

(* LEGION OUTPOST II SUPPLEMENTAL)

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CELEBRATING THIRTY YEARS OF INTERLAC

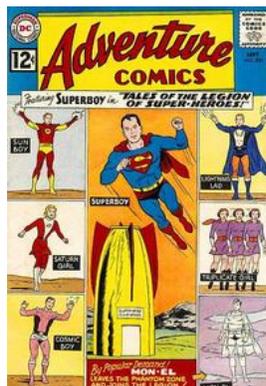
I was hoping to do something substantial for this special issue, but once again the deadline approaches too quickly. I had planned to write an essay about the history of the DCU from the near future to the end of time, devoting half a page or so to each of DC's sci-fi heroes. Based on what I've written thus far, it'll certainly end up being a multi-issue submission. My backup plan was to review the three appearances of Marsboy (his third appearance was reworked as the first appearance of Star Boy). I'm expecting that those two features will now begin a few months hence. For this issue, I will instead touch on some of the highlights of the last 48 years of the Legion's history.

ONE FATEFUL DAY IN 1958

In February 1958, editor Mort Weisinger, writer Otto Binder, and artist Al Plastino had created the Legion of Super-Heroes to be used as guest-stars in the Superboy story in ADVENTURE COMICS #247. Carrying an April cover date, this issue was just 1 of 37 titles published that month by DC Comics. To give an idea of what was appearing at the time, some of the other comics that were published during that month are depicted below (humor, romance, and licensed books were excluded due to space considerations).

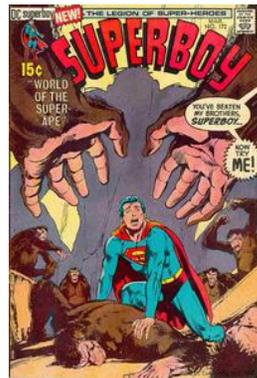


GRADUATING TO AN ONGOING FEATURE



After 4 ½ years of appearing in the various Superman family of titles, the Legion of Super-Heroes were finally granted their own ongoing feature. In July 1962, ADVENTURE COMICS #300 prominently showcased the new stars. They shared the book with Superboy solo tales until issue #316, when they took the comic over entirely. Beginning in issue #346, thirteen-year-old Jim Shooter began writing Legion stories, many of which became classics. Having an artist like Curt Swan drawing his tales was an added bonus. The Legion feature ran continuously from issue #300 until #380. It was replaced by a Supergirl feature, which had previously been running in the back of ACTION COMICS.

SLIPPING INTO OBSCURITY



Following the loss of their cover feature in ADVENTURE COMICS, the Legion began appearing as back-ups in other titles. In May 1969, the team was added to ACTION COMICS, where it ran from issue #378 to #392. In January 1971, they were moved to the SUPERBOY magazine, beginning with issue #172. The Legion appeared sporadically in this title, but their popularity amongst fans succeeded in keeping them alive. Costume updates by new Legion artist Dave Cockrum adorned this slow period.

GETTING THEIR OWN TITLE AT LAST (SORT OF)



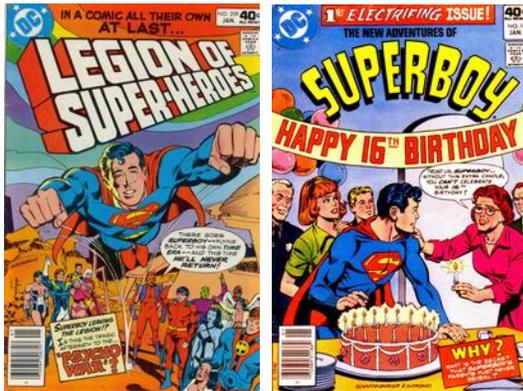
In December 1972, the Legionnaires finally received their own title. Unfortunately, LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES [1st series] was a reprint series, containing Legion stories from ADVENTURE COMICS (as well as a new text feature entitled “Legion membership list” in issues #1 and #2). The series also included reprints of Tommy Tomorrow, a sci-fi hero whose exploits occurred more than a century in our future. There were no connections between Tommy Tomorrow and the 30th century’s Legionnaires, other than both being futuristic sci-fi series. The title lasted for only 4 issues.

SHARING THE SPOTLIGHT



Beginning in June 1973, as of SUPERBOY #197, the words “starring the Legion of Super-Heroes” were added to the cover title. However, as indicated in the indicia, the official title was still simply “Superboy”. In December 1975, Paul Levitz launched the spin-off title KARATE KID then, a year later, began his first run on the main title with #225. In June 1977, starting with #231, the title was formally changed to SUPERBOY & THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES.

A TITLE TO CALL THEIR OWN



In October 1979, Superboy left the Legion, and his own title. The series was renamed THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES [2nd series] with issue #259. Superboy was spun off into a new title called, aptly enough, THE NEW ADVENTURES OF SUPERBOY. Paul Levitz returned as writer in issue #281, and Keith Giffen came on board as artist with issue #285. This pair would take the team to new heights, with such classics as “The Great Darkness Saga”.

THE DELUXE TREATMENT



In May 1984, with issue #314, the title was renamed again to TALES OF THE LEGION. A deluxe format companion, LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES [3rd series] #1, was added to the schedule. For the first 12 months, TALES OF THE LEGION would feature new stories, after which it began reprinting the deluxe series. The experiment would last a little over 3 years, ending with the cancellation of TALES OF THE LEGION as of issue #354. The deluxe series would continue on for nearly 2 more years.

A CRISIS OF UNIVERSAL PROPORTIONS



The 50th anniversary of DC Comics brought with it the Crisis On Infinite Earths, an event which would wipe out the Multiverse and replace it with a single, streamlined Universe. The effects of the Crisis plagued the Legion's era throughout 1985, but hit especially hard in LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES [3rd series] #16, where Brainiac 5 was shown mourning the death of Supergirl. In 1987, the full ramifications of the Crisis were made apparent, when it was revealed that, in the new reality, the Superboy they knew never really came from their own past at all, but rather hailed from a Pocket Universe. This series ended with #63.

FIVE YEARS LATER ...



After a three month hiatus in real time, and a five year jump in comic book time, Keith Giffen and Tom & Mary Bierbaum brought back the Legion in a new series. LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES [4th series] #1, published in September 1989, featured a disbanded team and a collapsed society. A few issues later, the timeline of the Legion was altered, retroactively replacing Superboy and Supergirl with new characters. In February 1993, the Bierbaums, along with Chris Sprouse, added a title called LEGIONNAIRES, which featured a mysterious duplicate team made up of younger versions of the heroes.

STARTING OVER FROM SCRATCH



In August 1994, it was decided that the Legion's long and convoluted history made the two titles inaccessible to new readers. Taking advantage of the reality-altering events of the mini-series ZERO HOUR: CRISIS IN TIME, the company rebooted Legion history, eliminating the existing group and replacing it with a lighter, simpler version. Mark Waid, Tom McCraw, and Stuart Immonen produced LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES [4th series] #0, while McCraw, Waid, and Jeffrey Moy created LEGIONNAIRES #0. Following these zero issues, numbering continued with #62 and #19, respectively.

THE LEGION ON THE SMALL SCREEN



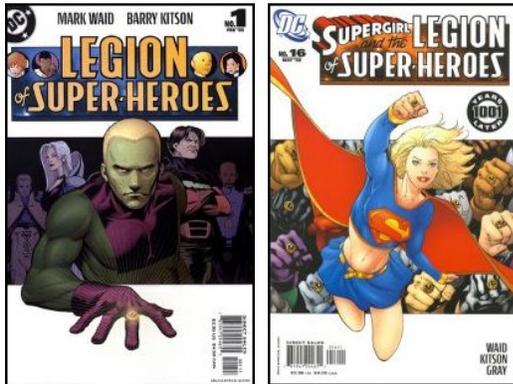
The Legion appeared on television for the first time on the cartoon series entitled SUPERMAN: THE ANIMATED SERIES. On October 31st 1998, the episode "New Kids In Town" debuted on the WB television network. Seven and a half years later, on April 15th 2006, they would return on Cartoon Network's JUSTICE LEAGUE UNLIMITED cartoon, in the episode called "Far From Home".

REVAMPING THE REBOOT



In the Fall of 1999, the Legion received a drastic facelift by Dan Abnett, Andy Lanning, and Olivier Coipel. They began their run with a 4-part story called "Legion of the Damned". This took place in LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES [4th series] #122-123 and LEGIONNAIRES #79-80. The two series ended soon afterward, with issues #125 and #81, respectively. This was followed by two mini-series, LEGION LOST #1-12 and LEGION WORLDS #1-6. Then, in October 2001, a single ongoing title called simply THE LEGION was launched. It lasted for 38 issues.

STARTING OVER FROM SCRATCH ... AGAIN



In September 2004, reality shifted once again. TEEN TITANS/LEGION SPECIAL #1 introduced a new version of Legionnaires, while relegating the earlier team to parts unknown. Three months later, LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES [5th series] debuted. This new group was the creation of Mark Waid and Barry Kitson. Then, in March 2006, Supergirl arrived abruptly in the 31st century. Consequently, the title was renamed SUPERGIRL AND THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES as of that issue (#16).

THE ANIMATED SERIES



The Legion will return to the small screen in the Fall of 2006. LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES will debut on the CW television network (a merger of WB and UPN) in September, however it will be an entirely different version from the one that appeared previously on SUPERMAN: THE ANIMATED SERIES and JUSTICE LEAGUE UNLIMITED. The show will air on Saturdays from 11:00AM to 11:30AM (EDT), and will star Superboy. After 27 long years, the Boy of Steel will once again be a Legionnaire! Long Live the Legion!