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THE ADVENTURES CONTINUE

NO. 1

Publisher/Editor: Don Rhoden
Special Thanks to Randy Garrett for his beautiful artwork; Jerry Epperson for his editorial assistance; Dee Epperson for typing everything; Paul Mandell for his advice and enthusiasm.

For my mother, who, with unerring devotion, taped The Adventures of Superman for me from December, 1981 until July, 1985, I would like to express my love and thanks.

ART IN THIS ISSUE:

Cover: Randy Garrett, Copyright © 1987 by Randy Garrett.
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THE ADVENTURES CONTINUE #1, February 1988.

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WELCOME!

Welcome to all of those who haven't forgotten. Welcome to the children of the 1950's and 1960's who remember the real Superman, the immortal George Reeves. I am sure that George never imagined, even in his wildest dreams, that someday his fans would honor his memory with a publication such as this one.

The goals of this publication are simple:

1. To honor and preserve the memory of George Reeves, the real Superman.
2. To offer a forum for the discussion of The Adventures of Superman, whether it be critical analysis or nostalgic reverie.
3. To promote the preservation, restoration, and availability of The Adventures of Superman to the public and collectors alike.

Most people who know television's Superman will tell you that **All That Glitters** was the finale to The Adventures of Superman; nothing could be further from the truth.

The Adventures Continue . . .

This first issue of The Adventures Continue is a very special one. It consists of interviews with many of the foremost Superman TV collectors, critics, and historians. These interviews comprise, for the first time, the collected thoughts of the most dedicated Superman television scholars in the first and only fanzine devoted to TV's The Adventures of Superman.

There are clubs and fanzines devoted to many other TV series, among them I Love Lucy, The Andy Griffith Show, The Honeymooners, and Nauseum. I thought it was high time that the real Superman, George Reeves, finally received the tribute due him. It is to his memory and to the legions of unforgetting fans to which I would like to dedicate this first issue.

I am hoping to publish The Adventures Continue on at least a twice yearly schedule. I am in need of contributors and hope that many of you will be able to write articles of your own. Anything is game. I am also open to artwork, suggestions, criticisms, etc., you name it.

Future issues will have the following departments.

1. **Letters** to the editor.

2. **Advertisements.** Initially, ads will be printed free, but must pertain in some way to The Adventures of Superman or to its cast members. Items may consist of film, videotape, stills, posters, memorabilia, out-takes, etc. For example, the films of George Reeves, Phyllis Coates, etc. are all acceptable. All ads will be published in a classified ad format and categorized as being Wanted, For Sale, Trade, Bid, etc. No rights are given or implied by the publisher.

3. **Trivia.** In future issues there will be trivia questions which will tax the knowledge of even the most devoted TV Superman fans. Readers are invited to send in their own questions.

4. **Reviews.** In forthcoming issues we will review various books, videotapes, etc. that pertain to The Adventures of Superman, including the two new TV's Best Adventures of Superman videotapes and the two which will be released in February 1988.

5. **Reprints.** I plan on reprinting at least one classic article that has dealt with to The Adventures of Superman, in each issue.

6. **Interviews** with the surviving cast members.

7. **Photographs.** Not only do I plan to publish photographic "stills" of the principals in the scenes, but I invite the readers to send in photos of themselves in their childhood Superman and/or Clark Kent costumes.

8. **Tour information.** Each issue we will try to provide the address of some place that has historical significance to The Adventures of Superman with present-day photos.

9. **Plugs.** Occasionally we will give information on what other publications or organizations exist which may be of interest to TV Superman fans.

This issue's plugs include:

Galaxy Patrol, c/o Dale L. Ames, 22 Colton St., Worcester, MA 01601. The club is devoted to the Space Patrol, Tom Corbett Space Cadet, and Captain Midnight.

Zacherly biography and newsletter. These items are being published by Louis Antonicello, 58 Giles Avenue, Jersey City, NJ 07306.

I also want to plug the new book, Superman on Television, by Michael Bifulco, 7415 Eton Avenue, Canoga Park, CA 91303. It provides a "Comprehensive Viewers' guide to the daring exploits of Superman as presented in the TV series". At last offering, the book was \$12.95, postpaid, but please write Michael for details. I recommend his book whole-heartedly.

I am sure that some of you readers out there have your own ideas about what you would like to see in future issues. I really want your input. This is your fanzine. I also want to invite you to send in your answers to the interview questions, perhaps we will be able to publish these responses in a future issue.

All readers will be notified, by mail, when The Adventures Continue #2 becomes available and, in closing, I hope that all of you enjoy reading this fanzine half as much as I did putting it together.

– Don Rhoden
February 2, 1988



REFLECTIONS ON THE PAST

Before beginning our reflections on the past, some introductions are probably in order.

Paul Mandell is an author, living in Brooklyn. He has written a series of articles on The Adventures of Superman in Starlog, and is hard at work researching the two Superman articles (one of which presents a startling perspective on the death of George Reeves that is only hinted at in his interview responses). He is also working on a special effects book.

Paul introduced me to several fans of The Adventures of Superman in the New York area. Among these are Mike Rose, Robert Harvey, and James Knolt. Mike Rose has been a fan of the series since the Fifties, while Robert Harvey, like myself, began his love affair with the show in the Sixties. James Knolt has written several articles about The Adventures of Superman and also enjoys communications with several of the surviving cast members of the series.

Mike Bifulco has just published a book titled: Superman on Television. He was instrumental in generating a lot of interest in this publication by notifying everyone who ordered his new book. His enthusiasm and assistance has been greatly appreciated.

Russel Forsythe was one of those who contacted me through Michael. He is a second generation Superman fan – his addiction to the series beginning in the Sixties.

Like Russel, Randy Garrett contacted me through Mike Bifulco's correspondence. A slightly modified version of the logo he designed for his own personal letterhead has been used as the logo for The Adventures Continue. I'm sure everyone will agree that Randy's art is fabulous, not to mention it being a superb likeness of George Reeves.

Gary Mantakoony is an old friend of mine from Connecticut. He supplied me with some Superman videos way back in 1984. His response to the interview questions was delayed because someone broke into his car and stole his mail, including my initial questionnaire. Against all odds, he later contacted

me, and managed to get his responses in before the final cut-off date.

Charles Wagner is an old friend of mine, going back many years. He and I have traded video tapes on numerous occasions. Charles is a cartoonist and the author of the comic book, Cecil Kunkel. He also writes a column about the more humorous aspects of The Adventures of Superman television series for the Comics Buyers Guide.

Tom Nagy lives in Omaha, Nebraska. We met at a local comic shop promotional event where he appeared in a homemade Superman costume based on George Reeves's costume.

Next is Jim Beaver, an author and screenwriter hailing from Studio City, California. Since 1978 he has been working on an authorized biography of George Reeves which he hopes to complete in the near future.

Jim Hambrick, Superman collector extraordinaire, has amassed enough Superman collectibles to cover a football field. A recent acquisition included one of the Superman costumes used by George Reeves in the black and white episodes (to go with a costume used in the color episodes). He has also loaned several items to the Smithsonian for use in their Superman exhibit.

Finally, I am Don Rhoden. I live in Omaha, Nebraska with my wife and two children. I am a physician by trade, but all I ever seem to do is put my patients to sleep (I suppose this is okay, since I'm an anesthesiologist). So, before you all start nodding off, let's get started with the interviews!



Please give a little background about yourself, and how long you have been a fan of The Adventures of Superman show. Include your first memory of the television series, as well as when and how you became a serious Superman video collector.

PAUL MANDELL

Of course, I'd like to think that I am the ultimate appreciator of Superman and George Reeves. Born in 1947, the year of Howdy Doody and flying saucers, I started watching The Adventures of Superman from Day One on my parent's twelve-inch RCA. Growing up in Brooklyn (Whitney Ellsworth's hometown) generated a very special kinship for me, since Metropolis was always depicted as a kind of ersatz New York (Up until age ten, I was convinced that the stock shot of the Daily Planet Building was actually the Williamsburg Savings Bank on Flatbush Avenue.). I remember the older kids on the block exalting over the release of Superman and the Mole Men in 1951, but being too young to buy a theater ticket, I didn't catch it until 1953, under the guise of Unknown People.

My first memory of the series is hazy at best. The first season shows were visually unsettling, even when they weren't meant to be, as were other shows of 1953 (What baby boomer can forget the sweaty hand closing for Dragnet and Ralph Bellamy walking through giant doors shaped like Camel cigarette packs in Man Against Crime?). Rescue was a case in point; the grimacing, oil-slicked face of Pop Polgase, squirming under the cave rocks with hapless Phyllis Coates, gave me insomnia. It must've been my entrée into the series.

I clearly remember seeing the premiere of The Stolen Costume, with a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, on ABC, Mondays at 5:30 pm. It followed Atom Squad, which was broadcast live from Chicago at 5:15. (The end-title music for Atom Squad, oddly enough, was the same Miklos Rosza piece used for the fight scenes in The Clown Who Cried and The Golden Vulture). The effect of

The Stolen Costume was so visceral, I sat down with my toy typewriter and banged out an imaginary sequel with one finger. That, I suppose, was the start of my writing career.

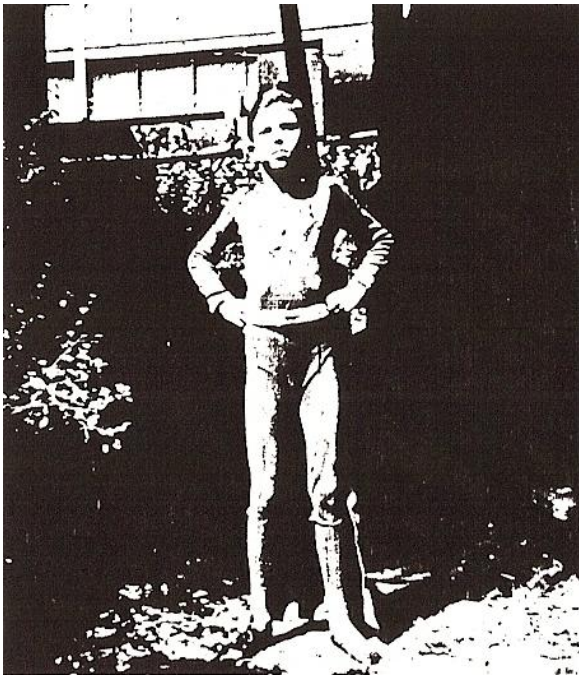
Another vivid memory was seeing a rerun of The Defeat of Superman, in August 1954, as soon as I returned to Brooklyn after vacationing with my family in the Catskills. I couldn't believe that Superman was about to die from Kryptonite, and the lead pipe flung across Metropolis Bay whizzed in my brain for weeks on end.

The first Superman comic book I can remember buying, for ten cents, had to do with our hero being a miser. I can still remember Lois Lane's remark on the cover: "Superman, a miser? But it can't be! What is he doing with that secret hoard?" The first Superboy comic I recall had to do with his becoming a giant. At the end, it was only a robot or a balloon. I forget the far-fetched plot. Comic-book logic in 1954 was wonderfully illogical.

My homemade Superman costume (inspired by Panic in the Sky) beat the hell out of the one Sears-Roebuck was selling. It consisted of my sister's blue leotards, a pair of red-dyed BVDs, a meticulously-rendered "S" which I sewed onto a blue pajama top, a red-dyed sheet for a cape (which ruined the bathroom sink), red knee-high socks that went over my sneakers, and a yellow bathrobe belt. I wore it under my school clothes and let the kids see it under my slightly unbuttoned shirt, in the bathroom, during recess. A true fan of Superman, it seemed, made for a schizoid existence. It hung in my secret closet for years and was probably lifted by Norman Budd.

In 1955, I was home with the mumps and happened to watch Art Linkletter's House Party. To my amazement, out stepped George Reeves, in a tailored suit sans glasses. The pitch was to prevent kids from jumping off rooftops. An incident or two of that nature prompted George's appearance on the show.

The death of George Reeves, on June 16, 1959, was unfathomable to me. "Superman, a suicide? But it can't be." I felt that I had lost a close friend, and an alter ego. I vividly remember coming home from school on that fateful



Paul Mandell in his homemade Superman costume, circa 1957. Sixty-five pounds of Brooklyn steel.

day and seeing the lurid headline of the New York Post. It took weeks for it to actually register.

Gary Grossman's book, Superman – Serial to Cereal, came as a pleasant shock in 1975, as I had always aspired to write the same (You gotta be quick in this business.). I befriended Jack Larson, Noel Neill, and Bob Shayne in the NBC Green Room prior to their appearance on Tom Snyder's Tomorrow Show, in November 1976. We still communicate frequently. Last January, Bob and I had a handshake agreement to do a book together about the "blacklist" years. He's 87 years old, but still sharp as a tack.

I learned a lot about Reeves from Jack and Bob. Undaunted by Grossman's book, I decided to pen my own reflections of George and the show, which appeared, in Starlog magazine, as a trilogy. I regret some of the emphasis I put on George's physical condition toward the end of his life – we all tend to get paunchy stomachs and thin hair at forty. Contrary to the article, I no longer believe that his death was a suicide.

In July 1987, WNBC disc jockey, Alan Coombs, devoted a week to The Adventures of Superman. Jack Larson

spoke on Monday. Noel Neill spoke on Tuesday. I was on Wednesday. Bob Shayne was on Thursday. Phyllis Coates came out of hiding and spoke candidly on Friday. Coombs's staff desperately tried to get George's death case reopened, but the LAPD and the coroner's office were unwilling, based on the lack of "compelling evidence."

I suppose we will never know the awful truth.

MIKE ROSE

I have been a Superman fan for many years and I'm always happy to meet somebody who shares the same enthusiasm as I have for the series.

Let me begin by saying that I am 35 years old, and can remember watching The Adventures of Superman as far back as when I first started watching television (I must have been three or four years old, and it is one of the only series that I can vividly recall viewing.). As a child, I had a homemade Superman costume (later discovering that a lot of kids did). It was made from a pair of blue pajamas with an emblem drawn on. I can still draw it today, and have been told it's quite good. I can draw a copy for your magazine if you wish. I also have a snapshot of the emblem used on the 1951 credits which I photographed off the TV.

I always loved the show and, of course, George Reeves. I considered him a role model as a kid, and still think about him quite a bit to this day.

I started collecting audio tapes of the Superman episodes, around 1965, when I got my first reel-to-reel recorder. With the coming of VCRs, I was frantic to find other collectors who could copy the Superman videos for me, since it wasn't being aired in New York.

JAMES KNOLT

I am 41 years old, married, with one daughter, Lisa. I have taught in the local elementary school for the past twenty years. Most importantly, I have been a devotee of The Adventures of Superman series since 1953, when I watched my first, thrilled-packed,

episode. Something about George Reeves's characterization moved me, made me care. He did, in fact, make me a better person.

I clearly remember the day I read his obituary in the newspaper. I cut the article from the paper and have carried it with me for these almost thirty years. On Donahue, Jack Larson told of being permanently saddened when he learned of his friend's death. I feel much the same way. I know my life was changed because he lived; I also know that it was changed because he died.

Through the years I have tried to contact several of the cast and crew. Starting in 1979, I was successful in finding Whitney Ellsworth, Robert Shayne, Herb Vigran, Sterling Holloway, Dabbs Greer and Natividad Vacio. In July 1979, Gail, Lisa and I traveled to California to have lunch with Whit and his lovely wife, Jane. Later that afternoon we visited with Bob Shayne.

Sadly, just one month after our visit, White passed away in his sleep. Bob and I stay in close contact, exchanging letters or phone calls every two or three months. Jane also keeps in touch. Of the others, only Dabbs Greer has written on a regular basis. I last heard from him this past summer. I forgot to mention that I also have letters from Jack Larson and Noel Neill.

Through the years I have collected many video tapes. The pride of my collection is all 104 television episodes of The Adventures of Superman. I have also recorded several other George Reeves films: Gone with the Wind, Thunder in the Pines, Lydia, So Proudly We Hail, The Blue Gardenia, and Blood and Sand. I also have a live performance of Kelly, from the Kraft Television Theater (January, 1951).

The first Superman episode I recall seeing was The Haunted Lighthouse. Immediately I became a fan. In 1953, my nephew and I made costumes for ourselves and "flew" through the skies of Pennsylvania. We lived on a small farm, so there was plenty of wide open space for our activities. Over the years, I sent away for several of the premiums which Kellogg's offered. Among my favorites was the Superman

T-shirt, which I completely wore out (and even then, I cut out the "S" and sewed it onto another t-shirt).

In 1965, I bought an audio tape recorder so that I could listen to the programs over and over again. With the purchase of a VCR in 1982, I was treated to a picture as well. As fate would have it, the station carrying the series dropped it after I had taped only ten episodes. It was then that I discovered trading. Not every one of my episodes is of good quality, but I can at least watch and enjoy. Interestingly enough, some of the poorly dubbed, grainy copies remind me of the picture I received on that first television back in 1953. It is much like going back in time.

MICHAEL BIFULCO

My current occupation is in the computer field. I work for, and own a small part of, a company with develops computer software for typesetting firms. My primary role with the company is to assure the quality and accuracy of the software by isolating problems and documenting them for the programmers. I also supervise the Customer Support department and write instruction material. My off-hour interests are in the motion-picture industry and freelance writing.

I have been a fan of the Superman television series since 1953. My first memory of the show goes back to when I was almost four years old. I would usually be playing out in the back yard of our Virginia home when my mother would call me from the kitchen door – it was time to watch the next episode of The Adventures of Superman!

My collecting activities began at age ten with an audio tape recorder and gradually moved into 16mm film and videotape.

ROBERT HARVEY

I am 33 years old, born and raised in New York City. Currently I work as an office records retention manager.

My first memory of the Superman show is from the early Sixties. I would rush home after school to see it; my mother would have the television tuned in when

I arrived, and can remember seeing The Deserted Village, Crime Wave, and The Unknown People. I can also recall the first episode I saw in color (The Stolen Elephant) and how impressive it looked.

I started my video collection in 1979, when the show had a short revival here, then continued with a few 16mm prints and more taping of episodes from Los Angeles and Chicago, and I am now taping the show in its current local revival.

RUSSEL FORSYTHE

I am 29 years old and single, working part-time in the maintenance department of Montgomery Wards and also as the late-night janitor for a local racquetball club. My hobbies include collecting old records, comic books, 16mm films of Superman, Batman, Popeye and The Three Stooges. I also collect some artwork.

I first became acquainted with the Man of Steel in March 1963, when my sister bought me my first Superman comic book. Three years later, the Batman show premiered on television, bringing about a resurged interest in comic book heroes.

It wasn't until January 2, 1967 that I saw Superman in Exile, my first episode of The Adventures of Superman. WSTV (Channel 9 from Steubenville, Ohio) had been broadcasting the show, weekdays at 4:30, for quite some time, but I had not watched it until then.

Unfortunately, WSTV cancelled Superman, that same week. The Superman show didn't return until May of 1967. During that summer I saw a good number of the episodes. It was during this time that my interest in both the Superman and Batman shows inspired me to collect old comic books and draw pictures of my favorite heroes. In October 1968, when I was ten, I dressed as Superman for Halloween.

Even at the age of eleven, I could tell how much better the 1951 episodes were than those of the later seasons. Superman was tougher and mightier; really giving criminals a good fight. In later seasons, he hardly had any direct run-ins with crooks, which I feel hurt the series. Fans deserved to

hero in action.

At this time, WWOR (Channel 9 from New York) is the only station I get to see Superman on.

I've always enjoyed The Adventures of Superman, it provides a good escape from the pressures of life. As powerful as he is, I see that he also has problems, but he is mighty enough to overcome them.

RANDY GARRETT

As a kid in the Fifties, I grew up with the Superman TV series and have been a fan ever since. My first memory of the show (and of television itself) is watching Crime Wave at the home of a friend, back in the stone-age, when very few people had TV sets. This was also my introduction to the character of Superman, and the only representation that ever captured my imagination so completely. I began collecting photos and paper stuff over twenty years ago and started a collection of 16mm films about ten years ago. In many ways, I'm still "stuck in the Fifties", having never converted to video tape.

GARY MANTAKOONY

I am 36 years of age and presently work as a credit manager of a water utility in southern Connecticut.

I've been a Superman fan since I was seven years old. My first memory of Superman occurred in 1958. A local New York TV station was showing the episode of the Golden Vulture.

Eight years ago, with the purchase of my first machine, I decided to become a serious Superman video collector. With this invention, I was able to relive all my childhood memories. Unfortunately many of the television shows that I grew up with are not being aired in my area, or are out of syndication, therefore I try to make video connections with other collectors, via advertisements, in different publications.

CHARLES WAGNER

It was 1953, maybe 1954, and my folks had stopped at a roadside greasy spoon for supper, after spending two days at an out-of-town union meeting, to which I had, for some reason, been taken along.

In addition to a high-fat menu, the "spoon" displayed a television on a high shelf behind the counter. People wear televisions on their wrists now, but back then, they were a novelty to some of us.

It wasn't the first episode of The Adventures of Superman. In fact, it wasn't even the beginning of the show:

"Sir Arthur, do you remember this place...?" demanded the ghostly face of Brockhurst, from the clouds.

Sir Arthur McCredy fainted and nearly plunged his Rolls-Royce to his doom before Superman arrived to pull over the old coot.

What special effects! What action! What a show!

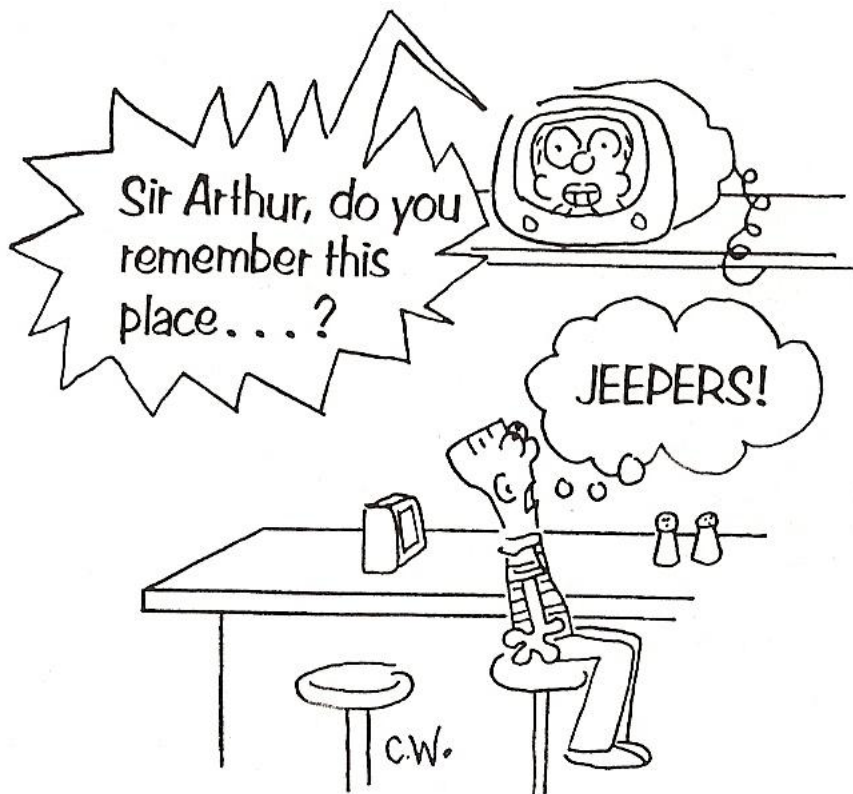
Jeepers! I was hooked. Even though we did not get a television until 1958, I watched episodes, as I could, at the neighbors and then caught The

Adventures of Superman in syndication, again in the afternoons in Bloomington, Indiana during grad school, and once more on Chicago's WGN before the episodes were seriously recut for more commercial spots.

With the magic of video recording and by begging missing episodes, I was able to put together an edited collection of the 104 episodes, plus Stamp Day for Superman, and a few miscellaneous related programs.

I liked the music, I liked the supporting cast, including both the crabby and nice Lois. I even enjoyed most of the goofball humor many writers consider detracting, but it was really George Reeves who made the show for me.

It could have been "Clark Kent, Reporter" and I still would have watched the program. In fact, my favorite scene is from Episode #13 – The Stolen Costume – in which Clark Kent races up the stairs to Superman theme music, bursts the door, and faces his would-be blackmailers. George Reeves, whether in tights or a doublebreasted suit, held the show. It was a happy day when he was made the star of The Adventures of Superman.



TOM NAGY

I'm 29 years old and I have been a fan of The Adventures of Superman since 1962.

When I was four years old, KMTV (Channel 3) used to run the show on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 5:00 and the show has been branded in my brain ever since. The Sixties Superman cartoons and the Batman TV show only galvanized my desire to see more of my hero.

When WOWT (Channel 6) put Superman on Saturday afternoons, at 1:00 in 1975 and 1976, I did everything I could to alter my high school job hours, so that I could see it. Even then, it took almost a year to show the black and white episodes (the good ones).

JIM BEAVER

I grew up in a suburb of Dallas in the Fifties and Sixties, and watched the Superman show every day it was on; originally, Mondays at 5:00 pm, then, in my teen years, seven days a week.

I was nearly nine when Reeves died, an event which is as memorable to me as JFK's death four years later.

I didn't start collecting episodes of the series until the advent of videotape, at about the same time as I was heavily into my research for the Reeves biography. I now have broadcasted versions of all episodes (some badly cut or transmitted) on tape.

JIM HAMBRICK

I collect all Superman-related material, and have been for twenty-nine years.

My first memory of the television series was watching Panic in the Sky at the age of five. For some reason, I could never get that episode out of my head.

DON RHODEN

I have been a Superman fan since the age of three or four, when I first saw The Adventures of Superman on KMTV (in Omaha, Nebraska), in 1960 or 1961. It was on in the late afternoon, after Popeye, which was one of my favorite shows. When it first came on, my mother tried to discourage me from watching it. "Oh, you don't want to watch that, it's too silly." I remember a few moments, though, from the Wedding of Superman, but didn't get to watch the whole thing.

Eventually, I did get to watch the show. The first episode I saw was The Golden Vulture. After that, I was hooked, and my life was changed. I went berserk.

With the help of my folks, I made my own Superman insignia out of felt, which was placed on various shirts and my cape. My parents bought me several costumes (my suits were far from invulnerable, each quickly needing knee patches due to my Super-clumsiness).

I also discovered Superman comics, and superhero comic books in general, a passion which has followed me to the present. Among the first Superman comics I bought were Superman #146 (the ultimate origin story), Superman #147, Adventure Comics #286 (with the beloved tales of the Bizarro World), Lois Lane #26, Superboy #91, World's Finest #119 (in this one I discovered Batman, but that's another story!), Jimmy Olsen #55, and Action #281.

Around 1963 or so, the television series was cancelled and I didn't see it again until 1975, when it was broadcast on WOWT (also in Omaha). This time, however, only the color episodes were shown. I watched them, but the magic was missing.

In 1981, I read Gary Grossman's book, Superman – Serial to Cereal. Afterwards, I was anxious to see the old black and white episodes that I had first seen twenty years before.

In 1982, I finally gained access to cable television and began taping episodes. The first one I taped was The Deserted Village, off of Chicago's WGN. Over the next two years I managed to complete my collection.

What season is your personal favorite and why?

PAUL MANDELL

The 1951 season, shot at RKO-Pathé on the Selznick lot, is my favorite. Most of it had to do with Robert Maxwell's hard-hitting influence and George playing Superman straight. Though cheaply done, the episodes exude that film noir look and didn't pander to the Television Code. Much of it was shot for night.

To a boy of six, the gut reaction of seeing *The Evil Three*, *Murder in Wax*, *Crime Wave* and the like was unforgettable. The plots were macabre, illogical, and often frightening. They still are. A hag in a wheelchair thrust down a staircase; a psychotic woman, ala Gloria Swanson in *Sunset Boulevard*, collecting human specimens in a cellar; a girl being deprived of her polio braces by an oily thug; Nazis, Mafia chieftains, New York hitmen. Gritty stuff for Fifties television; hardly the pinnacle of taste, but definitely unnerving.

Maxwell's decision to track mysterious library music cues (a long story in itself) fit those episodes perfectly. I am quite partial to the 1953, second season, shows, which were better produced and more carefully thought out. *Around the World* was a thrill for every kid in 1953. The music transcription discs rented by Whitney Ellsworth for that season will always be regarded as "classic Superman music."

I have little affection for anything made after 1953, sorry to say. Technicolor was a sight to behold, but the scripts were mindless and patronizing.

MIKE ROSE

I'd have to say my favorite season is 1951. I thought the acting was superior in every way. The whole production was better – lighting, scenery, and so on. Of course, how can you forget the great first season background music?

I loved Phyllis Coats's portrayal of Lois Lane. In 1951, George Reeves was at his peak, looking very tough – athletic. Also the first season's costume was the best looking.

JAMES KNOLT

I consider the second season to be my favorite. I know many people prefer the first, but I enjoy the human interest scripts – *Five Minutes to Doom*, *Superman in Exile*, *The Defeat of Superman*, *Panic in the Sky*, and, of course, *Around the World*. There were many others, but all share one common trait – each gave George Reeves the opportunity to project emotion, to show that he cared.

MICHAEL BIFULCO

Selecting a favorite season is no contest, the 1951 season is my favorite. Robert Maxwell produced a series of classics because he was able to assemble a great cast, performing action-packed shows on sets and locations rich with atmosphere. Clark Kent/Superman was a mysterious, hard-hitting crime fighter that every kid secretly hoped would show up in real life.

ROBERT HARVEY

The first season (1951) is my favorite due to its straightforward, no nonsense stories and character portrayals.

RUSSEL FORSYTHE

My favorite is the 1951 season. The shows were more serious. Superman didn't take any junk from the criminals, and always put them in their place fast. The manner in which the criminals were portrayed made you actually hate them; you were overjoyed when Superman dealt out their much deserved punishment.

RANDY GARRETT

To me, it's a toss-up between 1951 and 1953 as to which season is my favorite. Certainly the strong storylines and adult approach of the first season makes it the most memorable to many fans. However, the shows of 1953 are much better in terms of production quality. Even Reeves' portrayal seems to have more depth than in 1951 (when he was usually only required to mop up the set with the bad guys). The background music of the second season also makes it a notch above 1951, in some instances.

GARY MANTAKOONY

My favorite season would have to be 1951. The episodes were exciting and well paced. The realistic RKO lots, the taut and menacing musical scenes, coupled with producer Bob Maxwell's adult, if not macabre, stories such as Crime Wave and Mystery in Wax made this series a classic!

It's a shame that the quality did not sustain itself later, in 1953.

TOM NAGY

Without a doubt, the first season (1951) was the best. There are several reasons that I feel this way.

Superman is somewhat unknown to many people; the utter amazement by those few people who saw him fly and do superhuman feats, was great to watch.

Phyllis Coates, as Lois Lane, wasn't so helpless. She fought for every story she was after and really argued with Clark Kent -- before they became "friendly" rivals. The new Superman comic books show her in this manner, although a bit over done (She's just too pushy and bitchy).

Every one of the cast members acted seriously. This season was intended for an adult audience. The best example is Jack Larson's (Jimmy Olsen) acting. As the seasons progressed, the scripts called for him to become more of a buffoon.

JIM BEAVER

I don't have a real favorite season; I'm not one of those people who has every title memorized, along with its airdate and production crew. I like the early seasons, when it was a little grittier and more realistic (if a show about a guy flying around in multi-colored long-handles can ever be realistic). I hate the goofy "children's show" approach that took over later.

JIM HAMBRICK

The first season (1951) is my favorite because it had the best stories. Thomas Carr didn't hold back on the action.

DON RHODEN

The 1951 season is far and away my favorite. I watch the 1951 episodes probably ten times to every viewing of the 1953 episodes and probably twenty to thirty times as often as the color episodes. The 1951 episodes had this incredible atmosphere to them. They were violent, explosive, moody, bizarre, and macabre all at once.

After Episode #26, The Unknown People (Part Two), it was mostly downhill, with few exceptions (mostly from the 1953 episodes).

Viewing the first season now, gives me the sensation of looking through a time machine at a world of yesterday that needed a violent Superman to keep it safe.

What are your ten favorite episodes?

PAUL MANDELL

My favorite ten episodes? Not easy, but here goes: The Stolen Costume, The Evil Three, The Mind Machine, Mystery in Wax, Crime Wave, Panic in the Sky, The Defeat of Superman, The Dog Who Knew Superman, The Face and the Voice, and Around the World.

MIKE ROSE

My ten favorite episodes would have to be The Mind Machine, Crime Wave, Mystery in Wax, The Evil Three, Panic in the Sky, Riddle of Chinese Jade, Secret of Superman, The Face and the Voice, Superman on Earth, and Superman in Exile.

JAMES KNOLT

My favorite ten episodes? At the top of the list would have to be Panic in the Sky and Around the World.

After that, in no particular order, are: The Lucky Cat, The Man in the Lead Mask, Shot in the Dark, Defeat of Superman, A Ghost for Scotland Yard, The Evil Three, The Case of the Talkative Dummy, and Ghost Wolf.

If you asked me this same question tomorrow, I may not name the same ten (there are so many I enjoy).

MICHAEL BIFULCO

My ten favorites, in no particular order, are: Crime Wave, The Mind Machine, Panic in the Sky, The Golden Vulture, Double Trouble, Night of Terror, Semi-Private Eye, The Deserted Village, The Face and the Voice, and Czar of the Underworld.

ROBERT HARVEY

My favorite ten episodes, in order, are: The Unknown People (Part I), The Unknown People (Part 2), The Mind Machine, Superman in Exile, Panic in the Sky, The Golden Vulture, Around the World, Flight to the North, The Seven Souvenirs, and The Perils of Superman.

RUSSEL FORSYTHE

My ten favorite episodes (all from 1951): The Stolen Costume, The Evil Three, The Monkey Mystery, The Birthday Letter, The Secret of Superman, No Holds Barred, The Deserted Village, Mystery in Wax, Czar of the Underworld, and Superman on Earth.

RANDY GARRETT

My favorite episodes are Panic in the Sky, Crime Wave, Superman in Exile, Ghost Wolf, Human Bomb, The Face and the Voice, Perry White's Scoop, The Mind Machine, No Holds Barred, and The Mysterious Cube.

GARY MANTAKOONY

My ten favorite episodes are: Superman on Earth, Night of Terror, The Mind Machine, No Holds Barred, The Runaway Robot, Riddle of the Chinese Jade, The Human Bomb, Czar of the Underworld, Crime Wave, and Unknown People.

TOM NAGY

My ten favorite episodes are: Riddle of the Chinese Jade, A Night of Terror, Panic in the Sky, Five Minutes to Doom, No Holds Barred, The Mind Machine, The Ghost Wolf, Superman in Exile, The Evil Three, and Star of Fate.

JIM BEAVER

I don't have all the titles in my head, and I don't have any terribly special favorites. Superman on Earth, The Mysterious Cube, Divide and Conquer, Superman's Wife, and Panic in the Sky immediately come to mind, but I like the series more as a whole, than as individual items.

JIM HAMBRICK

My favorite episodes are: Panic in the Sky, The Unknown People, The Face and the Voice, The Haunted Lighthouse, The Mind Machine, Mystery of the Broken Statues, Divide and Conquer, The Stolen Costume, The Case of the Talkative Dummy, and Crime Wave.

DON RHODEN

My favorite episode of all time is The Evil Three. Cecil Elliot's laughter still sends chill s up and down

my spine. In no particular, the next nine are:

Night of Terror -- What a bitching ending.

The Mind Machine -- Keeps you on the edge of your chair.

The Secret of Superman -- Reeves fools the audience very convincingly when he drinks the powerful "amytal compound."

Mystery in Wax -- The suicide theme here ironically foreshadows Reeves' own fate eight years later.

The Human Bomb -- "Now it's my turn to blow up!"

Czar of the Underworld -- "... So I can show you how movies are made."

Crime Wave -- "Now you can print that statement Mr. Canby wanted you to print. There is no number one crime boss in Metropolis... anymore!"

Panic in the Sky -- This episode really conveyed a doomsday atmosphere (especially to a four year old).

A Ghost for Scotland Yard -- Guaranteed to give a kid nightmares.

I must admit that, at any time, my answers change depending on my mood.

Which portrayal of Lois Lane did you prefer?

PAUL MANDELL

My favorite Lois Lane? Phyllis Coates had 'em all beat by a mile. She's still as foxy as ever -- my first television crush.

MIKE ROSE

I really loved Phyllis Coates's Lois Lane. Not that I dislike Noel Neill, it's just that I prefer Phyllis Coates's portrayal.

JAMES KNOLT

Lois Lane? The only comment I can make is that I think Phyllis Coates was a wise choice for the first twenty-six episodes, and Noel Neill for the remaining stories.

I enjoyed Phyllis's screams. Golly jeeppers, did she have good lungs! On the other hand, Noel Neill could show much annoyance at Clark Kent's shortcomings. In my mind, it's six of one, half-dozen of another.

MICHAEL BIFULCO

My preferred portrayal of Lois Lane is that of Phyllis Coates. Her performance complimented George Reeves beautifully. Noel Neill was very good, but she had the disadvantage of progressively weaker stories. I often wonder how Phyllis Coates would have handled some of the later episodes.



Twenty years later, Paul puts the squeeze on Noel Neill and Bob Shayne. Taken at NBC-New York for Tom Snyder's "Tomorrow" show. Photo by Allan Asherman.

ROBERT HARVEY

Noel Neill is my choice as Lois Lane, primarily for her charm and warmth.

RUSSEL FORSYTHE

I liked Phyllis Coates's Lois Lane the best. I liked the way she looked and also admired how down-to-earth and sassy she could be, but also how very tenderhearted and compassionate she could be.

RANDY GARRETT

It is really impossible to compare the two portrayals of Lois Lane. Phyllis Coates's Lois Lane is perfectly suited to the type of stories done in 1951. However, a similar interpretation would have been jarring in later episodes, such as Tomb of Zaharan, in which a lighter approach was required. Coates was such a good actress that she could have easily adapted to the new story lines. The public at large may always remember Noel Neill as Lois Lane, but I've Always loved Phyllis is Coates just as much.

GARY MANTAKOONY

I am a fan of both Phyllis Coates and Noel Neill; however, I feel that the Coates's portrayal was superior.



TOM NAGY

Phyllis Coates's Lois Lane wasn't so helpless. She fought for every story she was after and really argued with Clark, when they were not so "friendly" rivals. The new comic books show her in this manner, although a little too much. She's just too pushy and bitchy.

JIM BEAVER

When I was a kid, I liked Noel Neill a lot more; I thought she was prettier and nicer. As an adult, I think Phyllis Coates's character is a lot more interesting and real.

JIM HAMBRICK

Phyllis Coates.

DON RHODEN

Both actresses were wonderful, Noel Neill made me feel very secure as a child while Phyllis is Coates was always too abrasive, like a mean elementary school teacher. As I grew older, I preferred Phyllis Coates's character to the one Noel Neill played because it was far more believable. The 1951 Lois Lane is still the closest, by far, to the original Siegel and Shuster Lois In Action #1.

Today, in 1988, Phyllis Coates is the unsung heroine of The Adventures of Superman.



Who is your favorite director?

PAUL MANDELL

Since the megaphone for the vintage season was shared by Lee Sholem and Tommy Carr, it's hard to pigeonhole either of them as a favorite director. A toss of a coin would probably land heads up for Roll 'em Sholem, since my favorite shows had him in the hot seat. My favorite writers were Ben Peter Freeman and Jackson Gillis -- Freeman Did the best of the grisly 1951 shows, Gillis (of Perry Mason fame) wrote the more intriguing 1953 episodes.

MIKE ROSE

My favorite director was Thomas Carr, but also I like Lee Sholem's work on the show.

JAMES KNOLT

My favorite director had to be Tommy Carr.

MICHAEL BIFULCO

Favorite director goes to Tommy Carr, with Lee Sholem a close second.

ROBERT HARVEY

Tommy Carr is my favorite director; he's good all around, but excels at action scenes.

RUSSEL FORSYTHE

Thomas Carr.

RANDY GARRETT

Tommy Carr was the best Superman director, followed closely by Lee Sholem.

GARY MANTAKOONY

My favorite director was Tommy Carr.

TOM NAGY

Favorite director? All together now! Tommy Carr!

JIM BEAVER

Probably Tommy Carr, but I don't see much directorial difference in the episodes, at least nothing that isn't probably more attributable to the script writing.

JIM HAMBRICK

Tommy Carr.

DON RHODEN

Tommy Carr was my favorite director, with Lee Sholem running a close second (Sholem probably could have won, if he had directed a few more episodes).

What are some of your favorite moments or vignettes from the episodes?

PAUL MANDELL

Favorite Vignettes:

George's famous furtive move when he lands in front of Beverly Washburn's house in Superman and the Mole Men.

Superman's masterful "electrocution" Scene in Crime Wave.

George's punchout of Professor Joe Mell, in Crime Wave, and his truly pissed dismantling of the "electrocution machine" (Mell would later assist Whit Bissell in turning Michael Landon into I Was a Teenage Werewolf).

George's deadpan announcement in Crime Wave: "There is no number one crime boss in Metropolis... anymore!"

George busting through the door and knocking out Frank Jenks, in Stolen Costume (a scene which literally put George on his ass when the crossbeams didn't break on cue).

George's magnificent full-frontal takeoff in Unknown People.

George busting through Luigi Dinelli's window in Czar of the Underworld.

The amnesiac Clark Kent with his shirt precariously opened, near Jimmy, in Panic in the Sky.

The singular shot of his fall through the glass shower stall in Panic.

Clark Kent, wearing the Superman costume and glasses, as his amnesia clears in Panic, underscored by Ronald Hamner's magnificent music cue "Menace."

The extended shot of George Reeves's profile as he flies (in rear projection, holding box) toward the asteroid in Panic (to the tune of "Eerie Night").

Clark Kent jumping over a picket fence in Deserted Village.

The frenetic punchout at the end of Night of Terror (although it was mostly a double in long shot), and Reeves's solid right hook, finishing it off.

The only scene of Superman reaching for his Kent clothes concealed in his cape (Night of Terror).

George's Bronx bruiser portrayal of Boulder in The Face and the Voice.

Clark Kent trying desperately to change into Superman, running around the pirate ship in The Golden Vulture.

Kent walking the plank.

George's riveting dialogue when he explains about the radium daggers in The Seven Souvenirs,

His passionate X-raying of Judy Nugent's eyes during surgery, in Around the World, and the rear-projected flight over Paris and Arabia.

MIKE ROSE

Some of my favorite scenes from the show are:

Mind Machine - Great fight scene followed by Superman lifting a plane. I must have played this one over fifty times.

Crime Wave - The whole montage of great fight scenes, flying shots, and episodes clips from the first year 1951! How can you beat it?

No Holds Barred - What I consider to be Reeves's greatest fight scene: "Alright boys, the party's over..."

Golden Vulture - Pirates chasing Clark around the ship, and another great Superman fight scene.

Night of Terror - Superman crashing through the ceiling and beating up the bad guys (once more, a great fight scene).

Unknown People - Superman protecting Luke Benson from the "vacuum cleaner" ray gun.

Deserted Village - Clark Kent running over fences after hearing a gunshot.

JAMES KNOLT

The Haunted lighthouse - The knife being bent on Superman's chest.

The Birthday Letter - The closing scene of Superman flying with Cathy.

The Mind Machine - Superman stopping the bus.

The Stolen Costume - What else? Clark crashing through the door.

The Evil Three - I can recall the unedited version where Elsa is pushed down the cellar stairs.

Shot in the Dark - The photo of Clark changing to Superman.

The Defeat of Superman - Lois crying over the prostrate Superman.

Panic in the Sky - The opening of the shirt, Superman wearing glasses.

The Machine That Could Plot Crimes - Lois following Clark.

The Big Freeze - Superman, after being frozen, walking through the streets as Clark Kent before he had a chance to apply make-up.

Night of Terror - Superman changing to Clark as Jimmy waits at the door.

All That Glitters - George's final look into the camera.

MICHAEL BIFULCO

Writing about my favorite moments could fill a book, but here are a few off the top of my head:

Lois Lane's first confrontation with Clark Kent regarding his ability to get a story before she could, in Superman on Earth.

Panic in the Sky as Lois and Jimmy show Kent around the Daily Planet, trying to restore his lost memory.

Panic in the Sky when it looks as if all is lost, Jimmy points to the sky and announces Superman's timely arrival.

The Golden Vulture as Kent snoops around the loading dock and ship, all the while great background music setting the mood.

Ghost Wolf when Lois takes charge and insists on bunking with Kent and Jimmy.

Semi-Private Eye whenever Jack Larson is on camera.

Clown Who Cried when Jimmy is being intimidated by Hercules, and later when he walks away from the restrained Hercules, after pulling out one of his beard hairs, whistling confidently.

ROBERT HARVEY

Some of my favorite moments are:

The confrontation with Luke Benson outside little girl's home in The Unknown People.

The bus sequence, fight sequence and airplane sequence from The Mind Machine.

The fight sequence from No Holds Barred.

Kent's leap over picket fence in The Deserted Village.

The confrontation and stranding of the villains in The Stolen Costume.

Confronting the Colonel and Macey in The Evil Three.

Lift-off in The Ghost Wolf.

Leap onto studio catwalk in Czar of the Underworld.

The atomic plant sequence, withering flowerpot sequence, and airplane sequence from Superman in Exile.

The observatory liftoffs from Panic in the Sky.

The pool hall scene in Semi-Private Eye.

The fight scene and sense of humor as Kent "drowns" in The Golden Vulture.

The sour look and comment when about to drink the explosive liquid for the second time in The Whistling Bird.

The flight sequence and closing gag from Around The World.

The blast furnace sequence in The Big Freeze.

RUSSEL FORSYTHE

My favorite moments from certain episodes include:

The Stolen Costume - The two criminals who have Superman's stolen costume, Ace and Connie have captured Clark Kent's detective friend, Candy.

Realizing he can't change to Superman, Kent crashes through Ace's apartment door at super-speed, knocking out Candy, and Ace fires three bullets at him (which, of course, bounce off Kent, who looks at Ace with a proud smile).

The Evil Three - The Colonel, not knowing who Superman is, strikes at the Man of Steel with his sabre, which of course breaks on impact. Superman picks up the Colonel, tosses him to the ground and takes off.

Later in the same episode, the other criminal, Macey, is holding Perry and Jimmy hostage in the basement of the old run-down hotel. Arriving at the hotel, Superman grabs Macey by the collar demanding he tell him Perry and Jimmy's whereabouts or he'll break every bone in his body. Macey attempts to wrestle Superman, but, once again the Man of Steel has no time for crazed criminals like Macey and picks him up and throws him over the hotel counter.

Mystery in Wax - Superman crashes through Madame Selena's hideout to rescue her captives when her husband fires a gun at Superman. The Man of Steel quickly subdues Selena's husband. Selena tries to retaliate, by grabbing the gun. but Superman, showing he has

no time or respect for such a demented woman, grabs her, disarms her and tosses her to Inspector Henderson.

RANDY GARRETT

There are many magic moments in the Superman series. The ones I remember most are:

Superman and Professor Roberts watching the meteor approach in Panic in the Sky.

Superman forcing his way into the nuclear reactor room in Superman in Exile.

Kent finding his extra costumes in the secret closet in Panic in the Sky.

The free-for-all fight at the end of No Holds Barred.

GARY MANTAKOONY

My favorite moments from The Adventures of Superman include the rescue scene from Superman on Earth, with Dabbs Greer; the fight scenes in Night of Terror, No Holds Barred, Czar of the Underworld, Crime Wave, and Unknown People.

There are also sensitive scenes, such as Clark Kent saying goodbye to Corky in The Dog Who Knew Superman; Noel Neill's apparent remorse in Superman dying in The Defeat of Superman; Sarah Kent saying goodbye to her son in Superman on Earth.

Phyllis Coates demonstrated herself as a great actress. and the superior Lois Lane, in Mystery of the Broken Statues, where Tris Coffin tries to make her devulge [sic] the location of a missing key. Her altercations with Frank Richards, in Night of Terror; her determination to free Pop Polgase in Rescue; her repartee with Peter Brocco when she's drugged and questioned about Superman in The Secret of Superman; her contempt for Madame Selena, and subsequent fight, in Mystery in Wax; and, of course, one of the all time. screamers in The Runaway Robot.

TOM NAGY

My favorite action scene is when Superman jumps into the air and flies. In particular, any scene with dramatic background music (or no music at all) which shifts to the beginning trumpets of the flight music, and Superman leaping out of the window.

After this, my favorite individual scene is in Riddle of the Chinese Jade when Superman beats the hell out of the smartass crook, who stole the statue.

JIM BEAVER

I liked Superman splitting in two in the jail cell (Divide and Conquer); when he passes through The Mysterious Cube, when he threatens to bounce Inspector Henderson around the room like a basketball in Three in One; when he flies to Egypt to get a plant from the pyramid (in Star of Fate); whenever he stops a plane or a car; especially when he makes a diamond from coal; when Jimmy got his leg stuck behind his head (in No Holds Barred).

JIM HAMBRICK

The scenes I particularly enjoy from the series include:

The fist fight in Golden Vulture;

George's acting in The Face and the Voice;

The furnace scene in The Big Freeze;

Any outside flying take-offs from the first season;

George's punches;

All That Glitters (George's last words in the episode) - "Maybe I never will..."

DON RHODEN

Superman jumping out of the storeroom window in the 1951 episodes.

The hair-raising fist fight, and last second rescue of Lois and Jimmy, in Night of Terror.

The fight in The Mind Machine
"Kranek - get away from that machine!"
Kent pretending to be drugged in
The Secret of Superman.

Phyllis Coates's face never looking
lovelier than it did when she was being
questioned by Dr. Ohrt in The Secret
of Superman.

"All right boys, the party's over,"
in No Holds Barred.

The unveiling scene, in Mystery in
Wax, with Perry, Lois and Clark, when
Kent sees the wax dummy of Perry White
with his X-ray vision first.

Superman questioning the Colonel, in
The Evil Three, immediately before
getting smashed across the chest with
the Colonel's sabre.

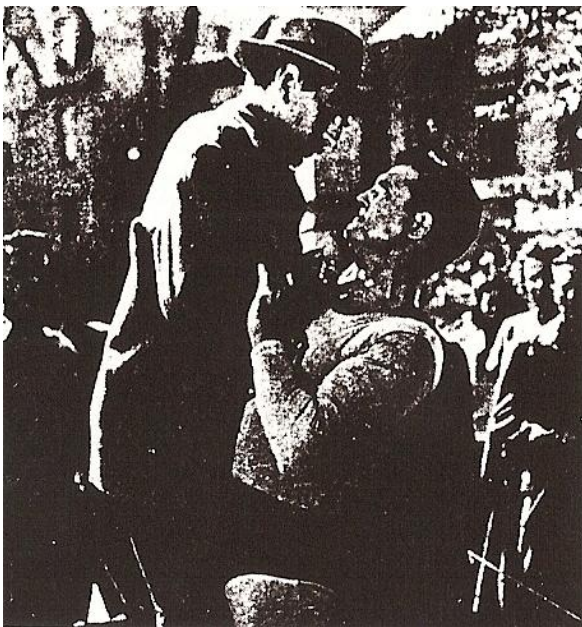
The eerie laugh of Elsa in The
Evil Three, with the crazed fight
scene between Macey and the Colonel.

Superman crashing through the window
and beating up Dinelli and his henchmen
in Czar of the Underworld.

Superman carrying a wounded mole man
(while three others follow) down a
dilapidated [sic] black-and-white street of
Silsby, his cape billowing in the wind,
in The Unknown People (Part 2).

An amnesiac Clark Kent standing with
his partially opened shirt, revealing
his costume, talking to Jimmy in Panic
in the Sky.

The eerily illuminated figure of
Superman standing dejected on a
mountain top in Superman in Exile.



What season do you feel is
the worst and why?

PAUL MANDELL

Unequivocally the last shot at
Eagle-Lion, later the Fred Ziv Studio.
Paper-mache sets and props, lousy
special effects, dumb scripts (even for
kids), poor George looking quite
inappropriate as the Superman we once
knew.

MIKE ROSE

Many fans may hate me for saying
this but I really don't like most of
the color years of Superman. I do like
one or two of the episodes, but they do
not compare with the black and white
shows.

I have to say my favorite season was
the first (1951), I guess because of
all of the action, adventure, and
mystery they contained. Seriously, I
prefer Robert Maxwell's concept of how
Superman should act to Ellsworth's. I
enjoyed the more violent fight scenes
and the "serial look" that they had.
George's tough dialogue delivery was
superior to the softer version the next
year.

I really don't have any year that I
think is the worst.

JAMES KNOLT

I suppose the 1956 season rates as
the worst with me. The plots were thin
and the acting subpar. Gregory Moffet
in The Stolen Elephant was not
good. I just can't imagine any boy
getting so excited over a game of
marbles or not knowing what an
automobile registration looks like. Did
he really believe it was an elephant
registration number (J24Y97)?

Close Shave left much to be
desired as well. Ditto for The Man
Who Made Dreams Come True.

MICHAEL BIFULCO

The worst season is the last season. Even Tommy Carr couldn't save it. Poor writing, bad sets, and an aging George Reeves really pulled it down.

ROBERT HARVEY

I feel the fifth season (1956) is the worst because the stories are geared more towards children (Tin Hero, The Prince Albert Coat, The Stolen Elephant, and Mr. Zero).

RUSSEL FORSYTHE

In my opinion, the 1956 season is the worst. By that time the show had become too comic and childish and Superman had lost most of his original charisma. It seemed like the producers were trying to return the show to the direction of the 1951 season, but the damage was already done.

RANDY GARRETT

To me, the worst season is 1956. Some shows are unbearable even for a diehard fan like me. Mr. Zero, Close Shave, Tin Hero, and so on, are just awful.

George looks fantastic, probably the best he ever looked, in the color episodes (while the scripts are terrible). The 1957 shows are pretty bad with Reeves looking a bit out of shape, but overall, 1956 is the bigger disappointment.

GARY MANTAKOONY

I feel that the worst season of The Adventures of Superman was 1956. The shows were silly, boring and for the most part insipid - Mr. Zero and The Stolen Elephant are standouts.

TOM NAGY

The worst season had to be the third season of color episodes.

From the second season of semi-serious, black and white episodes to the implausibly humorous, color shows, and the lame directing, it is easy to understand why George Reeves appears disappointed.

This season also introduced the unflattering, color costume. Where is the muscle padding? Why do the trunks come up on his waist so high? Worst of all, why was his cape tucked behind his shoulders instead of in front (like his tan and brown costume from the black and white episodes)?

JIM HAMBRICK

The last season was the worst because the stories were weak and George looked overweight and tired. I also disliked Noel Neill's Bozo-red hair.

DON RHODEN

1956.

What are your ten least favorite episodes?

PAUL MANDELL

My least favorite episodes? Well...

The Atomic Captive (I still hallucinate on this one), The Stolen Elephant, Joey, All That Glitters, The Brainy Burro, Superman Week, Dagger Island, The Gentle Monster, The Tomb of Zaharan, and Mr. Zero (zero).

MIKE ROSE

My least favorite episodes (all color shows, by the way) are: Joey, Topsy Turvey, Jolly Roger, Tin Hero, Prince Albert Coat, Stolen Elephant, Mr. Zero, The Tomb of Zaharan, The Brainy Burro, and Atomic Captive.

JAMES KNOLT

Again, in no particular order, my least favorite episodes are: Close Shave, The Stolen Elephant, Mr. Zero, The Deadly Rock, Three in One, The Brainy Burro, Tin Hero, Disappearing Lois, The Man Who Made Dreams Come True, King for a Day, and I've just Counted ten so I'll stop.

MICHAEL BIFULCO

My least favorite episodes are as follows: Mr. Zero, Wedding of Superman, Through the Time Barrier, Test of a Warrior, Topsy Turvey, The Brainy Burro, Man Who Made Dreams Come True, Gentle Monster, Jolly Roger, and The Stolen Elephant.

ROBERT HARVEY

My least favorite ten episodes (in order) are: Mr. Zero, The Atomic Captive, Tin Hero, Disappearing Lois, Through The Time Barrier, Joey, The Jolly Roger, Topsy Turvey, The Superman Silver Mine, and The Brainy Burro.

RUSSEL FORSYTHE

My least favorite 10 episodes are: Rescue (1951), Five Minutes To Doom (1953), Jet Ace (1953), Jimmy Olsen, Boy Editor (1953), Through The Time Barrier (1954), The Jolly Roger (1956), Mr. Zero (1956), Dagger Island (1955), Whistling Bird (1953), and Topsy Turvey (1955).

RANDY GARRETT

The worst show has to be Mr. Zero, followed by Brainy Burro, Atomic Captive, Tin Hero, Close Shave, Stolen Elephant, Whatever Goes Up, Wedding of Superman, Bully of Dry Gulch, and Flight to the North.

GARY MANTAKOONY

My least favorite episodes are: The Unlucky Number, The Talking Clue, Joey, Prince Albert Coat, The Stolen Elephant, Mr. Zero, Gentle Monster, Test Of A Warrior, Superman Week, and Double Trouble.

CHARLES WAGNER

Reeves was great! Neill was great! Coates was great! Larson was great!

Most of the stories were okay too, except maybe just a couple episodes that I love to hate.

Oh, shudder the day when Chuck Connors showed up in Metropolis (Episode #63, Flight to the North) and began bending horse shoes, introducing himself as Sylvester J. Superman, and giving the Man of Steel swell advice like "You're liable to get hurt flying around like that."

Mostly, I am glad that Connors is better known for gunning down people with his Winchester.

Then - be sure to get your insulin Shot first - there is Joey (Episode #66), in which a pathetic lass is almost forced to part with her beloved race horse. But, after quick action by philanthropist Perry White and Superman, this bizarre love relationship is saved and the mortgage on the horse ranch properly paid.

It wasn't just the girls who were dopey. How about - for gosh sake! - Johnny Wilson who finds The Stolen Elephant (Episode #89) in his barn and jumps to the conclusion that it is a birthday present from his goofy mother. Mrs. Wilson, who had spent her last dime buying Johnny a bag of marbles, was no help either. I'm glad I did not have to shovel up after that one.

The topper has to be Episode #52 (Around the World). Both Mr. and Mrs. Carson apparently refused to take their medication and what a mess that little Annie was. Of course, Lois wasn't much better when she started blubbing because Ann was blind.

But, wait!

Have you watched prime-time television lately? Maybe these episodes weren't as bad as I thought.

P.S.- Remember Episode #88, The Prince Albert Coat? Now that was really awful...maybe...

TOM NAGY

Out of the fifty-two color episodes, I hate forty-five of them.

JIM BEAVER

No question that Mr. Zero is my least favorite episode, though Flight to the North with Chuck Connors as Sylvester Superman is a pretty close second. I also hated the old professor who repeated a phrase at the end of every sentence.

JIM HAMBRICK

My least favorite episodes are: Mr. Zero, All That Glitters, The Gentle Monster, Flight to the North, The Bully of Dry Gulch, Peril by Sea, Superman's Wife, The Atomic Captive, The Magic Secret, and Peril in Paris.

DON RHODEN

My least favorite episodes are: The Prince Albert Coat (Confederate bonds? You bet...), Close Shave (for the lobotomized), Mr. Zero, The Brainy Burro (where's Mr. Ed?), The Atomic Captive (belongs with those government radioactive films from the Fifties), Joey and The Stolen Elephant (I hate animal shows), Peril By Sea (Great Caesar's Ghost, how ridiculous!), The Talking Clue (Henderson's kid has the lamest hobby I've ever heard of), and Topsy Turvey (I need some dramamine),

What mistakes, miscues and errors have you been able to detect?

PAUL MANDELL

Mistakes? Plentiful but fascinating:

The incomprehensible lack of mental linkage on the past [sic] of Mr. Big et al in Crime Wave, when Barbara Fuller's 8mm footage shows Kent running into the Famous Pathe alley and emerging as Superman.

A hot splice in the rear-projected footage of trees as Superman talks to Kentucky Colonel Jonathan Hale in The Evil Three.

The many intercuts of stock-shot Clark Kent removing his hat by the storeroom, when he had no hat to begin with.

The shadow of Mrs. Carmady falling on the sky backdrop of Moose Island as she first exits the house in The Haunted Lighthouse.

The table lamp shattering in Henderson's office a beat before the rifle fires in Czar of the Underworld.

Professor LaSerne's dialogue flub in Divide and Conquer (George moves right along).

No one recognizing Kent, sans glasses, as Superman in Panic in the Sky and The Golden Vulture (what amazing illogic).

An old crook actually mouthing his crony's lines in the car just before Superman clunks their heads together.

Professor Ladislav spending three-quarters of an episode trying to wet his whistle; Olsen driving right into a nuclear holocaust; Superman "reversing" the explosion (poor George); everything else in Atomic Captive.

Ed Cobb not connecting Clark Kent scuttling behind a rock and emerging a beat later as Superman in Rescue.

The "race of supermen" living on Krypton, so advanced that they must rely on torches, instead of electricity, on the Cat Women of the Moon set used in Superman on Earth.

George visibly puppeting Carmelita's head in The Brainy Burro.

The mind-boggling TV room with no one in it, except a seated dummy for the televising of Superman Week.

Bank guard, Buddy Mason, trying to say something in English about a sink turning purple (also Superman week). The pilot, Steve Carr, believing Kent's story that he had passed out airborne, oblivious to the busted jaw he must've acquired by Kent's punch in The Mind Machine.

The sound effect of Superman flying refusing to stop when he lands by the rocks in The Haunted Lighthouse; no sound effect in another show.

Clark Kent's chalk breaking as he solves the rebus in Missing Statues.

A piece of fishline pulling a flaming piece of paper into the gas leak in Rescue (you weren't supposed to see this on the twelve-inch screen).

The girl untying Jimmy the Kid from his chair, after his hands are free.

Oh, well ... love it or leave it.

MIKE ROSE

I know there were a lot of mistakes left in Superman episodes but I have only spotted a few,

In Shot in the Dark, you can see a man kneeling in the right corner of the room when Clark is putting out the fire in Billy Grey's supply room.

In Mind Machine, Superman ducks, when a gun is thrown at him.

JAMES KNOLT

The Man Who Could Read Minds is filled with a mixture of daytime and night scenes. It is also easy to see that a double was used for John Hamilton as Perry White drives into one of the early scenes.

In Superman Week, there is a strange conversation between Lois and Perry. Lois says something about having to phone them all, and Perry replies that there is no time for that, she will have to phone them instead.

Three in One also contains a glaring error by Noel Neill. She says, I believe, that Clark is still missing but that Mr. Kent has sent Jimmy out for something. I can't recall, at the

moment, what her exact words were, but she obviously meant that Mr. White sent Jimmy on his errand.

Of course, the way Superman raised the bathysphere in Perils of Superman is scientifically incorrect.

MICHAEL BIFULCO

Once again, mistakes sighted in the series would fill a book, but my favorites are Superman's chest insignia reversed in scenes where his direction of travel was photographed incorrect.

ROBERT HARVEY

With regards to mistakes, miscues and errors, I have noticed: microphone shadows, blown dialogue, continuity errors, reversed negatives, out of synch sound for liftoffs and landings, springboard sound, sound of running off decorated area of soundstage floor, excessive sweat stains, and noticeable padded shirt outlines.

A specific example is in The Birthday letter. As Kent calmly leaves Lois Lane's office, cut to outside hallway as he excitedly crosses to stock room door and enters, then cut to window as Superman leaps out, having spent no time changing.

RUSSEL FORSYTHE

In many episodes Clark Kent removes his glasses in front of his friends but none of them recognize him as Superman. Also, for some reason, the later color episodes do not have the titles printed on the films. I thought they might have been edited, but after talking to a fellow collector he told me that they didn't print the titles. I assume the titles only appear on the film leaders.

RANDY GARRETT

It's not surprising that repeated viewings of the series will reveal mistakes in the show, the same is true of Gone With the Wind.

In Drums of Death, Johnson is looking at a snapshot supposedly of voodoo witch doctor. This scene leads to two boo-boos. First, the photo is said to be an enlargement of a piece of movie film which Perry's sister has made. The film, when screened by Perry and Clark, shows the witch doctor peaking through some bushes, while the photo shows him standing still in front of a wall. Johnson slowly lowers the photo after looking at it and this reveals the second mistake in the scene. The photo he is looking at is obviously a portrait of a distinguished looking gentleman in a suit and tie.

Another goof to watch for, depending on how the picture is framed, is the appearance of the spring board in several of the 1951 take offs. When Reeves bounces off of it, it rebounds into frame for a second.

GARY MANTAKOONY

The two glaring mistakes that stand out in my mind are the scenes in The Talking Clue with George and Three in One with Noel Neill.

TOM NAGY

While the color episodes have the most errors, I have noticed, in The Evil Three, after Superman thrashes the Colonel, the springboard he jumps on for the takeoff bounces into view.

JIM BEAVER

There is an episode where, in a flying sequence, Reeves' cape catches on a wire holding him up.

JIM HAMBRICK

How can you want to put down anything about the television show?

DON RHODEN

You can see the spring board at the bottom of the screen, after Reeves leaves the Colonel, in The Evil Three.

When Murray and his mobsters leave their car, it rolls backwards because the driver forgot to set the parking brake in No Holds Barred.

Drums of Death - Clark flies out of his hotel room in Haiti which looks exactly like the storeroom in the Daily Planet.

George bangs the head of Dinelli (actually a dummy) on a brick wall when he lands back at the studio in Czar of the Underworld.

The newspaper says Dr. Hurley was the fourth suicide when he was only the third in Mystery in Wax.

In All That Glitters, it is obvious that the mouse is being pushed against its will, rather than pulling the heavy cabinet.

Superman knocking over the vault door on his way out of the room after rescuing Hugh Beaumont in The Big Squeeze.

Compare, if you will, the George Reeves versus Christopher Reeve Superman.

PAUL MANDELL

It's quite unfair to compare George Reeves and Christopher Reeve as Superman. Chris is a "today" actor with lots of latitude for the role, and he is a very good Superman. George had a unique acting style and persona - he deliberately chewed his lines and flaunted an arsenal of theatrical devices. Some people admired this, others did not. Still others may have found it embarrassing. Acting in Fifties television cannot (and should not) be compared to acting in the movies of the Eighties. Nevertheless, when George played it straight, in his leotards, he was Superman. For all Chris's finesse in the role, he is an overgrown Superboy with an overbite.

I'd like to think that George Reeves's crime-busting in Crime Wave and warmth in Around the World was everything Maxwell and Ellsworth had hoped Superman would be on the tube.

MIKE ROSE

To me, comparing George Reeves to Christopher Reeve is like comparing kryptonite to apples. George was, and always will be, Superman in the flesh. Anything else is a poor imitation. 'Nuff said.

JAMES KNOLT

There is no comparison between George and Chris to be made. Well, yes there is. Christopher Reeve's portrayal of Clark Kent is abominable. The current movie series seems to entirely miss the feeling of closeness which existed between the cast in the television series. Clark cared for Lois and Jimmy. Perry White looked after all of them, even Clark in many ways. The movies miss the point entirely. It was that feeling of warmth that intrigued me.

MICHAEL BIFULCO

This would be a good subject for a future article in the newsletter. Simply stated, though, I would say Christopher Reeve acted the part of Superman - George Reeves was Superman!

After growing up with the television series, trying to imagine anyone other than [sic] George as Superman would be like trying to imagine anyone other than Charlton Heston as Moses.

ROBERT HARVEY

As far as I'm concerned, there is no comparison. Chris Reeve has developed a better build, but his smirking boy scout approach is a poor substitute for George Reeves' sincere, thoughtful, and determine portrayal [sic]. As a child I was thoroughly convinced that he was Superman, and as an adult I've come to appreciate his wonderful performance in

a type of role that is very difficult to carry off successfully. To appreciate his talent, consider the portrayals of other superheros (or even Superman) in the movie serials or feature films - either wooden or overplayed to the point of parody.

RUSSEL FORSYTHE

I like George Reeves portrayal of Superman much better than Christopher Reeve. Of course I grew up watching George Reeves. I feel George Reeves's Superman is much more down to earth and appears tougher, especially during the 1951 season. Christopher Reeve tried to make too much of a dramatic role of Superman I feel.

RANDY GARRETT

There is no comparison between George Reeves and Christopher Reeve. As an actor. Reeve is very limited, even wooden at times. His interpretation of Clark Kent as a clumsy nerd is totally overdone to the point of being silly. His Superman is too mushy, much like Alan Alda as the Man of Steel (?). He looks completely plastic with his spit curl hair do and big rubber galoshes. I'll have to admit that my opinion of Mr. Reeve is based only on the first Superman film since I've refused to see the sequels, but to me his performance is a fiasco.

Obviously I'm a big fan of George Reeves. The main strength of the show and I feel the reason it is remembered so fondly is his ability as an actor. The character he created was tremendous. Totally heroic, yet humble and considerate of others. At times he was stern, but never flat or cardboard. His Clark Kent was a pleasure to watch also. Level-headed polite, and down to earth. Reeves's performance insures that the Superman series will always have a warm spot in the hearts of fans.

The new movies, I'm afraid, won't be so fondly recalled.

GARY MANTAKOONY

George was already thirty-seven when he became the second live-action Superman, where Chris was only in his twenties. George was a more seasoned actor with such pictures as Gone with the Wind and So Proudly We Hail, to his credit, whereas Chris was a relative unknown. George had the ability to play Clark Kent with both timidity, strength, and humor and Superman with acute forcefulness [sic] and agility. Chris, though very appealing, generally lacks his predecessors credibility and appears to me to be very bland.

TOM NAGY

George is tough, but a friend in the first and second seasons. He is always full of energy. Chris is gentle, friendly, but more cautious to use his powers.

The special effects used in the movies are good, the Eiffel Tower rescue scene, from Superman II, being the special effect most reminiscent of the television series. Unfortunately, most of the special effects are slow-paced, the flight take-offs are poor, and the flying music stinks. Chris Reeve is nice, but a wimp compared to George Reeves.

As a postscript, Chris Reeve's "S" insignia sucks.

JIM BEAVER

George Reeves, for the most part, played Kent and Superman exactly alike, and very honestly and straight-ahead, not kidding the character at all. He was not an extraordinarily subtle or gifted actor, but he was nevertheless quite a good one, and he did solid work on the show, especially in its early days, before the sameness of the work, day in and day out, began to wear on him.

Christopher Reeve is certainly the better actor of the two, with a terrific ability to find tiny nuances in a role, and he plays Kent and Superman as two totally different people, which is probably the better

way to go, since we're supposed to believe that nobody recognizes Superman once he puts on his glasses. Reeve has more fun in the role than Reeves did, and that fun is contagious, but then George had a lot less to work with, got paid less, and had to do it six days a week for six years! So it's no wonder Chris seems a little fresher in the part.

Despite a certain difference in their talents, I'll watch George Reeves in Superman or anything else any day of the week over Christopher Reeve, and no offense to Chris.

JIM HAMBRICK

George is, was and always will be The Original Superman.

Christopher Reeve would have made a good Superboy.

DON RHODEN

Christopher Reeve tried hard and does a good job of playing a yuppie Superman. The take-offs are never spectacular, and are more like Tinkerbell floating off. He is good-looking, and in the first three films, had the appropriate physique. He resembles the Curt Swan-John Byrne comic book version of the character. He plays a sensitive, Phil Donahue and Alan Alda, kind of Superman.

George Reeves, on the other hand, was a man's man. He looked like the old Wayne Boring-Joe Shuster version of the character. His takeoffs were spectacular (at least in the first two seasons), and in the first season, his portrayal was forceful. He couldn't be duped by anyone. In 1951, Reeves played the role straight.

In closing, compare Reeves' profile with Reeve's. After that, does anyone need further convincing?

What is your critical reaction to the release of Superman and the Mole Men?



PAUL MANDELL

The video release of Superman and the Mole-Men was a treat and a disappointment. My feeling is that even diehard aficionados could only view it as a curiosity piece. Superman and the Mole-Men was typical of the Lippert packages of the period (Robot Monster and so on) with its comic book title backgrounds and uninspired music. Most interesting was the opening flag shot of George in the movie; I had always assumed that it was shot for the series. Bud Kennedy (the familiar "apocalyptic voice" behind the series's opening titles and previews) narrated the movie. Kennedy can be seen in Crime Wave, behind the radio mike, when a bulletin is issued.

The original music, by Darrell Calker (of Woody Woodpecker fame, no less), was adequate, but nothing compared to the good old library tracks. The chilling mysterious and frenetic passages in Unknown People made it scary, particularly the clamorous cue used for the chase into the burning barn, and the eerie one when Phyllis is seen the mole men at the window.

Some of the dialogue scissored out for television is amusing. For instance, Phyllis observes the creature has the head of a human and "the body of a mole" (how she can equate a felt zippered body suit with a mole is anyone's guess, but it justified the title). You get to see the "seamier"

side of Sheriff Stanley Andrews when the PR man informs him of all the "publicity" he will get by not calling in the police. The missing dialogue by Walter Reed does well in heightening overall anxiety.

George's monologue about potential hysteria, prior to his magnificent "Peter Pan" takeoff, is great (other take-off shots and fight scenes used George Fisher and a variety of other stuntmen). The opening long shot of Silsby was either a freeze-frame or a painting in the movie; yet in Unknown People, trees billow in the wind. You can see the composite effect of water on the arroya [sic] downshot done by optical man, Jack Rabin, who died on May 25, 1987 (Rabin, not Thol Simonson, was responsible for putting together the flying shots in 1951). Also peculiar in the film is a different sound effect for George landing behind Jeff Corey near the dam. The familiar "whoosh" wasn't tracked in until it became a two-part show.

Sometimes ruthless editing works best. The pursuit of the mole man by Benson and his mob was much too long in the movie, and the serio-comic double-take of a local spitting out his coffee at the sight of the running creature doesn't redeem its length. Of note is my mother's old Electrolux vacuum cleaner used as a "laser weapon." I wish she had kept it, as it was recently exhibited in the Brooklyn Museum as an art deco objet d'art.

Superman and the Mole Men was a long-awaited rediscovery. Though one wishes that there could have been more in the way of missing dialogue and Superman action Scenes.

MIKE ROSE

I was thrilled beyond words when Superman and Mole Men was finally released. I missed seeing it as a child, being born in '52, but I had always wanted to see what was cut from the television version. Needless to say, Warner answered my prayers by finally releasing it on video.

I thought the music in it was terrible, compared with the music used in the series, but as a whole, I found it really enjoyable, and it was great to see the edited scenes.

JAMES KNOLT

I thoroughly enjoyed Superman and the Mole Men. I purchased a copy, and watch it often. For many years I anticipated its release, but never thought I would ever see it.

I also feel that Superman and the Mole Men was good for the added dialog and different opening. Even the music was more appropriate than the repetitious score used in Unknown People.

Now, I suppose as part of the Fiftieth Anniversary, Warner Home Video is releasing two volumes of Superman videos, including four television episodes. Volume One has Superman On Earth and All That Glitters. Volume Two has Crime Wave and Perils of Superman. Each volume also has a Fleischer cartoon. They will be available November 25th for the price of \$29.98 each (I also run a small mail-order video company).

MICHAEL BIFULCO

I was very happy to learn of the recent release of Superman and the Mole Men. Taken within the context of the times, it is a very good show. Certainly, I missed the television music so obviously absent from the film, but it was fun to see the whole story uncut. My only negative reaction was the price. I don't feel it will ever get a fair chance to reach the masses with such a high ticket.

We'll see.

ROBERT HARVEY

I was very pleased to have the chance to see Superman and the Mole Men in its original form. I feel that it plays better in its reworked form for television - the extra scenes (aside from Superman and Lois Lane behind the girl's house) add little to the story, and the music is hardly memorable.

RUSSEL FORSYTHE

I think it's good that Superman and the Mole Men has been released on tape. It helps to keep memories of the series alive. My only complaint is that, when they originally filmed it, they didn't have Perry White, Jimmy Olsen or Inspector Henderson in the movie.

RANDY GARRETT

The video release of Superman and the Mole Men will keep George Reeves's Superman in the public eye, but the show is really not a true representation of the series as a whole. It lacks both Perry and Jimmy, and the familiar "planet" surroundings. Cheap production values, represented by the animated flying shot, also hurt. However, all of these shortcomings are overshadowed by Reeves's tremendous performance.

JIM HAMBRICK

I thought it was great stuff!

I have been waiting for fifteen years to see Superman and the Mole Men released.

DON RHODEN

I loved every second of Superman and the Mole Men. Although the music was not near as good as the television music, I still enjoyed it. It reminded me of the old Fifties science-fiction movie music heard on the late shows of the last twenty years.

The only bad thing about the film was that it was too short. I was hoping for all sorts of stuff, like an extended fight scene where Superman takes the guns from the vigilante mob. The cassette's high price will keep many people from buying it, and also prevent many video rental outlets from stocking it, insuring a high profile for Christopher Reeve's Superman and not George Reeves's portrayal.

What imaginary episodes or scenarios would you like to have seen?

PAUL MANDELL

It would've been nice to have had Superman pitted against an arch villain like Luthor (a mean, non-Gene Hackman, Luthor) or a Brainiac. But when you realize how dumb fantastical characters were penned by the Chantlers and "Whit" Ellsworth in the final season, leaving them alone was a blessing. With bad guys like Dan Seymour, Tony Caruso, Frank Richards, and the Runyonesque heavies of the vintage episodes, I'd say that George Reeves had his hands full for quite a spell (even Joe Kirk - Baccigalupe in the Abbott and Costello show - had it in for Kent in Czar of the Underworld).

It's sad that Ellsworth chose to play down the series with bumbling Ben Weldons and insipid Pepperwinkles rather than pit Superman against the gritty characters that populated Dragnet and Racket Squad. Even sadder is that late bloomers, who remember The Adventures of Superman, lean towards the color episodes. Bob Maxwell may have gone over the line in 1951, but the man had nerve - the kind of nerve that we babyboomers enjoy so much.

MIKE ROSE

It would have been nice to bring more of the comic book characters to the television series, but I'm happy that they didn't. I think it would have taken away from the originality of the series.

JAMES KNOLT

I especially liked when George worked with children, such as Judy Ann Nugent and Isa Ashdown. Therefore, I think there should have been more of those.

MICHAEL BIFULCO

Imaginary episodes I would like to have seen are most of the second season shows with Phyllis Coates as Lois Lane.

ROBERT HARVEY

Some imaginary scenarios I'd like to have seen include an encounter with Brainiac and a team-up with Batman or the Justice League of America.

RUSSEL FORSYTHE

I would like to have seen Superman battle Lex Luthor. I would like to have seen a flashback episode in which Superman recalls how he and Luther had been boyhood friends, then how Luther became Superboy's enemy after the Boy of Steel blew out a fire in Luther's lab causing the boy scientist to lose all his hair.

RANDY GARRETT

I've always felt that the miniscule budget of the Superman series was a blessing in disguise. The lack of money ruled out Luthor and his comic book cronies since any of his inventions would have wiped out the budget for a whole season.

Similarly, invading aliens and monsters were impractical. Because of this Superman's adventures were kept more believable.

As a kid I always felt that the stories could have actually happened, especially the first two seasons. The only story I wish had been done was the proposed full-length movie. I've always wondered what more money and filming time would have allowed the crew to create. Of course, if the script had been on the level of the last few color seasons it's just as well the George Reeves Superman movie never came to be.

TOM NAGY

Besides a "Superman versus Luthor," and a team-up with Batman and Robin, any super-powered villain [sic] would have

been neat.

In the Fifties, the villains were earthlings, straight from real life.

JIM BEAVER

I always wanted Batman to show up on the series.

JIM HAMBRICK

Superman vs. Brainiac and Mr. Mxyzptlk.

DON RHODEN

Imaginary episodes (don't let me get started!)...

More Maxwell episodes...

No color episodes at all, black and white suits the 1951 episodes better.

More Phyllis Coates.

Modern love scenes between George and Phyllis.

A Bizarro episode. Can you imagine a Bizarro George Reeves, fighting against a George Reeves Superman, in gritty black-and-white, with Phyllis Coates

tied to a chair or table screaming? Picture this in a dark brooding Maxwell episode with the menacing background music reaching its peak. In other words, Superman with a "Frankenstein" motif.

A Lex Luthor just as fiendishly sadistic as the one now appearing in Byrne's Superman comics.

Lana Lang appearances. Help me out: What red-haired (or you can die the hair) actresses of the Fifties do you think could have portrayed Lana Lang?

More Superman feature films, or even the completion of the proposed films Superman and the Ghost of Mystery Mountain (1954) and Superman and the Secret Planet (1957).

I feel computerized graphics will eventually enable filmmakers to create new movies with long-dead stars such as Humphrey Bogart, George Reeves, or Marilyn Monroe. Future generations may be unable to distinguish real actors from computer-generated ones. A "new" Adventures of Superman series (done in the Maxwell flavor, of course), with George Reeves in the leading role would even be possible.

It doesn't hurt to dream...

ROLL THE CREDITS

Well, that's it for the first issue of The Adventures Continue.

I would like to close with an interesting question posed by James Knolt, who wrote: "There is one other matter which you might be able to help with. As the thirtieth anniversary of George's death approaches, I would like to do something to let the world know that he is not forgotten. I thought perhaps a full-page ad in Variety or the LA Times might be appropriate. What do you think? It could be paid for by his fans. Your

magazine might be a good way to spread the word."

Anyone else out there have any thoughts on this? I think it's a great idea for June 1989.

In addition, Jim Beaver welcomes any correspondence related to George Reeves for his upcoming biography. You may contact him at 6546 Hollywood Blvd, #201, Los Angeles, CA 90028.

See you next issue.

– Don Rhoden

THE ADVENTURES CONTINUE
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