

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."



ACME

At twenty-six, the genie they created has brought them super-success. Jerry Siegel, who does the writing, watches Joe Shuster at the drawing table.



PHOTOS BY DORK

"None of the Shusters can quite grasp what has happened to them." Joe (center left) is a bountiful provider for Brother Frank, Mamma, Papa, Sister Jeanetta. Right—Siegel invented Superman in a less luxurious bed, likes to read biographies of factual supermen.

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

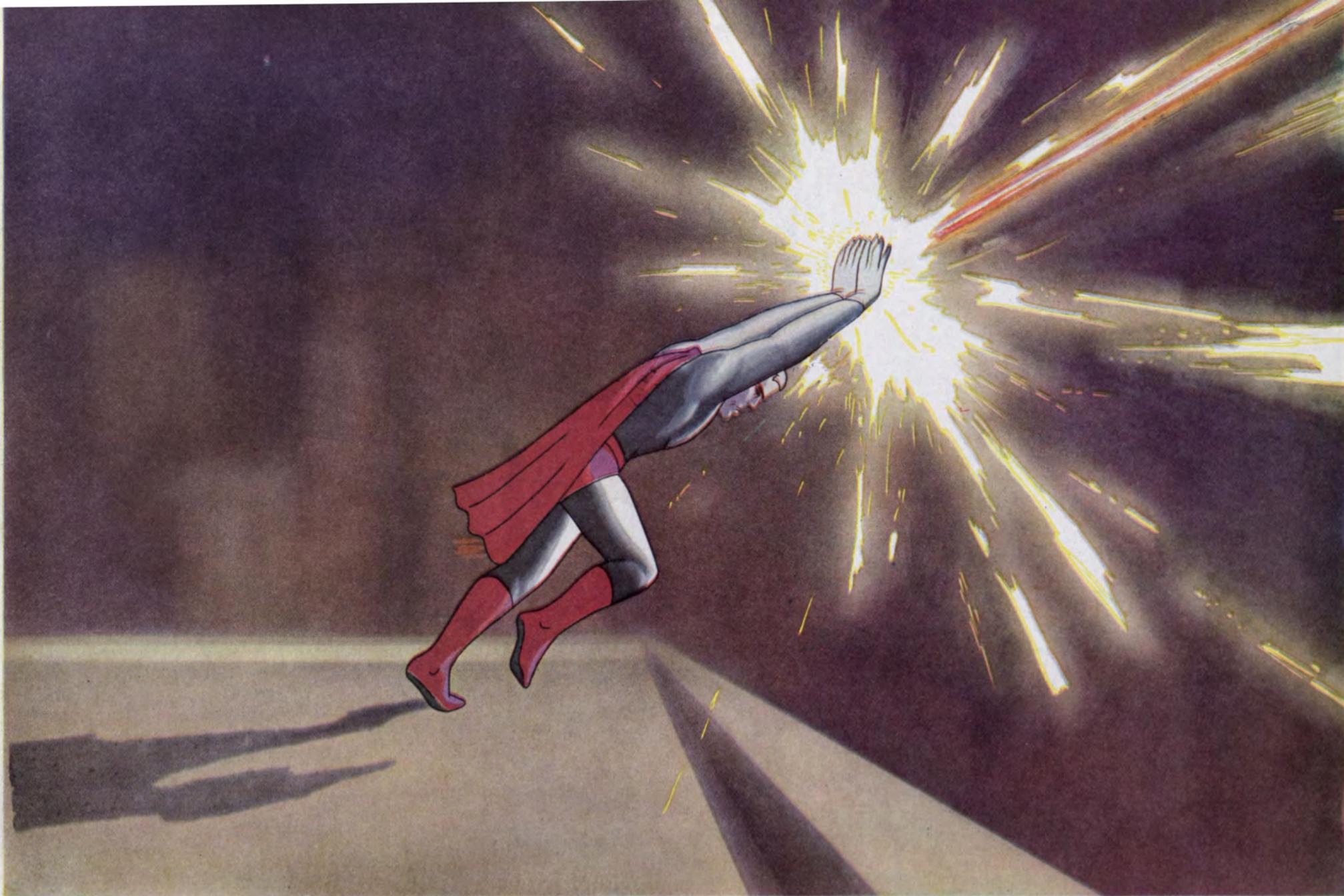
old-fashioned parents encourage belief in Santa Claus. Indeed, Siegel and Shuster are suspected by many of their friends of believing in Superman themselves.

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 outleuth; 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

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-



COURTESY OF PARAMOUNT-FLEISCHER STUDIOS

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

AN 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 anti-aircraft 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. Laurretta 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 counter-blasted: "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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LARRY GORDON PHOTO

UP, UP AND AWA-A-Y!

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United States, Latin America (*Super-hombre*), 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 huskier 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 men's furnishing 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 uneasily in Glenville High. Everybody in the struggling Siegel family had to pull his 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 devote myself 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.

A Cosmic Meeting

It was in the corridors of Glenville High that a classmate pointed out to him a pale, pitcher-eared lad named Joe Shuster, whose head was also in the clouds above Mars. Siegel sought him out.

"I understand," he said, "that you draw 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 than even 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 Jeanetta, 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, hawked ice-cream cones 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 Buck Rogers, Tarzan of the Apes, and other exemplars of the contemporary comic strip. As soon as school was out they repaired to Shuster's unheated workroom, barely twelve blocks from the Siegel home, and plunged into an editorial conference, resuming it every night and as much of the daytime as they could snatch from school for the next several years.

The Birth of Superman

They were years of struggle and discouragement. The partners brewed many a strong potion—Doctor Occult, a sort of astral Nick Carter who kept tangling with zombies, werewolves and such; Henri Duval, a doughty 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, bespatted 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 pins.

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 conceive a character like Samson, Hercules and all the strong men I ever heard tell of rolled into one. Only more so. I hop right out of bed and write this down, and then I go back and think some more for about two hours and get up again and write that down. This goes on all night at two-hour intervals, until in the morning I have a complete script."

As the dawn rose over Cleveland, Siegel, shirttail flying and script clutched in his fevered hands, raced through the empty streets to the Shuster home—one of the few violent exertions he has ever permitted himself—and roused his partner. Shuster took fire at once. Without pausing for either food or rest, they spent the rest of the day polishing off the first twelve Superman strips. The story told therein is now as familiar to the average American boy as George Washington and the cherry tree:

How, split seconds before the planet Krypton, abode of a super-race, is destroyed by earthquakes, Jorl-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 a passing motorist extricates tiny Jorl-l, Jr., and delivers him to an orphanage. Here, in an unforgettable

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GOOEY PIPE SINKS MARINE

—but he's out of the dog house now!

SERGEANT FRANKLIN'S pipe was ranklin' the bimbo in back of the boat. "Head for the shore," she gasped. "That briar of yours smells like burning celluloid! I'm getting dizzy!"

OUT SHE JUMPED and off she stalked. And there he stood. "Well," said the fisherman, "I see the Marines have landed, but don't have the situation well in hand. Get wise, Mister!"

"THAT HANDSOME UNIFORM will win no women till you clean your pipe and switch to a tobacco that smells good. Like this here Sir Walter blend of fine mild burleys. Try a load."

PUFF ENDS HUFF. The sergeant took that good advice—switched to Sir Walter Raleigh—and won her back in a sniff. Try this mildest tobacco yourself. It smells grand to everyone!

KEEP OUT OF THE
DOG HOUSE
WITH SIR WALTER



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Cellophane tape around lid seals flavor in, brings you tobacco 100% factory-fresh!

UNION MADE

Tune in...UNCLE WALTER'S DOG HOUSE

EVERY FRIDAY NIGHT ★ NBC ★ PRIZES FOR YOUR "DOG HOUSE" EXPERIENCE

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panel, the diapered super-tot merrily balances a huge armchair on his hand while doctor and nurse look on, bug-eyed.

We next see him grown to supermanhood, a broad-shouldered, Greek-profiled titan. In the process he has acquired a dual personality. Part of the time the world knows him as Clark Kent, a distinctly prissy reporter for the Daily Planet, who tends to shy away from unpleasantness. But let evil show its fangs and he ducks into privacy, shucks his college-cut clothes and stands forth, bold as truth, in the gaudy working clothes of Superman. This Doctor-Jekyll-and-Mr.-Hyde arrangement enables Clark Kent to hand his paper some extraordinary scoops on Superman's latest coups.

Most of them are brought off in behalf of Lois Lane, the Planet's toothsome girl reporter, whose nose for news is constantly landing her in dire straits.

If Major Wheeler-Nicholson's judgment in passing up this Homeric figure was faulty, it was no worse than the judgment of practically every syndicate and comic-magazine editor in the country. During the next six years all of them rejected it, some not once but two or three times.

"Frankly," wrote the editor of the Ledger Syndicate, "we feel that the public have had their fill of superhuman subjects." The Bell Syndicate explained that "we are in the market only for strips likely to have the most extraordinary appeal and we do not feel Superman gets into that category." United Feature thought that Superman was "a rather immature piece of work," and Esquire Features, Inc., suggested, "Pay a little more attention to actual drawing. . . . Yours seems crude and hurried."

To keep eating regularly, the partners had to turn their hands to comic valentines and cut-rate advertising layouts.

But 500 miles away, in a New York office building, blind chance suddenly staggered in the partners' direction. Here, on the ninth floor of 480 Lexington Avenue, Harry Donenfeld, owner of a printing plant, partner in a distributing company and an irrepressible prankster who once gave Jack Dempsey a hot foot, had taken over the major's interests, which now embraced three comic magazines. And on the well-known pulp-publishing theory that it is practically as cheap to run four as three, he had decided to bring out a new ten-cent monthly, Action Comics. But how to stock up on new material? Charlie Gaines figured that McClure Syndicate ought to have some stuff lying about. McClure did and Gaines sent over a batch of it, including the original Superman strips, which McClure had been on the verge of rejecting for the third time.

Selling a Brain Child

Without great enthusiasm Donenfeld asked Siegel and Shuster to paste up their original strips into a single thirteen-page story and offered them ten dollars a page. Before payment, however, his far-seeing general manager, Jack Liebowitz, mailed them a release form, explaining, "It is customary for all our contributors to release all rights to us. This is the businesslike way of doing things."

Meaning that for \$130 the partners would be relinquishing their equity in all possible future profits from syndication, radio, movies, and so on, and

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 gloomily. Then Siegel shrugged, "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 another \$130. 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—800,000—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. Amid the piteous sounds of syndicate editors kicking themselves, McClure 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 1940 cut was \$100,000.

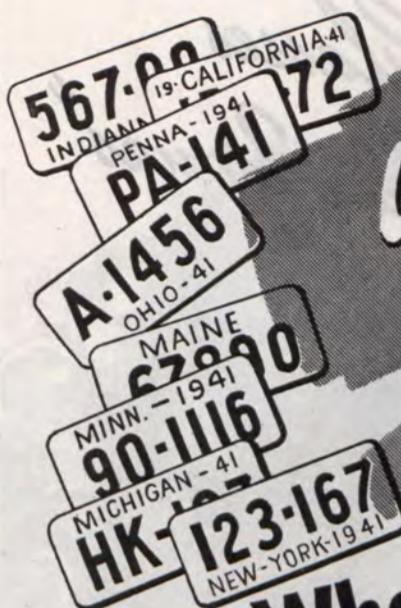
The McClure negotiations were preceded by considerable unhappiness for the partners. They sensed—correctly—that syndicate editors, who had once turned Superman down, would soon come to them, hat in hand. They begged Donenfeld to give back the syndicate rights.

"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 sleeper 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 strips for McClure, himself retaining an agent's 10 per cent—of McClure'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



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AO POLAROID Day Glasses employ the sensational Polaroid light control that stops reflected glare. Also dim over-brilliant light and absorb excess ultra-violet rays. Adult and children's . . . \$1.95 up.

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AO CALOBAR Sun Glass lenses meet specifications of U. S. Army Air Corps. Considered by many optical experts the finest lens of its kind, Calobar absorbs excess ultra-violet and infra-red rays. \$3.00 up.

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manage to break in. They invariably expect to see something pretty awesome. What they do see is five young artists, hired by Siegel and Shuster, jammed cheek-by-jowl into one of the world's tiniest rooms, furiously penciling and lettering Superman panels at the rate of one thirteen-page story, one Sunday page and six daily strips a week.

The staff reports for work five days a week at 9:30 and knocks off around 5:00. Their salaries range from \$50 to \$200 a week, which is more than Siegel and Shuster got during the early years of Superman's rise. Nobody but Shuster, however, is allowed to draw Superman's facial expressions, which run the gamut from sublime vacuity to steely determination, depending upon what expression Shuster has subconsciously screwed his 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, banging out his continuities, three or four at a crack, in his own glossy study at home, a Benny Goodman record swinging at his elbow to stimulate inspiration. He sends the first draft to New York for suggestions, corrections and general editing. A highly individual stylist, he is partial to phrases like "within the room," prefers "commences" to "begins" and has been known to split an infinitive three ways. To Whitney Ellsworth, one of the harassed Donenfeld editors, falls the delicate task of curbing these tendencies without diluting Superman's fruity mode of speech: "So Luthor is still alive and plotting the downfall and subjugation of present-day civilization! The world will never be safe until that fiend is destroyed—and somehow I've got to accomplish it."

Besides being the greatest soliloquizer since Hamlet, Superman is also a humorist full of whimsy and light banter. No matter how rough the action or how grim the crisis, he is always ready to toss off some blithe gaiety. "May I get in on this?" he inquires with elaborate mock courtesy, as he slams himself through brick and glass into Luthor's hide-out. Dangling from the underside of a speeding auto and bouncing his head against the curb at every turn, he observes airily, "Just a good scalp massage." When an artillery squad fires a Big Bertha at him, he catches the shell in his bare hands, chuckles, "Oh, wanna play, eh?" and hurls it right back at them.

Pen-and-Ink Morals

When Ellsworth returns his continuity, Siegel prepares a final draft and runs through it with the entire staff. Shuster then blueprints the main sequence of action and allots the drawing chores, each to its proper specialist.

Every two or three months Siegel flies to New York to sit in on a policy conference. With millions of parents ready to ban Superman from the house should ever his high moral sense falter, the company takes its civic responsibilities seriously.

Superman is never allowed, for example, to destroy property belonging to anybody except the villain, and then only when absolutely unavoidable. 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 kills anybody and

never uses a weapon other than his bare fists. He knocks evildoers silly at the drop of a hat, tosses them clear into the stratosphere and generally scares the daylights out of them. But those who get killed are always hoist by their own petards, as when a gangster whams Superman on the skull with a crowbar, only to have the crowbar rebound and shatter his own noggin.

Rarely by so much as a word or a glance is the tender passion suggested between Superman and Lois Lane. For one thing, Superman himself has shyly confessed that he would never embrace a girl, lest he inadvertently crack her ribs. 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. Radio, for instance. In 1939, Bob 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 toughest problem was sound effects. What sort of noise would Superman make taking off, anyway? They finally solved that one by mixing a newsreel recording of a bomb falling in the Spanish war, a fifty-mile gale and a hand-operated wind machine. The result was a gratifying "Who-o-o-sh."

They found a sponsor and on the evening of February 12, 1940, over ten scattered stations, was first heard: "Up in the sky! Look! It's a bird! It's a plane! It's Superman!"

Ten weeks later it had a Crossley rating of 5.6, establishing it as the most popular children's program wherever broadcast.

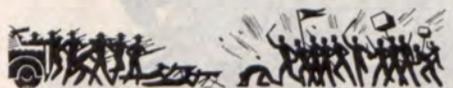
At this writing it is being broadcast three to five times a week on sixty-three stations, its sponsors including an Atlanta, Georgia, wet-wash laundry and a Hawaiian Swiss-watch firm, bringing the total annual radio income to \$75,000. A nationally known sponsor, whose identity is still a closely guarded secret, has just bid double that for exclusive ownership and plans to release it in the fall over a 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 superintends his community church and neither smokes nor drinks.

When first offered the role of Superman, Collyer, a \$300-a-week performer on such programs as Cavalcade of America and Battle of the Boroughs, thought it sounded pretty silly. Now he loves it. He gets twenty dollars a recording and usually records three episodes at a single session. He takes a lot of ribbing from his adult friends. The elevator starter in the recording studio building never fails to hoot, "Why don't you fly up?" But Collyer takes comfort from the hordes of kids who wait for him to get off the train nights in Jackson Heights, Long Island, and follow him, shouting, "Hi-ya, Superman! Make like Superman, will ya?" (Collyer uses a tenor for Clark Kent, a basso profundo for Superman.)

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A QUIET REVOLUTION



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!

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In October, Paramount Pictures will release the first of a series of twelve Fleischer technicolor cartoons. Under a guaranty-and-percentage contract, Superman, Inc., will net an estimated \$120,000. Another healthy source of profit, 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 1940-41 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 sizable profits for themselves: \$75,000, of which \$16,000 goes in staff salaries and overhead. At the end of the first year, when they were still making \$130 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 profits were skyrocketing, the boys again complained, and won a brand-new contract, whereby they got 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 by editors almost everywhere tops among comic magazines. This emboldened the boys to plead for still more money. They are now making thirty-five dollars a page.

Meantime, their syndicate profits have leaped to \$600 a week. They will soon be doubling, then quadrupling their weekly output, with an eye to bringing out Superman monthly and, if possible, twice a month. Next year, with revenues from radio, movies and licenses coming in, they stand to make \$150,000. Their ten-year term of service, however, is not reciprocal. Donenfeld remains free at any time to discharge them.

How much he personally pockets from Superman is a question much debated in New York publishing circles. In his various publishing corporations he owns 75 per cent of the stock; an old business associate, Paul Sampliner, owns the rest. Liebowitz cautiously admits that his boss last year paid an income tax on "more than \$100,000." Donenfeld himself, in an expansive mood, once told a reporter that he netted \$500,000 from Superman alone. The best available estimates come to about half that.

Living Up to a Character

Siegel and Shuster sometimes fall to brooding about how nice it would have been had they held out for a fat percentage of all future profits. But in the end they always reach the same Pollyannaism: "Even if we were making three or four times as much, we wouldn't be doing anything very different than we're doing now. As it is, we have to keep pinching ourselves."

Money has not addled their brains. They have read too many horror stories depicting the plight of improvident celebrities not to salt away a fair slice of their incomes. As good provider for his whole family, Shuster recently moved them into a better neighborhood and a ten-room, wooden-frame house at seventy-five dollars a month. One of his few extravagances has been filling it with shiny new furniture, including a sixteen-tube radio-phonograph console, so that he and Mamma Shuster can share their favorite pas-

time—listening to classical music. He has also bought a fancy automobile, shelves of detective stories and a camera. But Mamma Shuster still cooks and waits on table, the only concession to her improved status being a colored maid who comes in twice a week to house-clean. Joe wants his father to retire, but Papa Shuster insists on going downtown every day, where, for something to do, he operates an elevator. None of the Shusters can quite grasp what has happened to them.

To Joe Shuster the most important thing money has brought is the chance to build up his body. For years he tried Lionel Strongfort correspondence-school methods, dynamic tension and scores of physical-culture magazines—without result. Now he lifts weights three times a week in Barney Kofron's gym—he can handle 175 pounds—consumes a T-bone steak and two quarts of milk a day. This regimen has increased his weight from 112 to 128 pounds. To increase his height of five-foot-two, he wears built-up shoes. But he still looks like an undernourished, bewildered schoolboy of sixteen.

Last December in Miami Beach, where he liked to loiter, hatless and in shabby clothes, along uppity Lincoln Road, gawking at the expensive automobiles, a policeman approached Shuster, bristling with dark suspicions. Probably nothing would have happened had Shuster not protested that he was Superman's co-creator and flashed \$147 in large bills to show he was no derelict. The policeman arrested him and a magistrate sentenced

him to thirty days in the pen for vagrancy. A local reporter had the wit to suggest that Shuster establish his identity by drawing Superman. Face crimson, the court let him go.

Aladdin's Lamp

Jerry Siegel has spread himself economically a little bit more. With no dependents save the buxom, twenty-year-old sweetheart of high-school days, whom he married last year, he put \$15,000 into an air-conditioned, rock-wool-insulated, weather-stripped house with so many laborsaving gadgets that Bella Siegel has little to do all day except flip switches. Their pride and joy is a paneled playroom in the basement, complete with dart game, ping-pong table and bar, though neither drinks or even knows how to mix a cocktail. Every room has a radio and gleams with silken drapes and chromium fixings. Jerry has bought Bella a mink coat and a diamond bracelet.

Four months younger than Shuster, Siegel is an incurable jitterer, who hums softly to himself during conversational lulls and rolls reams of paper into little pellets. Four inches taller than Shuster, he weighs forty-two pounds more. Up in his attic he keeps a lazy man's hip-reducing machine which shakes itself and him silly when he pushes the button. He doesn't use it much. He and Bella spend half their waking lives in the movies, Siegel's pockets always crammed with four or five candy bars. Next to movies, he likes best to stretch

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out on his outside bed and read history or biography.

Shortly after Siegel received his last check from New York he telephoned Liebowitz for an advance of \$500.

"But we just mailed you a check," exclaimed Liebowitz.

"I know," replied Siegel, "but I have nineteen thousand five hundred dollars in my bank account and I want to round it out to an even twenty."

He got the advance.

Messrs. Shuster and Siegel are now in the throes of creating another comic strip.

It will be called Superboy and will confine itself to Superman's adolescence, when his supermuscles—the mind recoils from the possibilities—were employed in practical jokes.

"It will be," Siegel explains, "about Superman before he developed a social conscience."

UNCLE SHARKEY AND THE WALKING MATCH

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handicaps and lap miles. In Lou's, quoits were interrupted to demonstrate Sharkey's stride, and the pitchers waited, understandingly.

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 overbearing, 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 disappointments 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 blistered feet. The Molder, Padgett, a local dark horse, and Sharkey were miles behind the professionals, and definitely out of the big money, but their three-cornered battle had grown more bitter with each hotly contested lap. At the recollection of his man in tail position, Norrie muttered that someone must've lit holy candles against Sharkey. He drew absently on a cold pipe, and Dixie sat morosely on the bench, too dejected even to chew. What was worse, could any of the three stick out another night? The boards had pounded their feet unmercifully and they were worn to what Dixie called the shadow of a frazzle.

I didn't know I was to go on Saturday, till grandmom came over to mind my younger brothers. Mother bundled the three of us into the tub, saying she didn't have time for any singles, what with getting herself ready, putting in pop's studs and links, and tying his bow tie after he'd made the usual mess of it. I was ready first, and got the fidgets, but enjoyed the air of excitement in our house, and our red hall

light put the finisher on everything. We only used it at special times, and that red hall light always put something grand and exciting into an evening. Pop came downstairs, putting on arm bands; he fished a cigar from behind the clock, stuck a paper spill through the stove front, and lit up. He wasn't fidgety, but sat in his rocker beside the stove, knees crossed, and I knew he was thinking of those Belgian homers and that new forge blower.

Mother came down, convinced herself it was cold enough for a muff; she made a quick round of the dampers, dimmed the gas mantle, called strict orders up the stairs about that dog Gumption on those beds, and after a hasty look in the hall-rack mirror, she finally was ready.

We took the trolley uptown and walked over, and when we went into the armory, a wave of hot air met us, laden with tobacco smoke, perfume and liniment, and I couldn't see the track for the awful jam of people. There were five thousand there, but we had track-side seats. The whole place was flag-draped, smoke dipped in hazy layers against the lights, and near the roof the flags swayed from the rising heat. The band was playing Starshine. Peanut and soft-drink hawkers were busy, and I could smell frankfurters.

Then a man in a swallow-tail coat yelled through a megaphone, and gradually the noise died around him in rings that got wider and wider, finally reaching the outside edges of the crowd. I picked out Sharkey in the line-up; his face was thinner and his uniform slacker; a green sash hung on his right hip. He was near a heavy-shouldered, long-armed man I knew was The Molder. His dark hair stood up in a brush and his thighs looked thick as pickle kegs. He sported a leopardskin belt. Padgett was a slim-jim, yellow hair parted down the middle, and the backs of his legs bulged with muscle. When the names were announced, we all gave Sharkey a hand, for it was an honor to be out there, still in his walking shoes.

The band played The Star-Spangled Banner, everybody stood and sang, but not the walkers. They just stood, and from what we'd heard about their feet, I bet they wished the band would play another verse, but it didn't. Pop stood me between his knees to see the start. At the gun, they broke from rigid stance into full stride, and though I knew I should watch Uncle Sharkey, I couldn't take my eyes off Buckman, the champion of the world, leading off.

His head was high and proud, but with a pride that wouldn't annoy you, for he was entitled to carry his head that way. Each step struck on the heel, rolled across the arch onto the