

Glen Cadigan's Five Years of Yesterday

GLEN CADIGAN

Author

Residence:
St. John's,
Newfoundland
and Labrador



I don't go all the way back to the beginning of TwoMorrows, but I was there for five years from 2003–08, and in that time I edited four books (plus wrote one *Alter Ego* cover story), so my tenure covers years 10 through 15. For the fannish record, here are my memories of that time in my life:

TwoMorrows first appeared on my radar when I saw *The All-Star Companion* at my local comic book store. It was on a shelf with all of the new DC comics, which is where stores should stock such books, but often don't. It was later joined by issues of *Alter Ego* (#6 and 7), so this was back in 2000. Together that was enough to let me know this was the new behind-the-scenes publisher of comic book material. *Wizard* was still around, but it didn't cover old comics, and it wasn't what it used to be, either. So TwoMorrows had picked up the torch and I took note.

The implications of *The All-Star Companion* were immediately apparent, namely that there should be more books like it that covered the other DC super-groups. The Legion of Super-Heroes was the obvious next choice—at least to me, anyway—so I waited for it to happen. It didn't, even though I waited a long time. Eventually, a crazy thought entered my brain: why couldn't I do a book on the Legion of Super-Heroes?

I had a Legion website at the time (called *The Legion of Super-Heroes Online Companion*), and part of the site involved writing bios of past creators. I enjoyed doing the research and also thought a good way to spruce it up would be to include interviews with those still living. But a millisecond later, another thought entered my mind: "Why go to all that trouble and then give it away for free? Wouldn't it be better to put them in a book and sell it?"

My first TwoMorrows contact was actually P.C. Hamerlinck, editor of *Fawcett Collectors of America*. I was looking for a photo of Otto Binder in the 1950s for my Legion site and saw P.C.'s e-mail address on a Yahoo! group where he was promoting *The Fawcett Companion*, which had just come out. So I shot him an e-mail and we had a pleasant exchange. Much later, when that crazy idea entered

my head, I e-mailed him back ("Remember me?") and asked if he thought TwoMorrows might be interested in a book about the Legion.

He said he thought TwoMorrows would be very interested and I should go ahead and contact John Morrow to let him know. I later found out (and John can correct me on this if it isn't true) that the idea of doing another *Companion* book on a different DC property was kicked around the TwoMorrows offices, and the Legion was specifically mentioned, but none of the usual TwoMorrows suspects was interested in doing it.

So, when I reached out, John was interested, just like P.C. had said he would be. I remember John telling me that it would have to be different from the site (not just bios and indexes), and I was glad because I really wanted to do interviews. I had already interviewed Jim Mooney via phone—I found him on eBay—and had that in my back pocket in case I was asked to show what I could do. I wasn't, but John did say that he wanted to wait until he saw Paul Levitz face-to-face at San Diego that year to see what he thought of a Legion book.

I remember waiting months to find out if I'd gotten the green light. When I did get John on the phone again, he said that Paul's response was, "I'd like to see it." That was like getting a blessing from the Godfather, so it was full steam ahead! What people don't know is that Tom Galloway approached John at the same convention and pitched a Legion book, too. To John's credit, he stuck with me. I certainly didn't have Tom's credentials at the time, but John chose to go home with the one who brought him, and I can't say that every publisher would have done that.

When *The Legion Companion* was put to bed, I was speaking with John and he said, "What do you want to do for your next book?" I took that as a sign he liked the first one, so I said, "One about the Teen Titans." Both the *Legion* and the *Titans* were best-sellers at DC at the same time, and they had organized APAs, so I knew in both cases there was a fan base to sustain each volume.

Another thing people don't know is that John mailed me his Silver Age *Teen Titans* collection so

Below: Glen was a fan of this other well known, non-DC teenage super-hero as a kid.



I could read it as research. This was before digital comics, and that's a lot of faith to place in both myself and the postal system. Think of all of those Nick Cardy comics that could've been lost! One mishap at the Canadian border and they would've been gone forever. I know that I wouldn't mail any one my childhood comic books, but John mailed me his. I had the rest of the run covered, so he didn't have to worry about those.

While I was working on *The Titans Companion*, I had an idea to go back and do another Legion book called *The Best of the Legion Outpost*. Someone I met through my Legion website, Kevin McConnell, sent me copies of a complete set, and there was a lot of artwork that I didn't use in *The Legion Companion*, plus a couple of interviews with Legion editors from the '70s. I figured with a little bit more work (calling up David Michelinie and Bob Rozakis for an article about the *Karate Kid* comic), it would make for a good book. And pound for pound, I think it delivered. It was also a way to attach some permanence to the efforts of the first generation of Legion fandom, and to remind modern day fans of what had gone before.

Speaking of those *Outpost* fans, I knew I wanted introductory material by its original editors, Mike Flynn and Harry Broertjes. I budgeted two pages, but it came out to three. I didn't want to cut what they'd said, so I cut a one-page history of *The Legion Outpost* that I'd written instead. But I didn't want to cut it, either, so I put it on the inside front cover. I thought it was genius; talk about getting bang for your buck! I had to explain that to John, but he let it slide.

A similar thing happened with *The Titans Companion*. I'd asked Geoff Johns for an introduction and he agreed. But when enough time passed with nothing to show for it, I lost faith and designer Bill Walko suggested turning the two budgeted pages into a roll call instead. That was a great idea, so we did that, but I took one last shot at Geoff Johns anyway.

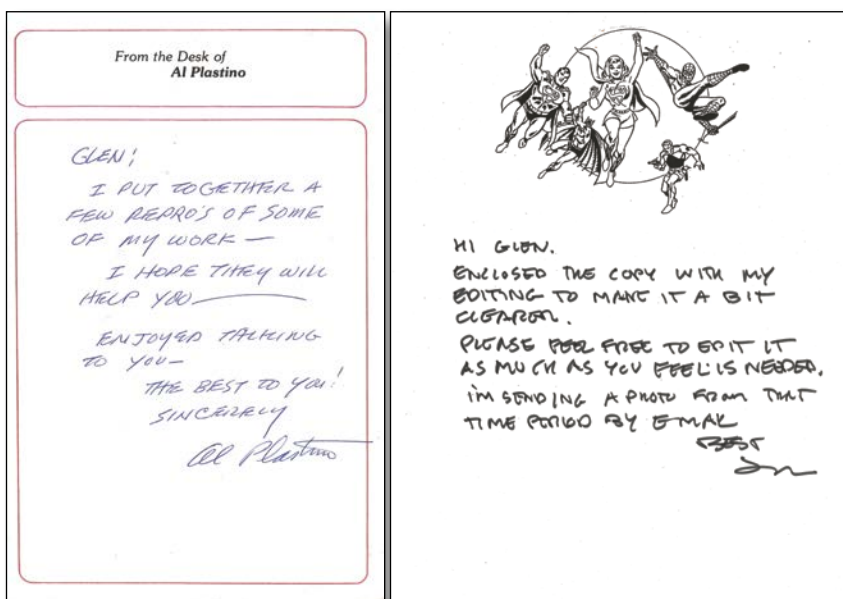
With just one day to go, I sent him a now-or-never e-mail, expecting it to go unanswered. I was wrong—he explained that he'd just returned to L.A. from filming the pilot for the *Blade* TV show in Vancouver, and he'd do it right away. And he did, which led to a new problem: all the pages were accounted for, and I didn't want to cut the Roll Call. It was solid and, besides, Geoff's intro was only one page long and the Roll Call twice that.

I decided to move the table of contents to the inside front cover instead and I still remember talking to John on the phone about it. "We've nev-



er put a table of contents on the cover before," he said, in his way of letting me know what he thought of the decision. But I explained and he looked the other way. And then I did it again on *The Titans*

Above: Dave Cockrum's late career cover for the *Legion Companion*, and notes for artists Al Plastino and Jim Mooney Glen that received while working on the book.





Companion 2, and he let that slide, too.

I still think it was a great idea. Haven't you ever tried to find the table of contents in a magazine, but couldn't? It was right there for easy reference. And when I saw Roy Thomas put artwork on the inside front cover of *The All-Star Companion* Vol. 2, I figured somebody else thought it was a good idea to use up that real estate, too.

Ultimately, the *Companion* books came to an end. I did three, so I was tied with Michael Eury for second place. Only Roy Thomas did more (four). Michael and I were each given one half of a silver medallion, which we still wear to this day.

Here are some random thoughts and memories from my time with TwoMorrrows:

I'm convinced Jim Starlin was drawing when I interviewed him for *The Legion Companion*. He just sounded like he was doing something else, that's all I can tell you.

When I called Jim Shooter, I was ten minutes late because it had snowed the night before and my phone line was dead. I don't know why, but it came back to life and we did the interview, fingers crossed the whole time.

A similar thing happened when I interviewed Neal Adams. There was a power outage on my end, and for some reason my phone needed batteries to work. I call that my battery powered

interview because the tape recorder required batteries, too. My stress level was very high due to the prospect of equipment failure, but it was worth it when he casually mentioned that Frank Miller was stopping by later and they were going to talk about doing something with Batman. I guess they didn't do it or I would've heard about it.

Twice when I cold-called someone about setting up an interview, they said, "How about now?" The first time was with Dave Cockrum and I wasn't ready. The second time it was Al Plastino and I was. Dave was actually sitting by the fire during a power outage (what is it with me and blackouts?), which was why he hadn't replied to my e-mails. I was always ready to roll after Dave Cockrum.

People told me that Al Plastino was angry at how the industry had treated him, so he wouldn't do an interview. They were wrong—he wasn't bitter, and he went on to do interviews with others after I broke the ice. He even started going to shows and doing commissions, so don't believe what you hear.

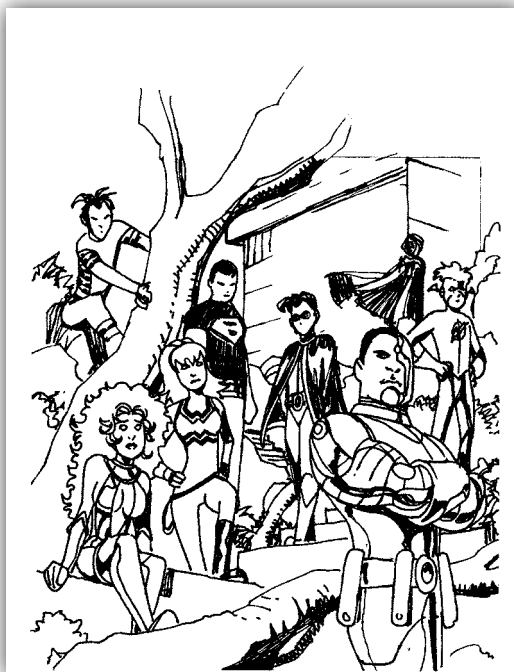
I learned that when you get someone on the phone, ask them everything because you might never hear from them again. So when I interviewed George Pérez about *The New Teen Titans*, I think I spoke to him for about two hours, and I still had more questions to ask. He told me to call him back the next day, and when I did, the first thing he said was, "Yeah, I can't talk that long today." I felt a little bad for cutting into his drawing time, but I knew that the readers of the book were counting on it!

Speaking of the readers, my goal was to always give them something

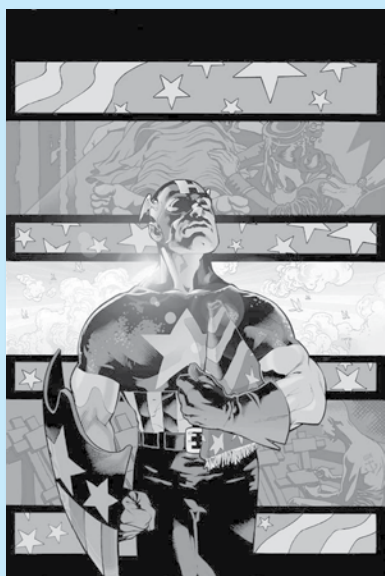
that they couldn't get anywhere else. That's why I did interviews and not indexes, and that's why some disgruntled readers contacted me and asked why *The Legion Companion* wasn't more like *The All-Star Companion*. I heard that more than once.

A trip down memory lane wouldn't be complete without mentioning the cover artists. Dave Cockrum did the first two of my books and Phil Jimenez did the third. I asked Phil well in advance, so far that he got back to me once and said he didn't think he still had the time. When I told him when it really had to be in, I think he laughed.

Mike McKone did the cover of my last TwoMorrrows book and I interviewed him in person at San Diego the same year I headed out there and helped set up the TwoMorrrows booth. I also helped tear it down, and I remember making a mad dash with a dolly filled with boxes of books down the front of the hall to make it to the FedEx office before it closed. Those were the days!



A BRIEF FORAY INTO THE MODERN AGE OF COMICS



Above: Planned for Summer 2001, *ComicoLOGY* #5 was to feature 35 years of Jack Kirby's New Gods, Greg Beettam and Stephen Geigen-Miller's Xeno's Arrow, a Tom DeFalco interview, Chris Staros and Brett Warnock of Top Shelf Productions, and Tony Harris, whose above art was to be the cover image.



And I couldn't have done what I did without my partners in crime: Chris Day on the *Legion* books and Bill Walko on the *Titans* ones. Bill did some of the interviews himself, especially the ones with the people responsible for the *Titans* cartoon. He also wrote the titles for each interview, and I still expect him to do his own books someday.

Chris Day had an idea to put Saturn Girl's symbol around the page numbers on *The Legion Companion*. I liked the visual, but changed it so that every interview had a different symbol that would correspond with the interviewee. So Dave Cockrum had Wildfire, Jim Starlin had Ultra Boy, and Otto Binder had Lightning Lad because his symbol looked the same as Captain Marvel's. Legion co-creator Al Plastino got the Saturn Girl symbol in the end, with Mort Weisinger, the third Legion co-creator, ending up with Cosmic Boy. I even "invented" a symbol for Devlin O'Ryan (based upon his shirt) and gave it to Tom Bierbaum. It appears on the inside front cover (that again!) with the other Legion symbols as a repeating pattern, an honor that was never officially bestowed upon the character by DC.

I also couldn't have done my books without a legion of art collectors, so thanks to them all! Steven Weill was the first, and he wandered up to the TwoMorrows table at San Diego the same year *The Legion Companion* was green lit because Eddy Zeno told him it might be happening—because

I asked Eddy for a copy of a Curt Swan interview from *Cartoonist PROfiles* in case it did. It really is a small community and I tell this story to prove it. Other major art collectors were Miki Annamanthadoo and Michael Lovitz, but all contributors were greatly appreciated.

A confession: if the TwoMorrows editors were a super-hero team circa 2004, we'd all sit around a T-shaped table with John and Pam at the top, Jon, Roy, Bill, P.C., and Michael T. down one side, and George, Michael, Eric, Mark, and myself down the other. Then the table would just get longer as our numbers grew, just like it did with the Legion of Super-Heroes.

Another thought: isn't it funny that a company that specializes in comic book history has a name that suggests the future? And after 25 years of covering comic book history, TwoMorrows now has its own history, and thus must cover itself. Those are the rules—look 'em up!

— Glen Cadigan

voted to contemporary comics.

Unfortunately, due to irreconcilable difficulties, *ComicoLOGY* proved not a good fit within the growing TwoMorrows family of magazines, despite *ComicoLOGY*'s stellar contents (featuring career-spanning interviews and extensive unpublished artwork) and smart design, as well as top-notch artists providing covers, including Bruce Timm, Michael Allred, and Paul Grist, among others. The last issue, #4—the "All Brian" ish—appeared in June 2001.

Previous page: Mike McKone's initial layout for the cover of *Titans Companion* 2 (center), and Glen amidst a sea of TwoMorrows books (including his own) at the 2012 Comic-Con International: San Diego.

