

Strip Art Ramblings

By Tony Marine – cis180marine@bigfoot.com

Greetings fellow APA-mates! I was going to skip my submission for this issue because I really don't have any unique insights or opinions about **Will Eisner** (and my wife and I just had our second baby), but couldn't stand the thought of not submitting something. I was saddened to hear of his passing, and immediately felt regret in not having met one of the biggest names in the industry. I'm especially envious of some of our Atlanta area constituents who were able to spend some time with him just prior to his passing. I did attend portions of the last **Eisner Awards** ceremonies, so I guess I was fortunate to have been in the same room as the man. I'll leave the writings about him to the experts in this group, and look forward to this issues publication so that I can learn more about one of the industry giants.

I've decided to showcase some of my strip art this issue, with some comments about why I like each piece. First up is the last strip I purchased - a **Mac Raboy Flash Gordon Sunday**. A fellow collector friend who has a very large strip art collection once told me that you have to see a Raboy in person to really appreciate it – he was right! The inks are just stunning on this piece. Also, considering it's a Sunday and quite large, I'd say it was a bargain. I'm very pleased with it.



Mac Raboy – Flash Gordon Sunday – 9/11/60.

If you ever wanted proof that strip art is where you get the most bang for your art buck, look no further than **Frank Godwin's *Rusty Riley*** strips. Godwin is an illustrator of the highest caliber, and yet, like a lot of other great strip artists, the stuff can be had amazingly cheap. This is my only *Rusty Riley* strip, and whenever I look at it, I wonder why I don't have more. Godwin is a master with the brush, and the rendering on this piece is exceptional. I like the fact that it's a two-panel strip because the horses, a key feature in *Rusty Riley*'s, are nice and big.



Frank Godwin – Rusty Riley – 6/4/55.

I spent a couple of years looking for a good **Alex Raymond *Rip Kirby*** strip, and finally found one that I really like. It doesn't feature *Rip*, but it's from the period I like best, and has some amazing inking, which is typical of Raymond's work. I heard someone once describe Raymond as the master of "thick and thin", and I quite agree. Aside from the overall inking quality of the piece, I especially like the very loose figures in the background in panel 2. Neat stuff. When I first started looking for a *Rip Kirby* strip only a couple of years ago, there were many available for under \$300. I don't know what is driving the market, but prices seem to be skyrocketing. I'd still like another example that features *Rip* himself.



Alex Raymond – Rip Kirby – 2/27/54

This **John Cullen Murphy** *Big Ben Bolt* strip might be the first piece of strip art I ever purchased. Once I started getting into strip collecting, I quickly realized where **Neal Adams** learned some of his best tricks. Guys like Murphy were doing realistic strips long before Neal ever hit the scene.



John Cullen Murphy - Big Ben Bolt - 9-5-61.

Another early strip that I purchased, and one of my favorites, is this **Jose Luis Salinas** *Cisco Kid* daily from 1951. It's from his first week doing the strip and there's a picture of Salinas holding this strip on the back of the collected *Cisco Kid* book (see below). This is the most beautiful *Cisco* strip I've ever seen, and I'm thrilled to own it.



Jose Luis Salinas - Cisco Kid - 1-24-51.



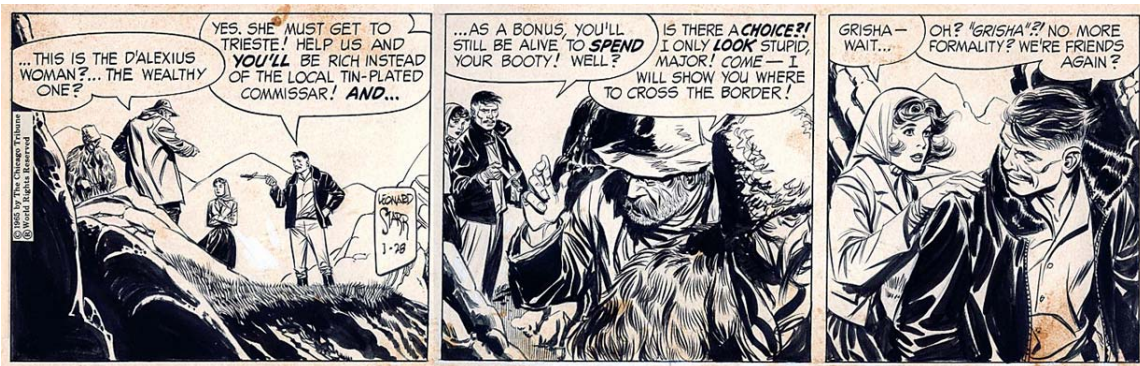
Salinas holding my Cisco strip.

I bought several **Dan Barry Flash Gordon** dailies, and kept the best 2 of the bunch. This, to me, is the perfect Gordon daily – killer robots attacking, a nice close-up of Flash, and a cool outer space scene. Doesn't get much better! The cross-hatching on Flash's face in panel two is beautiful, and hard to see on this little scan. Barry worked on Flash Gordon from 1951 up until 1990 (nearly 40 years!), but I like the late 50's, early 60's period the best.



Dan Barry – Flash Gordon – 8-14-62

When I received this **Leonard Starr On Stage** daily in the mail I flipped! I couldn't get over how beautiful the inking was. Even the smaller figures in panel one and two are inked with incredible detail. This is signed to someone by Starr, and was apparently given as a gift, so I assume he thought fairly highly of it. I've been looking for other strips from him, but haven't been able to find any of this quality. If anybody knows where I can get one from this period, please let me know.



Leonard Starr – On Stage – 1-28-65.

Well, those are some of my personal favorites. There are a few key strips that are missing from my collection. The two at the top of the list are a **Neal Adams Ben Casey**, and a **Frazetta Johnny Comet**. Also, I recently saw a **Basil Wolverton** strip from the late 20's. I'm not sure of the title as I couldn't find much info on the web, but I believe it might be from something called **Ethan Downing**. If anyone can help me find any of these, I'd be much obliged! See you next time.