UP, UP AND AWA-A-Y!

The Rise of Superman, Inc.

By John Kobler

ONE afternoon last June, shortly after the owners moved into the new house on Cleveland's University Heights, a delegation of small boys rang the doorbell. At sight of the short, plump, heavily spectacled young man of twenty-six who answered it, their faces fell.

"Aw, I told you Superman doesn't live here," the oldest one fretted.

"Oh, yes, he does," insisted another. "My pop told me so.

"Hold on, boys," put in the plump twenty-six-year-old. "Just wait here a minute." He bobbed back into the house, returning an instant later with an outfit familiar to millions of boys the country over: the red boots, blue tights and flowing red cape, embroidered with an enormous S, which Superman, America's No. 1 Comic Magazine hero, wears whenever he swings into action.

The boys' faces brightened again. Hopping up and down excitedly, they squealed, "Where is he? We wanna see him!"

"Well, right now," explained the plump youth, "he's engaged on one of his mysterious missions.

But he's not far away. He ought to be landing on the roof any minute."

Until dusk fell, the boys kept circling the house, their eyes glued to the roof. Superman failed to show up that day. But when their mothers called them for supper, the plump young man managed to send them home satisfied that Superman was hovering somewhere in the neighborhood.

In the three years that Jerry Siegel, the plump youth, has been writing the Superman saga, and Joe Shuster, his neighbor, partner and boyhood crony of the same age, has been illustrating it, they have assumed a solemn obligation to instill faith, wherever possible, in the physical reality of Superman. They have done this in the same spirit in which old-fashioned parents encourage belief in Santa Claus. Indeed, Siegel and Shuster are suspected by many of their friends of believing in Superman themselves.

And to their deep satisfaction, material considerations aside, their Man of Steel, with his super-hearing, super-sight and super-vitality, has become all things to all boys. He has shaken the pedestal of many a classic boyhood idol: Tarzan, whom he can outleap and outfight; Nick Carter, whom he can outsleuth; Galahad, whose purity is as tarnished brass compared to his. More than this, Superman accomplishes with casual ease feats that are common to every boy's daydreams. He kayoes eleven prize fighters in one second flat, leaps an eighth of a mile in any direction, runs faster than a locomotive and swims faster than a fish. His eyes are so keen that they can see through the thickest walls, his ears so acute that he is, willy-nilly, an eavesdropper on any conversation within a hundred yards. His skin is so tough that nothing short of an exploding grenade can even tickle it. Bullets bounce off it like spitballs; cold steel crumples against it like matchwood. And to top it all, his motivating traits are "super-courage, super-goodness and super-justice"; his mission in life "to go to the rescue of persecuted people and deserving persons."

Perhaps the greatest of all Superman's achievements is that he is a miracle man in fact as well as in fancy. No other cartoon character ever has been such an all-around success at the age of three. No other cartoon character ever has carried his creators to such an accomplishment as Siegel and Shuster enjoy at the age of twenty-six.

Three times a week, millions of young spines tingle as Superman thunders hollowly over the air waves, "Up, up and awa-a-y!" then soars into space to wreck an enemy Zeppelin in full flight or extinguish a forest fire by huffing at it, as the crisis may demand. His noble profile confronts them in two magazines and 230 newspapers with a com-
Superman crashes the movies—a scene from his first animated cartoon, about to be released. Below—The businessmen who have made an even better thing of Superman than have his authors. Harry Donenfeld is the man in the center.

bined circulation of nearly 25,000,000. That boy is growing rare who has no Superman dungarees in his wardrobe or no Superman Krypto-Raygun in his play chest.

When R. H. Macy & Co. staged a Superman exhibit in its New York store last Christmas, it took in $30,000 in thirty-cent admissions. Superman Day at the World's Fair cracked all attendance records for any single children's event, drawing 36,000 of them at ten cents a head. Certificates, code cards and buttons, setting them apart as members of the Superman Club of America, are proudly carried by some quarter of a million youngsters, including Mickey Rooney, Spanky McFarland, Farina, a du Pont, a La Follette, Mayor La Guardia's two children, and six Annapolis midshipmen. The 33rd Bombardment Squadron, Air Corps Reserve, has adopted Superman as its insignia.

Bomb-Shelter Divertissement

A N AMERICAN newspaper correspondent, touring London's bomb shelters during a heavy raid, observed a cockney boy immersed in the pages of Superman. Neither the din of antiaircraft fire nor shells exploding near by could distract his attention, and in his rapture he began squirming and jostling his neighbors. After a particularly violent detonation, his mother snatched the magazine out of his hands. "Give over," she bawled, "and pay attention to the air raid."

Among the intellectuals, Superman has been acclaimed the first authentic culture hero since Paul Bunyan. The New Republic recently analyzed him in terms of Nietzschean philosophy, a concept neither Siegel nor Shuster could ever understand.

Although many a parent-teacher group has objected to Superman, Dr. Lauretta Bender, the psychiatrist, addressing the American Orthopsychiatric Association, declared that he provides an inexpensive form of therapy for unhappy children. She cited the case history of a boy, ignored by a flighty mother and an alcoholic father, who believed he would soon die. He found relief by identifying himself with the imperishable Superman. "(He) would seem to offer the same type of mental catharsis," Doctor Bender concluded, "that Aristotle claimed was an attribute of the drama."

Governments have taken official note of Superman. In a special strip drawn for a magazine, Siegel and Shuster had him demolish the Siegfried Line, seize both Hitler and Stalin by the napes of their necks and whisk them off for judgment before the League of Nations. Das Schwarze Korps, official newspaper of Hitler's Elite Guards, took note of their Jewish blood and counterblasted: "The clever creator of Superman is a Colorado beetle (sic). . . . He stinks."

Translations used to carry Superman all over Europe—yes, including Scandinavia. But, banned wherever the swastika waves, he is now confined to the British Empire, the

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United States, Latin America (Superman), Hawaii and the Philippines.

The young creators of the Man of Steel would have been hailed by Doctor Freud as perfect clinical illustrations of psychological compensation. For here are two small, shy, nervous, myopic lads, who can barely cope with ordinary body-building contraptions, let alone tear the wings off a stratoliner in mid-air. As the puniest kids in school, picked on and bullied by their huselier classmates, they continually moped off into what Doctor Freud termed "infantile phantasies," wherein they became colossi of brute strength, capable of flattening whole regiments of class bullies by a flick of their pinkies.

Siegel's parents are old-time Clevelanders. His father, Michael, who died six years ago, ran a hole-in-the-wall newsstand, a tailor shop and his mother helped behind the counter. There are three sisters, now all married, and two older brothers—Leo, a dentist, and Harry, a mailman.

Never a shining scholar, Siegel daydreamed through Oliver Wendell Holmes Public School, landing uneventfully in Glenville High. Everybody in the struggling Siegel family had to pull their own weight. Between classes Jerry made deliveries for a printing plant, averaging four dollars a week. At all leisure moments, however, he nurtured his ingrown soul on an undiluted diet of dime novels and comic strips, especially the Man-From-Mars category. "It inspired me to publish my own faithfully," he declared, "and henceforth to writing science fiction literature," says Siegel, who often talks like that.

Presently he was devoting himself to it so wholeheartedly that it sometimes took two years to move him from one grade into the next.

How, one hot night in 1932, the Man of Steel had sprung practically full-blown into Jerry Siegel's head is an experience he never tires of describing:

"I am lying in bed counting sheep when all of a sudden it hits me. I conceived a character like Samson, Hercules and all the strong men I ever heard of. It smacks of science fiction stuff.

"Uh-huh," Shuster admitted, his eyes blinking behind double-thick lenses.

By the noon recess the boys had formed a partnership which has progressed, unmarred by a single dispute, to this day.

The Dutch-Russian-Jewish Shusters were harder up even than the Siegels. Julius Shuster, a work-worn little tailor, had started life in Toronto forty years earlier and emigrated to Cleveland when Joe was ten. The family, consisting, in addition, of Mamma Shuster, brother Frank—who now works as a letterer on the Siegel-Shuster staff—and sister Jeannetta, crowded into a twenty-dollar-a-month flat in a down-at-the-heels district. Some days they skipped a meal. One winter they had no coal and Joe had to work at his drawing board wearing cotton gloves.

By the time he entered Glenville High he was a wage earner of experience, having peddled newspapers, handed out coupons in summer, and worked as an apprentice in a sign painter's shop. He earned as much as five dollars a week, which he dutifully handed over to his parents. He also found time to win a scholarship at the Cleveland School of Art and attend night classes at John Huntington Art School, where the tuition was ten cents a lesson.

Five minutes after Siegel and Shuster met they were breathlessly discussing the Rogers of the Apes, and other exemplars of the contemporary comic strip. As soon as school was out they repaired to Shuster's unheated room and worked for many a strong potion—Doctor Oecute, a sort of astral Nick Carter who kept tangling with zombies, werewolves and such; Henri Duval, a drowsy musketeer in the image of D'Artagnan—but no editor hastened to press riches on them. What few continuities they did place were bought by Major Malcolm Wheeler-Nicholson, a grand-mannered, bespattered ex-army officer, who in February of 1935 had published New Fun Comics, first original comic magazine and forerunner of some 108 which now festoon the newsstands. (For the record, the first Comic Magazine of any description—it contained reprints only—was published by M. Charles Gaines, a schoolteacher who became production manager of McClure Syndicate. But the major couldn't see Superman for two pines.)

How, split seconds before the planet Krypton, abode of a super-race, is destroyed by a meteor, Jor-L, the great Kryptonian scientist, pops his first-born into a rocket ship and launches him into interplanetary space. Some 3,000,000,000 light-years later the rocket ship lands safely on a roadside near Metropolis, U. S. A., where passing motorists extricate tiny Jor-L, Jr, and deliver him to an orphanage.

Here, in an unforgettable
That Donenfeld, as sole owner of Superman, could even hire some other team to draw him.

The partners, who by this time had abandoned hope that Superman would ever amount to much, mulled this over helplessly. Then Siegel instructed, "Well, at least this way we'll see him in print." They signed the form.

Superman appeared in the first issue of Action Comics, June, 1938. Nothing happened. Nor the second issue, for which the partners received other than $100. Nor the third. But with the fourth, Action Comics spurted mysteriously ahead of its fellow publications. Donenfeld heard the rumble of distant drums. "We better have a newsstand survey," said he.

**The Golden Touch**

The survey quickened his brightest hopes. Children were clamoring, not for Action Comics, but for "that magazine with Superman in it." Quivering with excitement, Donenfeld ordered Superman splashed all over the cover of succeeding issues. They sold out.

In May of 1939 he tested a quarterly consisting of four thirteen-page Superman stories. It, too, was a sellout. The following July, Superman Magazine bowed in as a bimonthly. It has been zipping along ever since at a lively 1,300,000, while Action Comics, featuring only one Superman story, soared to 900,000. Today Superman leads all other comic-magazine characters, one of the few within even hailing distance being The Bat Man—900,000—a bimonthly also owned by Donenfeld. Last year the Superman magazine grossed $950,000.

From the fall of '38 on, it was all sail and no anchor. Again the ptelephone sounds of syndicate editors kicking themselves, Donenfeld negotiated with Donenfeld to handle the newspaper rights, Donenfeld to receive 40 per cent. Superman was eventually placed in 230 daily and Sunday newspapers scattered throughout the Western Hemisphere. Donenfeld's 1939 cut was $1,000,000.

The McClone negotiations were preceded by considerable unhappiness for the partners. They sensed—correctly—that syndicate editors, who had once turned Superman down, would soon come to them, hat in hand. They begged Donenfeld to give back the syndicate rights. "We can't do that," he replied, "but if one of you will come to New York, I'm sure we can work something out."

Sitting up all night in the coach for lack of sleepier fare, Siegel arrived, rumpled and yawning, to receive the proposition: if the partners would confine all their services to Donenfeld for ten years, he would permit them to do so for McClone, himself retaining an agent's 10 per cent of McClone's gross, however, not his own 40 per cent net. In the heat of discussion Siegel was frequently reminded that Donenfeld owned all rights and could freeze the partners out. The boys signed a contract, which for the first year brought them an increase of less than $100 a month.

Back in Cleveland, Siegel and Shuster rented a thirty-dollar-a-month office in a remote office building. "The idea was to work where nobody would be likely to interrupt us," says Shuster. They had the telephone ripped out and kept the frosted-glass door blank, lest curiosity seekers swamp them. As it is, a few of the more persistent ones...
IT MAY BE TRUE! Awkward and ugly, of course. But the primitive Eskimo's slit fishbone is better, safer glare-protection than you'll get from any sun glasses. *** How can you be sure the sun glasses you buy are scientifically safe and efficient? What makes the difference between correct and incorrect glare-protection? Scientists of American Optical Company give the answers in the vital truths presented here.

FOR YOUR EYES' SAKE . . . KNOW THESE FACTS

LENS QUALITY is the first consideration. Some sun glasses are beat or blown glass containing invisible, but eye-throwing defects. AO Sun Glass lenses are made only of fine quality optical glass, to high optical standards.

ABSORPTIVE POWER or ability to stop rays that cause strain and discomfort may be very low in inferior lenses. All AO Sun Glass lenses shut out excessive ultra-violet (sunburn) rays, and some also absorb excess infra-red (heat) rays.

LENS COLOR may be guesswork in poor sun glasses. AO scientifically determines

SAY "AO" . . . AND BE SURE!

Four Types, Many Styles ... $1.00 and up.

Choose sun glasses that carry the famous AO mark. It stands for more than 100 years of optical experience . . . pioneering in absorptive lenses . . . recognized service in the optical professions. Army, Navy and Industry, where war has screamed its own face into at the moment of creation. He also indicates the color scheme, though the actual water coloring is applied in New York.

Siegel's schedule is more irregular. He seldom visits the office, hanging out his manila. Sometimes three or four times a week, more than once, more than ten times a year. He has been known to spend an infinite number of hours at a stretch. To Whiteman, the time and place are of no consequence. He is a man of indescribable help, who turns up, unasked, and at convenient moments, and whenever something is needed in the office. He never seems to tire, and his presence is always helpful. He is always ready to give assistance, and his suggestions are always accepted.

The story of the make-up of fashion is a round table. The three main types of fashion are: the natural, the semi-natural, and the artificial. The natural type is characterized by simplicity and modesty. The semi-natural type is more ornate, with a touch of fantasy. The artificial type is the most elaborate, with a lot of frills and flourishes.

When Ellsworth returns his continuity, Siegel prepares a final draft and goes through it with the rest of the staff. Shuster then blueprint the main sequence of action and allot the drawing and lettering to his proper specialist.

Every two or three months Siegel flies to New York to sit in on a policy conference. With millions of parents who wait for him to get off the train, Superman is also a humorist full of whimsey and light banter. No matter how rough the action or how grim the crisis, he is always ready to toss off a bit of banter. "Just a good scalp massage." When a set of Supermen on the coast-to-coast hookup. Of the 250 people employed in Superman enterprises, the only one who approaches the physical and spiritual ideal is Superman's radio voice, Clayton (Bud) Collyer, an extravagantly handsome young Williams graduate, six feet tall, weighing 170 pounds, most of it in his chest and shoulders, who is partial to phrases like "within the sterile uninhabitable, but only when absolutely necessary.

Superman is never allowed, for example, to destroy property belonging to anybody except the villain, and then only when absolutely necessary. He will readily project himself through a building, rendering it utterly uninhabitable, but only when Lois Lane's predicament inside is so desperate that to use the conventional entrance might mean a fatal delay. Superman never uses a weapon other than his bare fists. He knocks villains silly at the drop of a hat, toses them clear into the stratosphere and generally scares the daylight out of them. But those who get killed are always hoisted by their own petard and then thrown back into the airbrusher's hands. It is a curious evidence of children's precocity that most of them sense how Superman and Lois feel about each other anyway.

The Air Wave of Prosperity

With Superman, Inc.'s, many extra-literary enterprises neither Shuster nor Siegel has any direct connection.

In 1938, Rob Maxwell, one of Donenfeld's brain-trusters, sat down with a script writer to whip together a series of fifteen-minute recorded cliff-hangers. The project dragged along for six months. The result was a gratifying success. Superman's radio voice, the siren of the air, was now heard in homes throughout the country. It was a new opportunity for the writers and directors, who could now reach a larger audience than ever before.

The Air Wave of Prosperity has been an unqualified success. With the growth of the radio industry, the demand for Superman's radio voice has increased. The Superman franchise is now one of the most valuable assets of the company, and the demand for Superman's radio voice is constantly growing. The success of the Superman franchise has been due to the careful planning and execution of the radio writers and directors. They have been able to create a series of programs that are both entertaining and educational. The Superman franchise is a true example of the power of radio to influence public opinion and to promote good citizenship.
In October, Paramount Pictures will release the first of a series of twelve Fleischer technicolor cartoons. Under a guaranteed-percentage contract, Superman, Inc., will net an estimated $120,000. Another healthy source of growth developed only within the last six months, is thirty-three licensed products, which have poured $100,000 more into the till, bringing the company's $140-11 income to a jolly total of approximately $1,500,000—and this exclusive of the $1,100,000 from Donenfeld's other publications.

It was only after anguished appeals that Siegel and Shuster finally managed, in 1940, to wangle a six-year extension for themselves: $75,000, of which $14,000 goes in staff salaries and overhead. At the end of the first year, when they were still making $150 on a purely salaried basis, they had asked Liebowitz for a five-dollar raise per page. He professed to be shocked, but, as Liebowitz later expressed it, "An artist must be happy," and he granted the raise. The following year, after learning that Superman's books were still rocketing, the boys again complained, and won a brand-new contract, whereby they were given another five-dollar raise, or twenty dollars a page, and 5 per cent of all other Superman revenues.

In the same year Superman was proclaimed "the greatest merchandising character on the whole planet." Swiftly, they set out to design and produce wood and metal-working machines that would be lighter, more flexible, handier and more efficient than any machines then on the market—which would cost only one fourth to one third as much as older machines—yet would accomplish the same work. Today, so low in cost are these Delta machines, produced by modern manufacturing methods, that they can be purchased by the very smallest of "one-man" shops!

Behind these Delta light machine tools—now used so successfully and economically by thousands of the finest of American shops—lies years of research and experiment; years of development and patient testing in the field.

As a result, practically every worth-while improvement in light wood and metal-working machinery, for the past fourteen years, has come from the drafting boards of Delta engineers. Today, from the largest airplane and armament plants to the smallest basement workshop, Delta machines are recognized as the standard of high quality and performance.

Let us tell you about Delta machines, and how they can serve your needs.

The Delta Manufacturing Company
208 E. Vienna Avenue
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

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THE SATURDAY EVENING POST
June 21, 1941

ROARING guns, screaming planes and rumbling tanks have had no part in a revolution that has taken place all around you during the past ten years. Quietly, steadily, new types of machine tools have been developed and produced to meet modern manufacturing conditions, until now, in thousands of factories and shops throughout the world, hundreds of thousands of these new tools have displaced older, slower and much more expensive machines!

Behind this quiet revolution lies an unusual story of inventive ingenuity and manufacturing skill. More than ten years ago, Delta engineers set out to design and produce wood and metal-working machines that would be lighter, more flexible, handier and more efficient than any machines then on the market—which would cost only one fourth to one third as much as older machines—yet would accomplish the same work. Today, so low in cost are these Delta machines, produced by modern manufacturing methods, that they can be purchased by the very smallest of "one-man" shops!

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Sometimes one would break in, "Hold on there! You ain't got that exactly right! Here, lemme show you." And a quoit in each hand, the pitcher would demonstrate, and the quoits finally get under way. Glowing accounts were abroad about The Molder's speed and staying power, but our camp countered with large gobs of silence, garnished with overhearing, serene confidence.

After the secret workout, I was positive Sharkey'd come in first, even ahead of Buckman. I imagined it so often, it settled itself that way, and the night of the first match I dreamed it, and could hardly wait to get the morning paper out of the vestibule to read about him leading.

BUCKMAN STEALS SHOW BEFORE 4000 FANS

Started off in whirlwind style, maintaining it throughout. . . . Great favorite with the fans because of his unassuming deportment on the track.

And a lot more. When I complained that it was so different from what I'd expected, pop said I was just the age to start learning that there's disappointment as you go down the pike, and this was one of them. But the second and third nights were the same. The grind weeded out fourteen starters, seven were left, and Buckman had pocketed the match, trailed by Carlisle and Jackson. Jackson developed pleurisy, Carlisle was plagued with leg cramps, and Lockwood fought blisters. The Molder, Padgett, a local dark horse, and Sharkey were miles behind the professionals, and definitely handicapped and lap miles. In Lou's, the quoits were interrupted to demonstrate Sharkey's stride, and the pitchers waited, understandingly.

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