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\*\*\*\*\*Richall Press Goes Monthly\*\*\*\*\*

Actually, I should have said, 'Yellow Tangerine goes monthly'. Oh, well... This issue will include mailing comments from APA-5 #34 (a mailing that was lost in a pile of K-as until today, when I found it) and a short article about one of those elusive cartoonists from the early underground comics era...

Tony Bell

A while back, someone asked who the devil Tony Bell (who had inked some Wonder Warthog strips for Drag Cartoons) was. Now, I had known that Tony Bell had a three page strip in the Gilbert Shelton edited Radical Amerika Comics, so I figured he must have been someone Shelton knew from way back who had never really gotten into underground comics.

Recently, I ran into an insurance salesman who claimed to know Tony Bell as recently as a year ago and proceeded to fill me in on who Tony Bell was. This guy, Bob Cloninger, ran into Tony Bell via Clara, Tony's bride-to-be. Briefly described, Tony looks like a motorcycle hood (from the mid 1960s) and has a large 'beer belly', and talks and acts about like you'd expect such a person to. He works at a straight job for about one hour a week designing the outsides of computer components (this is his main source of income). He draws a one page comic strip 'Motorcross Cat', about a drag racing cat, for a monthly tabloid drag magazine published in Austin, Texas (the editor is his next door neighbor). From what I can gather, 'Motorcross Cat' has been appearing on a monthly basis for the last three or so years. Bob told me that he met Tony just as Tony was running out of ideas for 'Motorcross Cat' and that he used to help Tony write the strip and they'd stay up all night brainstorming sometimes. Tony also is a designer and has designed several bars and lounges out on the west coast. He and Clara love to fly around to all these auctions and buy stuff cheap that he can resell later for a good amount. One time, according to Bob, he bought a lot of 250 stuffed animal heads (moose, deer, and other animals) and sold several of these to the bars he was designing for outrageous sums.

Tony Bell had an outrageous sense of humor as well and at every party that he and Clara gave (one every week or so), a pie would have to be thrown at someone (no matter how formal the party was...this was a tradition). When Tony was married, all of his friends grabbed him and threw him into this Giant pie they had whipped up for the occasion. Bob was always doing Tony all sorts of favors and in return, Tony would do Bob favors...like if Bob needed his lawn mowed, Tony would go out and mow it ..even though he could have been making more by doing something else. Tony also has a strange workshop and is an expert in many things mechanical. According to Bob, he designed and built the Batmobile used for the BATMAN TV show. He is also building a racing car and a small airplane (both from his designs) from scratch. In any event, apparently a most interesting person.

Bob could not get anything out of Tony regarding his hand (if any) in doing the Freak Brothers and Wonder Warthog. What Bob did find out came by way of Clara who said that he had created both groups and later gave them to Gilbert Shelton when Gilbert saw a way to make money from them. Tony has

this thing about not discussing anything he did in the past so it was kind of difficult to get this information from him (Bob really didn't care one way or the other anyway). My guess is that Tony Bell didn't have anything to do with the creation of Wonder Warthog but was instrumental in its success in the drag mags (both by inking and providing a lot of the technical knowhow). The fact that he might have had a hand in the creation of the Freak Brothers is news to me, although since he and Shelton both lived in Austin at the time, this could be possible. I understand that Bob believed that Fat Freddy was modeled after Tony Bell and if that's the case, it would be quite possible that Tony Bell was involved somehow in their creation. For what it is worth, Bob thought that a local Austin character (who showed up at many of Tony's parties), Jim Franklin was modeled after Freewheelin' Frank. That's about all I learned from talking to Bob Cloninger. I had a lot of unanswered questions, but the only way I could have gotten any answers was to talk to Tony Bell and that was kind of out of the question. Too bad.

\*\*\*\*\*Mailing Comments #34\*\*\*\*\*

Chris Warner: Ah, the problems of composing on stencil. While I try to catch all typographical errors, this doesn't mean I'll always succeed (in fact I noticed you made quite a few yourself in EA #19), but I digress. After thinking about it for a while, I see your point about similar lifestyles being a requirement for friendship. For a good many of us, I would imagine that this is the case. A lot depends on how you define friendship, though...different people have different standards.

I was relating to your comment as it applied to me, which is why I said what I said. I have several friends who are into somewhat different lifestyles, yet this doesn't particularly prevent us from being friends. I'm a very tolerant individual, so this might have something to do with it...I don't know. I also have this strange belief that there is nothing so important that it is worth taking seriously. A strange statement, perhaps and definitely one I can't adequately explain without going into a lot more detail.

Environment was a better word than lifestyle and means more in terms of your argument (to me at least). I find that I come closer to agreeing with what you said about friendship when you substitute the word environment for lifestyle. Environment covers a lot more...mostly the reasons behind why a person does a certain thing that the actual thing itself (which would be close to what I call lifestyle). The reason behind an action has always been more important than the action itself. The problem with an apa is that due to the form of communication, it is often not easy to ascertain the reasons behind the actions. Besides, telephone calls are free if you know how...Right Mad Marcus?

I'll hunt for Lean Years, but I doubt that it will ever make it to Tallahassee. Not that Tallahassee is any more repressive than it used to be, but that underground comics distribution is terrible. May have to order it from Bud Plant.

It's always interesting to see how you try to dechrome APA-5 by occasionally throwing in a few half-hearted 'fuck you's. It can be a dangerous game though, if the wrong people take you too seriously. Can cause you some real hard feelings.

Actually, I've heard tons of horror stories about people being abused and ripped off by Warren. I guess the moral is that if Warren thinks that you will be useful to him in the future, he'll treat you right. If he doesn't think you to be that useful, then probably you'll get treated like shit.

As my old 1964 Decca Stereo was kind of shot, I splurged and bought a better system at a garage sale for \$50. Included were a Garrard S-55 turntable, two Olsen speakers and an Olsen amp. Not much, but worth \$50.

Paul Chadwick: I don't think that a motion to abolish mailing comments would pass or could be enforced. However, a motion to deny page credit for mailing comments could be passed and could be enforced.

Hair hassles can be fun...particularly if you work in a rather conservative field (say accounting) and work with a bunch of rednecks to boot (to say nothing of still being on 'probation'). I never really allowed my hair to get too long (while I was living at home), because my mother would scream and yell for 4 hours straight a day, until I got it cut. Being lazy (and not wishing to move out and get a job), I felt that getting my hair cut was a cheap price to pay in return for the peace and quiet it afforded me. Later, (out on my own) I did let it get longer, but found that it was too much of a hassle to keep it clean. So, now it is somewhat shorter. I guess all of what I've been saying can be summed up by this dialog that I occasionally have with Captain Illo, one of the farm out type people around Tallahassee.

"Peace, Captain Illo, Peace!"

"Tell me Great Rich...are you a hippie?"

"This is true."

"But you have short hair..."

"I am an incognito hippie."

Gary Bruin: Yes, while Ditko did do thosetwo issues of Hogan's Heroes (as well as an issue or two of Get Smart and about 4 or 5 stories for ACG), they were inked by Sal Trapani and that makes a world of difference. That illustration that Adkins did looked too good to be Adkins. Whoops, maybe I had better watch what I am saying, or I won't be able to oneday show up on the Dan Adkins doorstep and get a job as an inker for Marvel comics. You must not have wanted to meet Roy Crane all that badly because you sure weren't at the Orlandocon...and it wasn't that far away either.

Greg Puryear: I've always liked Jeopardy as it was a gameshow that allowed you to be a little more than an inactive viewer and it does enable you to learn a little something each time you watch. A couple of people from the Planet of the Apes TV show were at the DC Worldcon and were totally unimpressed with the way Marvel had been getting all the articles wrong. I liked the old F-TROOP TV show and even have a complete book of original artwork from F-Troop #2 by that fabulous pro among pros, Tony Fracchio/Williamsune/Tallerico. The only thing I can say about Williamsune art is that it looks a little better in original size than it does reduced down...just barely.

That comment about Marty Griem asking Tony Isabella whether his art was any good or not just about broke me up. Reminds me of a time four years ago when Bob Cosgrove made the statement that Marty Greim could get a job in pro comics any time he wanted (all Marty had to do was say 'when') and was nearly laughed out of K-a.

Ron Harris: As I understand it many of the Dell books were actually produced by Western Printing and Lithographing, who owned the licenses on the various characters (Disney, Lantz, MGM, Warner Bros. etc...) and just sold the completed books to Dell (who published them). Somewhere along the way, the Western printing people decided they could make more money on their own and took the characters they owned the licenses on and founded Gold Key. Dell, which had never been actually producing comic books, took what was left and started from scratch. I guess the people who were in charge figured any old garbage would sell and that was what they took great pains to produce. At least this is the way I heard it. Only a couple of the old artists went to work for the new Dell which accounts for the turnover in art.

While I don't know what led to this break, I think it had to do with Dell's charging 15¢ while everyone else charged 10¢. This move was rapidly destroying Dell and they had many titles which enjoyed a 1,000,000 plus circulation prior to the price change which dropped to 2 or 300,000 during the change. Clearly such a decision was not too wise and was what (I feel) led to the decline of the funny animal comics and the rise of the Second Heroic Age of Comics. Not the rise really, but rather the success. When comic readers could get three other comics for the price of two Dells...which do you think they chose (regardless of the fact that the Dells probably had just as many pages of comics)?

Section T was the highlight of the issue for me and I really got a lot out of your discussion of the various artistic styles and how they influenced you over the years. So you can imagine that I'm really looking forward to your discussion on the ways to identify various inkers. I have a few little things I watch for in inkers myself, but I know there are a lot more I don't know about (because not being an artist, I don't notice a lot of things that an artist like you would).

I recall that one of Mort Walker's assistants on Beetle Bailey draws the CDC title of the same name. And the Peanuts comic books for Dell always had covers that were signed by "Charles Schulz". I had assumed he drew the covers and some Dell staff artist (who was damn good) drew the interiors. I don't know who it was, but they sure did a good job.

Art Scott: Other Warren projects which have folded besides Blazing Combat would include Spacemen (8 issues), Help (26 issues), Screen Thrills Illustrated (10 issues), Monster World (10 issues) and Wildest Westerns (6 or 7 issues). When you consider that most of these folded around the same time, one can see why Warren was having financial problems during the early period of Creepy and Eerie's existences. Besides, Blazing Combat was quarterly and The Spirit is bimonthly. I figure at least 3 more issues before we hear a bad word (recall how #1s sales will be misleading because so few were distributed and dealers and collectors pounced on every available copy they could find).

Jim V: I had hoped to mention some of my collecting interests this time around, but it looks like I ran out of space before I ran out of things to type. And if I want to get this to Art (who I assume won...I haven't heard the final outcome) in time. Yeah trying to keep up a communication with everybody in an apa can be a real time consuming task. Me, I try to keep up with the people who really count...the people who I have things I want to SPEAK OF. That might not have sounded too brilliant, but when you're composing on stencil... I really look forward to reviews of things I don't have, particularly when it's from a reviewer I highly respect. I remember reading about Thompson raves over Crockett Johnson's Barnaby and the first time I saw a copy of the book, I pounced on it (and found it to be truly good work). Or when Dwight Decker praised Milt Gross' He Done Her Wrong. It took me a couple of years to get a hold of a copy, but when I did, I found it to be everything Decker had said it would be. By the same token, I'm looking forward to getting Lynn Ward's four graphic novels, but \$25 sure is steep, so I'll wait a while.

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Well, I guess that about wraps up this issue. With a little luck, I should be back next month, with more mailing comments and assorted trivia and maybe even another letter from Marty Greim. I certainly hope so. Mary Greim is one of my favorite people to get letters from. They really crack me up.

Best Rich 10-14-74