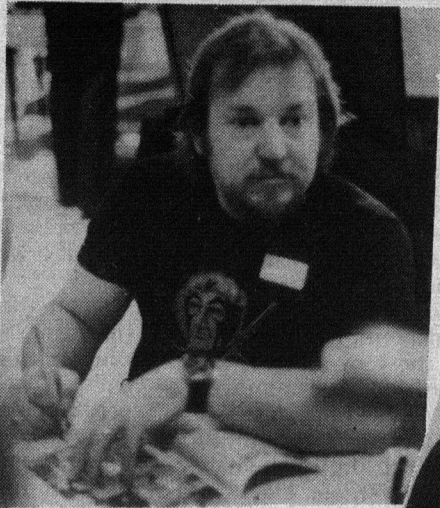


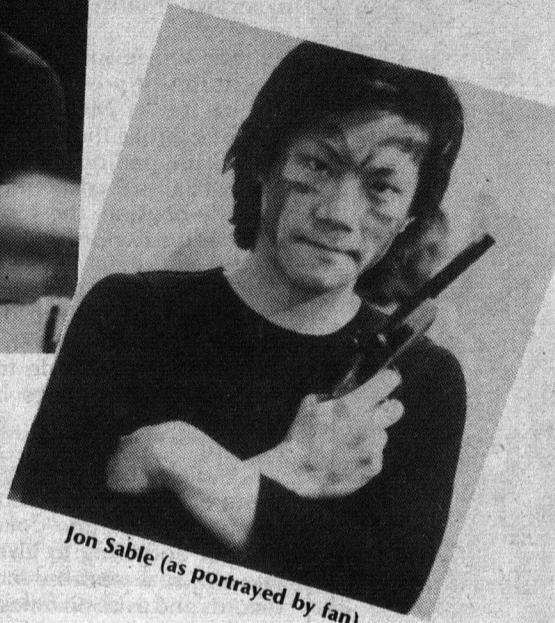
ists Speak out



Jon Sable (on paper)



Mike Grell



Jon Sable (as portrayed by fan)

One of the four cartoonists at the convention was none other than Sergio Aragones, probably the one of most well known cartoonists around. Heck everybody's seen his teeny-tiny marginals in *Mad* magazines and some of you might even remember *Plop* magazine (at DC) and gosh-all-mighty some of you might even read his current magazine *Groo, the Wanderer*. Well even if you don't, too bad. So, here's my interview with the man himself.

Gateway: How did you start in the business?

Aragones: In Mexico, when I was in high school, I drew for the school paper, the editor took a cartoon I drew and had it sold in a magazine back in 1953.

Gateway: How about *Mad* magazine, what are your feelings toward the publication?

Aragones: It's been a second family to me. When I came to the States, I was lost, no family, lack of language, but *Mad* took me in. Working for them was a dream come true, I had been a fan of it back in Mexico, even though I couldn't read English, so writing for them was a lifelong dream that I thought I'd never be able to accomplish.

Gateway: Do you see yourself ever stopping your work for *Mad*?

Aragones: I can't stop family.

Gateway: I heard that *Groo the Wanderer* is moving from Pacific comics over to Marvel. Is this true? What's happening?

Aragones: What's happening to *Groo* is that Pacific wanted to raise the price to a buck fifty and print the comic on a better paper stock. So I'm talking to Marvel to sell *Groo* for 60 cents every month, instead of bimonthly, so that more people can read it. The high prices might be good for the collectors but not so great



for people who read the comics. As far as developments for the character go, I'm introducing a new lady character called Chakaal, she'll be in at least two issues of *Groo*.

Gateway: Are you going to keep the same arrangement with Marvel as with Pacific, as in keeping ownership of your characters, royalties, etc?

Aragones: This is the only way I'll ever work. But I still want to reach the majority of the people.

Gateway: What about other work you're doing?

Aragones: Besides *Groo* and *Mad* I'm doing the titles for 5 or 6 Dick Clark's TV Censor Bloopers and I've done some TV animation.

Gateway: Where did you study?

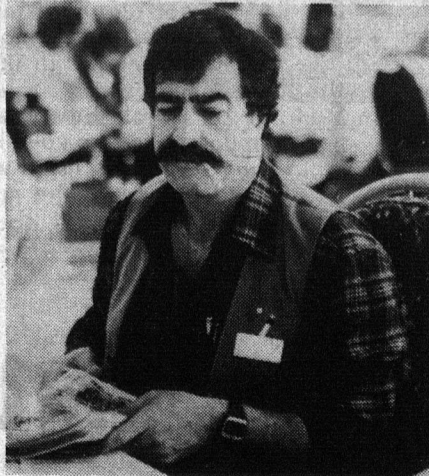
Aragones: I studied architecture at the University of Mexico.

Gateway: Where do you live now?

Aragones: I live in LA now, but I've lived in New York, you have to go to New York when you start.

Gateway: What about Mexico?

Aragones: I burnt my bridges in Mexico City. You might say that like Cortez I burnt my ships, I've been in the US 25 years, and I've gotten used to America.



Sergio Aragones

Mike Grell made his first big splash in the comics world during the late 70's drawing Superboy and the Legion of Superheroes. Grell now draws Warlord for DC, *Jon Sable Freelance* and *Star Slayer* for First Comics.

Gateway: When did you start drawing?

Grell: I drew from the time I was a little kid almost as soon as I could pick up a pencil. When I was nineteen in the Air Force I heard a cartoonist tell me he only worked a few days a week and earned millions. Like a fool, I believed him.

it's quite easy. Of course, DC and Marvel have had to keep up with the payments if they want to keep their talent. Gone is the day they'd pay an artist three dollars a page or at least I hope no one's stupid enough to draw for three bucks a page.

Gateway: What are your plans for the future?

Grell: The only project that I can safely say that I am contemplating is a mini-series about Lady Margaret Graemleth (a jewel thief called Maggie the Cat) in all likelihood it's quite possible that my wife, Cheryl, will be writing it, and I'll probably stick to *Jon Sable* for the next two to four years. Then I'll retire from comics and devote my time to wildlife painting and the occasional special project. For example, graphic novels on the *Savage Empire*, which is Warlord's origin place.

Gateway: Where were you trained?

Grell: I was an illustrator in the Air Force and I took the Famous Cartoonist Correspondence Course which every one snickers at but is still quite good. Also, at the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts.

Gateway: Where did you get your start in the business?

Grell: I started with DC in 1973, as a matter of a fact almost 10 years to the day. My first assignment was back-up stories of Aquaman, then I moved to Superboy, and the Legion. Now we call it Stupidboy. But I was thrilled to get the assignment and lucky to get it when I did, even though it was a killer book, with too many characters and too many costumes. I had never read the book and really didn't know much about it, but it was an assignment when I needed work.

Gateway: What do you think about the independent publishing houses? (i.e. First, PC, etc.)

Grell: The independents have changed the industry 100 per cent as far as the creative aspect goes. They made it possible for an artist to share the wealth and it's possible for everybody down the line to make lots of money, like now I get royalties on my titles. Before, it was difficult for an artist to break the fifty thousand bracket and now



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