancing coins (very thin), and Wendy Snow's was foil-covered circles of cardboard.

But Wendy Pini wanted the costume be as accurate as both the artwork from the comics, and the fact that it was supposed to be armor, would demand.

So I had to scout out several hundred nickel-sized steel disks (roughly 2 mm thick), and then drill tiny holes into every one of them (breaking many bits in the process) so



she could sew them to a wire and leather armature for the top piece, and a leather breechcloth for the bottom.

The entire costume weighs over 20 pounds, and as Wendy often says, hers was the only Sonja costume that clanked. I suspect it was that, coupled with her dead-on serious take on the character, that intimidated. Heaven knows, it intimidated me at times!

Source: <http://bronzageofblogs.blogspot.com/2009/06/frank-thorne.html>. Photo of Wendy Pini from 1970s New York comic convention taken by Flickr user Brengibble: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/brengibble/174897978>. Panel from *The Savage Sword of Conan* #29 (Marvel Comics, 1974).

'Dick Tracy' from 9/11/2001



I found this perusing GoComics.Com, which archives the comic strip going all the way back to April 18, 2001. Given the tragic events of the day, I thought this scene of the con woman preacher Mistress of Death meeting her maker was eerie.

Alpha Mails

I'm a comics guy from way back, used to buy a ton, and then less, and then less still. Nowadays, I'm pretty much just buying Rick Geary's *Treasury of XXth Century Murder* books and comics-based non-fiction.

Interestingly, I first started reading comics about 1979 myself, mostly old *Sgt. Rock* and *Weird West* comics. I think I was buying the most back in the 1983 to 1989 timeframe, almost all DC as I had serious trouble getting into Marvel characters. I did buy some *X-Men* (the pirate issue) and would later discover my love for both *The Hulk* and *Daredevil*.

John Byrne is a hugely significant figure in the DC world, and I do remember some of his stuff on *X-Men*, but the key to his career for me will always be *The Man of Steel*. A GIANT turning point for Superman, making him readable again after years as a second rate

character, really. 1970s *Superman* is unreadable, as far as I'm concerned, and the art was often the worst. Though, I will always mourn the loss of Krypto ...

Neat little issue!

— Chris Garcia, April 30, 2013

Thanks. I followed all of Byrne's Marvel and DC projects in the '80s, particularly *Fantastic Four* and *Superman*.

The changes he made to Superman hold up pretty well, though they were finally abandoned in the 2009 mini-series *Superman: Birthright*. I particularly liked Byrne making Lex Luthor an evil industrialist who eventually becomes president of the United States. He was ahead of his time in proposing a moratorium on the use of fossil fuels.

Good luck on the Hugos! (Garcia edits two publications up for a Hugo Award this year as best fanzine — *The Drink Tank* and *Journey Planet* — and is nominated for best fan writer. Both 'zines can be found on efanzines.com.)

Mailing Comments for CA 582

Jim Korkis: I hope the *ElfQuest* archives at Columbia University include correspondence with all the film and television companies that tried to adapt the series. Wendy and Richard Pinis' experience with CBS in the 1980s sounds particularly gruesome. I wasn't aware that TV executives back then protected childhood me from elf miscegenation.

Gary Brown: Thanks for the Orlando MegaCon write-up. I've lived in St. Augustine for 16 years and attended several small cons around Jacksonville, but somehow never made the trek down to Orlando. I used to attend the Dallas Fantasy Fair each year, which drew numerous legends when it hosted the Harvey Awards.

Mark Verheiden: I hadn't thought of Gaslight Anthem as a Springsteen heir before, but "45" definitely sounds like something The Boss could've belted out. Another recent alt-rock song even more in his spirit is "Runaways" by The Killers. That song roars.

I'm not a big fan, but I got a deal on *Tunnel of Love* on Amazon a while back and have become hooked on "Brilliant Disguise."

Gaff: Great stuff in your time capsules of Aprils 1963 and 1968. I didn't know that Gil Kane made a bid at creator-owned comics with the magazine *His Name is ... Savage!* The history of the book is interesting. Pressure

from the big comic publishers made it difficult to get the book printed. Two printers accepted the job only to change their minds.

Once it was printed, there were problems in distribution. Only 10,000 of the 200,000 copies reached newsstands! Daniel Herman writes about the disaster in his book *Gil Kane: The Art of the Comics*.

My knowledge of DC did not extend to Miss Arrowette from *World's Finest* 134, whose spectacularly lame name suggested a quick fade to obscurity.

Her character history on Wikipedia did not disappoint. She must be the only super-hero felled by carpal tunnel syndrome. She's also a lousy mother, turning her daughter into the current Arrowette by being an excessively demanding parent. She was such a bad mom Max Mercury turned her in to child welfare officials.

Hurricane Heeran: Your experiences as a Quinnipiac pollster were remarkably free of abuse from people you call. Did you leave those stories out?

The emphasis on baseball is strange. I wonder if any politician picked a favorite team after running it past focus groups.

On my site the Drudge Retort at drudge.com, I often used Quinnipiac polls because of the organization's reputation and ideological independence. Do you trust its polls more or less after working there?

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