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Batman Takes Parade By Storm

(How Comic Book Culture Shaped a Small City's Halloween parade)

History Research Seminar

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On Saturday, October 26th, 2019, the participants lined up to begin of the Rutland Halloween Parade. 10,000 people came to the small city of Rutland to view the famed Halloween parade for its 60th year. Over 72 floats had participated and 1700 people led by the Skelly Dancers. School floats with specific themes to the Star Wars non-profit organization the 501st Legion to droves and rows of different Batman themed floats marched throughout the city to celebrate this joyous occasion.

There have been many narratives told about this historic Halloween parade. One specific example can be found on the Rutland Historical Society's website, which is the documentary called *Rutland Halloween Parade Hijinks and History* by B. Burge. The standard narrative told is that on Halloween night in 1959, the Rutland area was host to its first Halloween parade, and it was a grand show in its first year. The story continues that a man by the name of Tom Fagan loved what he saw and went to his friend John Cioffredi, who was the superintendent of the Rutland Recreation Department, and offered to make the parade better the next year. When planning for the next year, Fagan suggested that Batman be a part of the parade. By Halloween of 1961, Batman was running the parade in Rutland, and this would be the start to exciting times for the Rutland Halloween parade.¹ Five years into the parade, the parade was the most popular it had ever been, and by 1970 had been featured in Marvel comics Avengers Number 83, which would start a major event later in comic book history. The narrative tells of great events in this city's history, but not everyone knows the full back story of this city's parade, and all who participated in it, and help form it into the parade many know and love.

The Rutland Halloween Parade is part of a much larger celebration of Halloween. Halloween has been a part of American culture for many years dating back to the early days of

¹ "Police and Ghost Busy ." *Rutland Daily Herald* . November 1, 1960.

the colonial-era here, and drawing influence from Samhain of Ireland in the Celtic belief system of spirits and otherworldly beings, with the belief that if we wore masks, it would save us from the spirits crossing the Veil when it is weak between the end of fall and winter. To understand the parade and the celebrations behind Halloween, the Rutland Halloween parade is a by-product of the shaping's of the Cold War Era and the ever-changing society in America. In order to understand this, we must investigate the history of the folklore and what people had celebrated during the 1960's to understand the parades background. A few historians have examined the celebration of Halloween in this era. *Halloween: An American Holiday, An American History* by Lesley Pratt Bannatyne, where the history of Halloween in postwar America has been described. The book describes that parties began to take place more in the classrooms and less frequently were large celebrations held in the communities, as they had become either too expensive or too large for some communities to host. Bannatyne argues that, while the pageantry of Halloween dates back to medieval times, costumed parades became part of American celebrations in the 20th century.² The origins of Halloween and how America has adopted the holiday's customs has also been studied by historians. *Halloween in America: Contemporary Customs and Performances* Jack Santino also discusses the origins of Halloween, and how America has adopted the holiday's original customs. Santino emphasizes the harvest and the links between Thanksgiving and Halloween, noting that Halloween "works for the individual as a public performance of a private persona, a personal participation in a group experience."³ While Bannatyne credits the costumed parades to the Cold War shift, Santino emphasizes that the "public performance of a

² Ibid Pg. 135

³ Santino, Jack. "Halloween in America: Contemporary Customs and Performances." *Western Folklore*, January 1, 1983..

private persona” is a means by which people experience Halloween, and not a revolutionary change.

As it is stated, Halloween was growing to be more than just a child holiday in the sixties. This gave way for new ideas for parades throughout the United States, where it didn't just include children, and adults could also dress up as their favorite characters and enjoy Halloween night. Tom Fagan saw this as an opportunity and was able to mold this Halloween parade into something more, something that would attract crowds and bring them to the little city. Rutland Halloween parade stood out; it wasn't just about costumes; it was about the comic book culture of the time. While comic books have been a part of American culture for over a century, they didn't reach their peak in popularity until the late 1930s. With the introduction of characters like Superman, Batman, and many others during the late 1930s and during World War II, the popularity of comic books skyrocketed. To understand how comic books influenced the Rutland Halloween parade, it is important to also look into the history of comic books and how they influenced American culture, especially during the 1960's, the comics that will help make people recognize the characters what would make the parade in Rutland Stand out.

Also, to understand culture and the history of comics and to understand how comics influenced this small city's parade, we should look to the historian Bradford W. Wright, and his book *Comic Book Nation: The Transformation of Youth Culture in America*, which argues that comics significantly influenced youth culture in the United States in the 1960s. Wright then discusses the influence of Batman in culture, and how other superheroes throughout history started popping up thereafter. Wright delved into an extensive history throughout the book and discussed the issues that the comics ran into through the 1950s, including how violent

they were and how Americans used them as an escape during the Red Scare, and then explained how by the 1960, comics took on a whole new outlook. New ideas and views were being put into comics to help influence their readers. Each company adapted their views to what was going on in culture. By the time 1960 came around, the comics had the Justice League of America, according to Wright. He goes on to discuss how superheroes helped American society by joining police forces and more, "DC Comics were image of affluent in America handsome superheroes reside in clean, green suburbs in modern, even futuristic, cities."

This history is a good way to understand the comic book culture during the inception of the parade and how comic books could have influenced Tom Fagan and Rutland Halloween parade.⁴ With Tom Fagan's love for comics and love for Halloween and the parade, he knew adding superheroes to the parade would benefit the parade itself and would attract crowds seeing superheroes alongside the common Halloween sites.

Furthermore, American society was ever changing throughout the 1950s: World War Two had ended, people began to have more of an open mind about how American society was functioning, men and women were able to express themselves more, comic books were adapting to the ever changing mentality of the era, and the start of a new decade was upon America. The 1960s was the start of new ideas on how society viewed things, that the cultural norms were not as cut and dry as the 1950s where men had to live a certain way and women had to live a certain way. It brought an open mind to American culture and comic books became more popular amongst the culture as well.

⁴ Wright, Bradford W. *Comic Book Nation: the Transformation of Youth Culture in America*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003.

Many historians have investigated the past and the social history of this era. In his book *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974*, James T. Patterson argues how America prospered all the way through the 1960s, even with the issues of the Vietnam War. According to Patterson, “English Prime Minister Edward Heath later said that the United States in the post-War era enjoyed...the greatest prosperity the world has ever known...It was a boom that produced a national euphoria, a buoyant time of grand expectations and an unprecedented faith in our government, in our leaders, and in the American dream--an optimistic spirit which would be shaken by events in the '60s and '70s, and particularly by the Vietnam War.”⁵

Other historians have also looked into American Society in post-World War America. In *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Dissolution of a Generation*, Tom Engelhardt argues that during the 1950's, television became more of a cultural norm in America. Engelhardt continues his argument on American culture and how people became disillusioned with the pop culture of the post war era and discussed how Americans started to change their view on American society and how Americans had become more disillusioned with war and The World War II mentality. Patterson's writings, however, show us a different point of view of American Society and how wonderfully people viewed it. The 1960s were an ever-changing phenomenon, Americans were opening their minds to new ideas and we will see that reflection in the evolution of the Rutland Halloween parade.

Another book written by Paul Goodman entitled *Growing Up Absurd: Problems of Youth in the Organized System* investigates the light of the American culture during the Cold War era around 1960. According to Goodman, education had to be a social structure during this

⁵ James T. Patterson, *Grand Expectations: the United States, 1945-1974* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998))

time period. During the time when Russia was America's biggest competitor, Americans emphasized education in the 1950s and 1960s, according to Goodman. This makes sense, because just after World War II, the United States became a superpower and entered the atomic age. Goodman continued discussing his aspects of American culture during this time and suggests that during this time you grew up either the masculine type who was very much into the society, or a man of this time could be unique and not follow society by being different. Goodman's writing come from the perspective of the times. Goodman's essay was written during this era, so he had a fresh look at the changing times during the post war era and how American Society had been changing. This explain how men like Tom Fagan could come up with ideas for parades. They weren't like everyone else in this Cold War society. ⁶

All these histories provide a perspective of what life was like in Cold War America. This gives us a good idea what life was like in Rutland City during this time; a vision of youth who were trying to find a new identity in this changing time period. We can understand how economic times were booming, societal changes were happening, there was a new view in America that we will compete against the Soviet men and women, and Americans were trying to find new identities in this time. All around the 1960s brought a whole different view in America with the rise of the Vietnam War, new education, and more. This can help us understand American culture during this time. However, there is one question that remains, and that we will review through this thesis.

As we read in the histories, there was a big change in history after World War II and the start of the Cold War period, and new ideas were formed. With that, the comic book

⁶ Goodman, Paul. *Growing up Absurd: Problems of Youth in the Organized System*. Vintage Books, 1962.

culture evolved, the demand for Superman, Green Arrow, Green Lantern, Wonder Woman, and Batman stayed true. With the 1960s brought new ideals to American culture which in return shaped the comic book industry. With society's changes came new characters like Spider-Man and X-Men, as written before in this thesis. In Rutland, Tom Fagan was a part of this ever-changing movement in history. Victory culture was coming to an end. People became more open minded, they became more creative, and went with the flow more. Tom Fagan was successful in shaping the Rutland Halloween parade with his vision of superheroes and bringing a more colorful Halloween to the city since more people were expressing themselves more and were open to the fun that he was bringing them. They were able to express themselves through the parade itself.

The story goes that the Rutland Halloween parade is a long-standing tradition that has been going on for 60 years, that in 1959 the parade made its debut, that Tom Fagan watched this parade thought it was wonderful but could make it better, that by 1960 Batman was leading the parade, and by 1965 the parade was at its height of popularity. This information isn't entirely accurate, and it isn't entirely wrong. The narrative that Tom Fagan watched the parade and went to his friend John Cioffredi, the superintendent of the Rutland Recreation Department, is true, but did not start until 1960, a year later.

In 1959, the superintendent of the Rutland Recreation Department Eustace "Bud" Erickson was struggling to find the funding for Halloween parties throughout the city for the schools. Eventually they were able to throw something together at the Recreation Department, and they were going to run a small dance there and "threatened" a "horror walk" according to

the Daily Herald.⁷ Rutland had a long extensive Halloween tradition, that Center Street would have a window painting competition on center street in Rutland. The Recreation Department also held the Mr. or Mrs. Jack-o-Lantern competition for kids, where kids would be given clues to guess who Mr. or Mrs. Jack-o-Lantern was, and whomever guessed it would win a prize. Despite Eriksson's efforts, no formal parade took place in 1959, and according to the records, the parade wasn't held until the following year.

According to records the Rutland annual report at the Rutland Historical Society, the Rutland Halloween parade was held in the following year in 1960. It is written in the Rutland annual report that they had a budget of just over \$35,000 that year, and that the Halloween parade was a new program that year. Furthermore, the parade in 1960 was a huge success, according to the Rutland Daily Herald. An article suspected to be written by Tom Fagan includes the title "weird lot to Parade" with the subtitle "Halloween march to begin at 6 p.m. when horrible's start through city streets." The article includes a colorful beginning to describe what the plans are for the Halloween parade that night. The article uses colorful words including "Goonaflocka's" and "Vambies," and it is known that Tom Fagan had a very colorful vocabulary regarding Halloween, to the point where he himself was named Mr. Halloween⁸, later in his life.

On Halloween night in 1960, the parade went off without a hitch. A story in the newspaper the next day was called "Police and Ghosts busy" with the subtitle "Halloween parade is feature early evening; pranks come later". The beginning of the article starts off with more unique language, obviously written by Tom Fagan: "There was no Goonaflakas, Vambie's,

⁷ Erikson Is Haunted ." *Rutland Daily Herald*, 29 Oct. 1959, pp. 32–32.

⁸ "Weird Lot To Parade." *Rutland Daily Herald* , 31 Oct. 1960.

Winky's nor Munchkins during Monday night's parade of Halloween Horrible's which marched triumphantly down Center Street!" The parade was led that night by then-mayor Dan J Healy who was accompanied by Casper the Ghost, who was John Cioffredi's son, Billy. The article reported that there were little vandalisms that night and after the parade Halloween parties ensued and 300 bottles of Coca-Cola were distributed to the elementary schools around the city. After the parade, the article stated that kids began to trick or treat and the article then offered colorful explanations of weird happenings after the parade ended after 10 p.m., such as a black cat appearing and unusual sounding bells. Tom Fagan was actively forming the narrative of the parade in the newspaper. On Tuesday, the school announced the best parade's trophy (which still goes on today) with awards handed out for best costumes and more. This is evidence that Halloween and Rutland go together, however the next year a new character would run the streets of Rutland during the parade.⁹

After the success of the Rutland Halloween parade, Tom Fagan went to his friend, John Cioffredi. According to the traditional narrative, following the 1960 parade, Tom Fagan would go to his friend John Cioffredi and suggested that Batman would appear in the next year's parade. Tom Fagan was a huge Halloween fan and an especially huge comic book and Batman fan. The traditional narrative says Fagan knew that implementing Batman would draw in bigger crowds to the Halloween parade. Fagan wrote in a newspaper article on October 28th, 1961 explaining what the parade had in store: The Parade would again be headed by the mayor Dan Healy, who once again followed by the Mr. and Mrs. Jack-o-Lantern, Frankenstein float and others were in this article stated. Further, Fagan wrote that "the event would include bands with

⁹ "Police and Ghost Busy." *Rutland Daily Herald*, 1 Nov. 1960, p. 9.

tune up several floats and assorted Halloween characters from history, books and folklore take their place fire whistles will blast at 6:30 p.m. as the parade moves North to Merchant's row." ¹⁰

The parade seems to have been extended and added new things by this point.

According to this article, the parade originally started at Main Street park on route 7 in Rutland and marched down Center Street to the Depot, which is now the Rutland Plaza. In 1961, the route started at the Depot parking lot, marched North to Merchants Row, and then turned right on West Street, then down Wales Street, and back down to Merchants Row in a circle around this area. Today, you would see Walmart on Merchant's Row, to West Street (what we now see where Foley Hall and Castleton Gryphon building apartments (which now has a giant mural of Batman in honor of Tom Fagan), down Wales Street (which is now a one way street), and back to Merchants Row, where Wales merges on to Center Street and moves down to Merchants Row, back to the parking lot. ¹¹

On November 1st, Tom Fagan reported that this was the greatest Halloween parade yet, which brought out a variety of ghosts and goblins. Streams of people marched the parade between schools and American Legion. The article noted "the Lincoln School and St. Peter School kiddies stayed far ahead of a well-known character who performed gracefully and dynamically as "Batman" the legendary hero of the comics...one point it appeared Batman was ready to fly away into the sky"; this was the introduction of Batman into the Rutland Halloween parade to show how comic books were implemented into the Rutland Halloween parade. Written in the articles of the Rutland Daily Herald as a wonderful addition, Batman would be forever cemented in the parade's history. At the time, the parade would be led by the mayor of Rutland

¹⁰ Tom. Fagan. " Anthropophagist to Stalk City Streets Tuesday." *Rutland Daily Herald*, 28 Oct. 1961.

¹¹ *ibid*

for a few more years, and Batman would not lead the parade until 1964.¹² The parade would be heavily advertised throughout the next few years by Fagan and promoted by him in fanzines and comics later.

According to the traditional narrative, the parade ran every year, but that is not entirely true. The parade, in fact, shut down at least once in its first five years. The 1962 parade was set to run but was abruptly shut down due to a torrential downpour. An article by Fagan called "*Rain Cancels Halloween parade*" reported that the parade as set to start up by 6:30 and all the sudden started to rain. The article noted that, "Wednesday weather provided no treat for Rutland City but played an astute populist anticipating a parade" using words like "spell cast by Rutland Recreation Department to keep the skies clear" and more were written into the newspaper and that they may have planned add some more troops to the Veterans Day Parade in Rutland on November 12th, though further research is required for this.¹³

By 1963 the parade hit its third year. What would be second appearance of Batman, the parade (which also added new characters to show up that year) was mentioned in a small article that the parade-goers got to see new faces and familiar ones listing the likes of "President Kennedy Liz Taylor as Cleopatra , The Beverly Hillbillies and a slightly Potbelly Batman paraded before a large crowd to music no less than five bands". The parade had implemented more pop culture, helping it gain more popularity. Little did anyone know that with

¹² "Creatures of Darkness Take Over City Streets ." *Rutland Daily Herald* , 1 Nov. 1961, p. 13.

¹³ Tom Fagan. "Rain Cancels City Halloween Parade." *Rutland Daily Herald* , 1 Nov. 1962, p. 14.

efforts of Tom Fagan the parade would start gaining steam. Because of this, in just a few years the parade would become something much bigger. Tom Fagan seemed to have found a good formula to make the Parade much better every year. He knew that pop culture icons such as Batman would draw in crowds, and it was very smart. The evidence shown so far really helps the historical question of how comic books shaped this parade, and more came a couple of years after 1963 when Tom Fagan would start advertising the city parade. ¹⁴

1964 was the year that Batman made an appearance to marshal the Rutland Halloween parade. In an article written by Tom Slayton, he would write "The slimy ooze of the Dead wet leaves oh, the patterning rush of hunger maddened rats and the squish of footsteps in the muck of newly open graves will signal the start of Rutland annual processions creatures from the beyoung Saturday night." The article would then discuss what was going on that night. John Cioffredi that night said it was going to be the biggest parade yet and that it would be marshaled officially by Batman himself. Batman would be accompanied by Robin, Batwoman, Batgirl, and Batmite.

The year that Batman would lead the parade shows that the popularity of comics was on the rise in this area. The fact that John Cioffredi had Tom Fagan marshal the parade as Batman and have the bat family join him in the parade shows the popularity of comics and how they influenced this little city. More details were written that next day on November 1st about what was going on and how many people may have attended this city's Halloween parade. ¹⁵

¹⁴ "Big Parade, Vandalism Mark Halloween Night in Rutland ." *Rutland Daily Herald* , November 1, 1963.

¹⁵ Tom Slayton. "City's Halloween Parade Features-Eeek!" *Rutland Daily Herald* , October 31, 1964.

During this time Tom Fagan had been writing letters into fanzines and comic books for a few years. He had written in a fanzine called *Batmania* by Biljo White and various other comics talking about the parade. He described how Batman leading the parade was a great thing for the parade. Kirk Hastings then compiled these articles and images of the Rutland Halloween parade throughout the years. In one of his letters, Fagan wrote a letter that was published in *Batman* Number 148 in June 1962. Fagan discussed the introduction of Batman into the parade saying “Dear Editor: Rutland, Vermont, a community of some 18,000 people, had some fun and excitement of Batman featured in its past Halloween festivities. The Rutland recreation department, headed by John W Cioffedi, sponsored a parade with over 1000 marchers. Included in the float lineup was one depicting BATMAN”. He goes on in his colorful words to talk about how Batman didn’t want to be identified and that his float had a “seven-foot square poster depicting BATMAN and BATMITE.” In return, the editor thanked the city of Rutland for their support of Batman and Robin.¹⁶ In May 1964, just months before the 1964 Halloween parade, Tom Fagan had written a letter to *Detective comics* number 327. The letter reads “Batman is no stranger to Rutland Vermont, residents, be they, comic-book readers or not.” Fagan goes on to say as much as a much Rutland look forward to the parade, they look forward to seeing Batman every year during this parade. He announces in this article that Batman will be marshaling the parade this year and that his identity will be kept secret, per comic book fashion.¹⁷ This evidently shows that Tom Fagan wanted to attract more crowds to the small city of Rutland, by advertising in these comics. To bring in fans of Batman and other comics by

¹⁶ Jerry Coleman. *Batman: Batman Unmasked! In Jokers Greatest Triumph* . Vol. 1, Dc Comics, 1962.

¹⁷ John, Broome. *Detective Comics*. Vol. 327. New York, New York: DC Comics, 1964.

describing what these events are like every year really promoting the Rutland Halloween parade in Fagan fashion.

Fagan was also contacted by a young and up-and-coming comic book writer by the name of Roy Thomas. Thomas would later become Marvel comic's editor in chief after Stan Lee, who had been editor from 1945 to 1971. Roy was a young book writer at the time and had just made his name. According to an interview with Roy Thomas, Fagan had met Roy at New York City's comic con in July 1965. Later that year, Roy said "He was there as a fan, and invited con host Dave Kaler (with whom I was then staying, prior to getting an apartment with Gary Friedrich near year's end) to come up to the Halloween parade three months later. We did, wearing the costumes we wore at the costume part of the con: Dave as Dr. Strange, I as Plastic Man. Unless his daughter was dressed as Batmite or some such thing, Dave, Tom (as Batman), and I were the basic comic book contingent of that particular parade. Tom had been playing Batman in it for several years already, I believe." That year the Rutland Halloween parade would turn out to be one of the biggest Halloween parades Rutland would have seen.¹⁸ Because of Fagan's invitation to Roy and the rest of Roy's friends (who were fellow comic book writers) they had heard of the popularity of the parade, It would be Roy Thomas who would help cement the Rutland Halloween parade into comic book history.

The days leading up to the parade, the Rutland Herald in October 1965 and Tom Fagan were hyping up the event. On October 30th, it discussed the lineup for the Halloween Parade and who was leading the parade: the marshal himself, Batman, on a float with his Bat-

¹⁸ "Hello ." *Hello* , December 11, 2019.

family followed by Joker and other heroes and villains, with the title of the float they were on “Batmania Sweeps the Nation”.¹⁹ November 1st the parade was reported in the Rutland Herald with the title “Hauntingly Successful.” The Rutland Herald reports “the mad, midnight world of pumpkins, parades, ghoulies and ghosties flitted through Rutland Saturday like the shadow of a bat across the moon.” That year the parade had been held on October 30th rather than the 31st, and it seems that they started following the practices of having the parade on Saturdays. The Halloween parade originally would fall on Halloween, but eventually would fall on the Saturday before the holiday. That year the parade was late because of a “Tardy Batman”. That year the parade winner of 1965 for best float was Christ the King school of Rutland. Newcomer faces had shown during this parade and it was the big turnout for which they had hoped.²⁰

1965 was a pivotal year for the Rutland Halloween parade. It was the year that the parade would truly show the popularity of comics by debuting all the different comic book characters and with the help of Roy Thomas and the comic book writers, in the years after 1965 the comic book characters would take hold of the Rutland Halloween parade. It seems that because of the success of 1965, more people would want to dress as superheroes than monsters and ghouls. 1966 was also a big year for comic books and Batman. In January of 1966, Batman the TV series would premier, and Adam West and Burt Ward would make their appearance as the famed dynamic duo Batman and Robin. The character very familiar to the Rutland people because of Fagan would now be seen on television screens across the nation. Comic books, it seems, had taken hold in full glory by the parade’s fifth year. It seems throughout the 1960s

¹⁹ Ibid, Oct, 30th 1965

²⁰ Ibid, Nov, 1st, 1965.

books and Halloween were becoming more and more popular. As the years crept closer to the 1970s more people started to enjoy Halloween and it wasn't exclusive to just children anymore.

Through reporting in the Rutland Herald in 1966, lots of reports of ghosts and pumpkins reported throughout that time. This year the Rutland Herald hyped the Mr. and Mrs. Jack-o'-Lantern competition, the Pumpkin Princess, and Batman leading the parade as marshal on his "Night Legion" float. This year in 1966 Batman was well received yet again according to the article on November 1st, when "shouts of "there he is," went up from the crowd when Batman surrounded by his family triumphantly passed by on a large float. Except to the cheers of his frenzied fans". Also, it seems another Batman had made an appearance that year. "Another Batman, accompanied by a woman in Robin, wrote in the middle section of the parade in an expensive convertible." Lots of great new costumes had shown in the parade and it was another huge success for that year. The use of two Batman seems that the character was popular enough to do so. ²¹ Many articles were written about this parade in 1966. One of the articles titled "The Bands" stated "one of the happiest by far the longest of Rutland's traditional Halloween parades made its way through the streets of Rutland Monday night." Another article sates "spooks added to the Erie atmosphere" which that year named their pumpkin Princess and unveiled Mr. Jack-o'-Lantern after the parade. Mr. Jack-o'-Lantern and the Pumpkin Princess were very prominent during this time in the parade as well. 1966 was another successful year for the Rutland Halloween parade.

In the parade's 7th year, excitement was hyping up in the Daily Herald. An article on Tuesday October 31st, 1967 titled "*Halloween parade to Spook downtown whistle shrieks for*

²¹ Ibid,1966

Marchers" a whistle would blow every year for the Halloween parade to start. This year the article described certain details about the parade. Written from the " Vermont pumpkin Bureau" they would talk about how Miss Crystal Trepanier of West Rutland would be this Year's pumpkin princess²² (as of 2019, each school picks a pumpkin princess for the Rutland Halloween parade) and Batman would be marshaling the parade on his Night Legion float. Orders from each school would have marched behind with the 4-H club and Civil Air Patrol of the Rutland areas local Airport, the Cairo Shriners and more. The article also states that Cioffredi said this "should be one of the biggest ever." In the Halloween edition of the Rutland Herald Pumpkin Bureau, an extravagant story unfolded about how the school superintendent wanted to unmask the Miss Jack-o-Lantern but didn't, because she convinced him to keep her identity secret until the end of the parade. Throughout the history of the parade, Mr. or Mrs. Jack-o-Lantern was a wonderful mystery every year. On November 1st, the article titled "*Young Spirits invade dark, dank downtown in Prelude to unveiling of mystery Miss*" the article started off that day with "for about an hour Tuesday night the streets of downtown Rutland were haunted. A friendly invasion of spirits of all ages paraded through the downtown streets spreading Halloween cheer in 7 flavors of lollipops among the large crowd that throng the sidewalks for the look at the world of mystery and make believe." Miss Jack-o-Lantern was an ass to be revealed as Miss Lucy Doane. The article details who won the Miss Jack-o-Lantern contest, how old they were, what they were winning, and more, and then continues how well the parade went off and that "the parade ended with a float peopled with that Personnel proclaiming the introduction of the new Batgirl." Presumably, the new Batgirl was based on the 1966 Batman show, where Batgirl was portrayed by Yvonne Craig. Batman the TV show had been airing for about a year by this point and played

²² Ibid, October 31st 1967

a popular role in pop culture then as well as today. This shows that more superheroes were being portrayed in this parade.²³

The parade would get bigger every year, and by the next year, 1968 they were promoting heavily the Mister Jack-o-Lantern of this year. On October 24th, 1968 the article begins with the Vermont Pumpkin Bureau stating "it appears as if the elusive Mr. Jack-o-Lantern has no place left to appeal on Wednesday, the board of aldermen spurned an appeal by O'Lantern to enact an ordinance forbidding Rutland area youngsters to guess his identity" shows that the parade was heavily promoted Halloween alongside its pop culture side, you can't Halloween without a Jack-o-Lantern, it seems.

On October 30th, the Pumpkin Bureau had announced the lineup for the Rutland Halloween parade and Batman would be attending again. He was sad to announce that he would not be able to unveil the Jack-o-Lantern this year, " he said that he must "check out a lead on campaign button theft in Rutland area." As it states in the article, "Cioffredi said that he will find someone to unmask Old Lantern. Lantern was unsuccessful in an attempt to deprive some lucky boy or girl from winning a bicycle. Cioffredi's agent will draw the name of the bicycle winner from a box containing correct answers to O'Lanterns true identity after the parade ends." The Jack-o-Lantern was so popular in this parade kids wanted to win their prizes every year - especially a bicycle. The parade that year was supposed to be divided into four different sections. It says in the article Rutland Police Department and Vermont State Police cruisers will lead the parade the vehicles will be followed by the Rutland American Legion Color Guard, Pumpkin Princess Miss Katie Gilligan of Pittsford, and Otter Valley Union High School band. Children

²³ Ibid, November, 1st, 1967

from Lincoln and Dana schools will be included in the parades first section, Batman will take his place on the Batman float at the end of the parades for this section. The Mount Saint Joseph Academy band will lead off section two of the parade. This section will include a float from teen Council and school children from Park and Christ the King School. Rutland Junior High School band will lead off the parade's third section floats from Brandon Training School, and the College of St. Joseph the Provider and the Rutland High School band will be in the third section as well as the children from Northwest, Longfellow, Barstow, and St. Peter schools. The Rutland Civil Air Patrol and West Rutland flashy band will lead off the last section of the parade. Included in this last section as well is the Rutland Town Elementary School float, children from Northeast, Immaculate Heart of Mary and Southeast schools and the Rutland Shriners Calliope. It seems even in 1968 that the parade hasn't changed very much decades later in 2019. The setup is about the same, though it has gotten bigger since then. Batman was still marshal in 1968. It seems to have gone off without a hitch.²⁴

On November 1st, the parade was announced to be a success yet again. Vermont Pumpkin Bureau announced who the Jack-o-Lantern was that year (who at the time was City attorney John D Hanson) and that a young girl by the name of Carrie Kelly won the bicycle for guessing the identity. The article also states that "about three thousand Spectators lined the streets for the March. They saw the ranks of the biggest parade of the year. It was lead by Otter Valley Union High School, the home of this year's pumpkin princess, Miss Katie Gilligan. Parade Marshal Batman was on hand early to keep things rolling from his "Batman for president" float. The float entered by the night Legion (Rutland County Charter chapter), has been a perennial favorite since the parade begin 9 years ago." Note though it says 9 years, all

²⁴ Ibid October, 30th 196

evidence points towards it would have been its eighth year. The parade had many different themes like Macbeth and was another success for the year. Little did they know this parade would blow up another two years.²⁵

Another year had passed and 1969 was here. Comic books would be very prominent in this year's parade it seems. October 29th, an article the Rutland Daily Herald was titled "*Comic Book characters in Parade*"²⁶ the article would discuss the parade that year: " the Night Legion float, which is not a glob of ice cream in a warm glass of beer, is actually a float to be in the Rutland Halloween parade scheduled for 6:30 Friday evening. An odiferous cluster of yawning Night Legionnaires, stretching bleary-eyed from watching too many Dracula movies, explain to a nervous reporter Tuesday that the float will carry through Rutland a whole host of superheroes and (God forbid) their super enemies. On the float will be Poison Ivy, Catwoman, Red Skull, The Flash, Vigilante, Robin the Boy Wonder, Batman, Batgirl, and Batmite...Spiderman, who missed out on the gag, will follow up on the Champion Publications float and will be accompanied by the Invisible Girl. Or will he? That is, how will one know whether she's there if she's invisible? Oh dear, maybe the Crypt Keeper would know, but who dares ask?" It truly seems that the parade was diversifying who was in the parade as superheroes. Wider variety, it seems, the popularity of comics was starting to grow even more by the list of heroes and villains who attended that year's parade.

On October 31st, a photo shows up in the articles picture of a Jack-o-Lantern yet again. As it states under the picture, the notorious Jack-o'-Lantern was spotted hanging around the back door of his Rutland town house Thursday afternoon, but he was able to escape before

²⁵ Ibid, November 1st, 1968

²⁶ Ibid, October 29th, 1969

the photographer was able to find out his true identity. It will be discovered Friday night following the annual Rutland Halloween parade. (Harold's photo, Mitchell) "the article on October 31st of that year it's warm around discussing it was going to happen at 6:30 that night. Four sections of courseware in the parade and per usual pumpkin princess Batman and more. This year's lineup each section would be. The Night Legion float like every year same section "children from Lincoln Dana schools will also be in the first section" as stated in this article, in section 2 will be Rutland high schools Halloween queen and the RHS band. Park Street School in Christ the King School children are also scheduled to parade in the second section will be followed up by the comic book Crusader float." So, in the second section of the parade I hear the comic book would be forever present comic books head taken its roots even heavier in 1969. Pumpkins dreams had been in full effect by this point. The parade had another successful year. On November 1st, 1969²⁷ the Rutland Herald declared a good year for the Rutland Halloween Parade. The title of the article that covered the parade states " Thousands View Halloween parade; Comic Book Heroes Have crowd agape". An article by Bryce McIntyre goes on to talk about the parade, "dressed in black tails and derbies, the Mount Saint Joseph Marjorettes were awarded running Ovation all the way down Merchants Row in Friday night's festive Halloween parade thousands of Rutland turned out shortly after 6:30 p.m. View and participate. in the ceremony and pomp, the city's biggest parade of the year." It goes on and on describing who was featured in the parade, especially Mr. Jack-o-Lantern, the other Comic Book Heroes "the comic book personalities writing float sponsored by Rutland Knight Legion also received Innovation by bystanders on Merchants row the costumes were filled out in three dimensions by creators of the comic book strips themselves many of them have income for New York City and farther merely

²⁷ Ibid, Nov, 1st, 1969

to participate in Rutland Halloween parade. some of the personalities portrayed were able the caretaker from the House of Secrets (Mark Hanerfeod), Cane caretaker of House of Mystery (len,Wein), Flash (Richard Rubenfeld), Spiderman (Roy Thomas), Invisible Girl (Jean Thomas), No Man (Marvin Wolfman), Catwoman (Susan O'Neill), The Phantom Stranger (Andrew YanChus), Vigilante (David Kaler), and The Spirit (Elliott Wagner), all four New York City." All these names are people that come out of the New York City comic book designers of the time, which coincide with my interview I held with Roy Thomas over email. The parade has become so popular and so well-known, comic book writers would participate in this parade and help bringing thousands of people to Rutland City. Tom Fagan's idea of bringing comic book heroes and villains into the parade would come full circle the next year, when the Rutland Halloween parade would be featured officially in a comic book, specifically in Avengers Number 83. 1970 would be the Rutland Halloween Parade's 10th year and probably the biggest parade they had seen.

On October 25th, 1970, the advertisements in articles about the parade start to kick in, and in an article that is titled *Jenne urges caution on Halloween*. the police chief of the time Stuart D. Jenne expressed concerns in the article about symbolism on Halloween, which was a very prominent thing throughout the years, but the article concludes with the fact that Jenne noticed that over the last few years the Halloween parade had reduced the amount of vandalism, and while so many were focused on the parade, it was a wonderful event that reduced crime, which is appropriate that the parade was headed by superheroes. The article then states "the parade starts Saturday at 6:30 p.m. in downtown Rutland and will feature 30 comic book characters this year. When was a Battlefield Avengers and their latest thrill pack issue?" The parade was featured in Avengers Number 83 that year. With the events leading up to that comic

book, Rutland would be featured in other Marvel comics leading up to the event of the Avengers battling in Rutland City.²⁸

On October 30th, 1970, the newspaper reported a very elaborate story; it discussed how the whole is "Cuttingsville narcotics Bureau was found dead Thursday on Rutland city dump" that it was under investigation and that the last people who were seen there where the Avengers and they were sought for questioning. It discussed at the evil Avengers villain Jack-o-Lantern had an evil plot and that his identity would be revealed on the Halloween parade. This year the parade heavily advertised The Avengers due to their involvement in Halloween parade. Comic books were in full effect here this year there was huge hype for this wonderful parade this year. By October 31st, the Rutland Herald advertised *City's Halloween parade starts tonight at 6:30* it discussed how Jack-o-Lantern had been apprehended "the evil incompetent has been foiled again and will once more be forced to participate in the Rutland Halloween parade, where he will draw the name of the lucky child who win 4 foot pumpkin filled with toys their youngster will get a shiny new bicycle." It goes on to discuss how the parade will start, who was the pumpkin princess, and "the parade will also have the most fantastic array of super characters ever assembled, including the entire Batman family: Batgirl and Batman, Robin, and Bat-Mite some of the more esoteric heroes and villains to join the bats will be revolutionary black panther, Thor, Sif of Asgard, Medusa, Black Widow, Quicksilver, Conan the Barbarian, The Red Skull and Havoc." The parade was full of new comic book characters especially from the Marvel Universe this year. It is also known Tom Fagan wouldn't be dressed as Batman himself this year because of the Avenger themed parade and parade being featured in the comics, Tom Fagan was

²⁸ Ibid, Oct, 25th

featured in this comic at his mansion dressed Nighthawk in the Marvel Universe. This year he would be dressed as Nighthawk in the parade.

A few days later, on November 2nd, the parade was held very successful on its 10th year. The parade would be held to have 5000 onlookers in this little city. The parade would talk about how because of a United States Postal Service strike, a box of toys could not be delivered to the Jack-o-Lantern competition that year, they would still receive it eventually. It also went on to say on how nearly 30 superheroes appeared in this year's parade. The article states "veteran parade officiant out of noticed that Batman was not his usual self, but a knew figure to Rutland, Nighthawk seemed pacifically super." (Rutland Knight Legion sponsored several of comic book floats, and many strange types, in addition to bat family and Nighthawk please crowds, Captain Marvel was a big hit with his Marvelous Antics, and a bearded Superman Drew cheers from weirdo spectators. the Revolutionary Black Panther food heard on a stable of forces, which included wasp, Scarlet Witch, and Medusa. Solomon Grundy who was on the scene from Wilmington, Del, and Man-Bat tousled several times with. Batboy was not present, but Batmite, Age 2, Drew cheers from local kiddies". (1969 Nighthawk was introduced, Marvels Version of Batman). The parade was the success the parade after serving 10 years to the Rutland Community had been immortalized. Comic books and pop culture police shaped the Rutland Halloween parade. Tom Fagan's idea to add superheroes had brought crowds to Rutland City, as Roy Thomas had stated in the interview " I don't recall the details, but I got his enthusiastic permission to work him into that AVENGERS issue. Otherwise, I handled all the details, including having John Buscema draw Tom, my first wife Jeanie, and me together. Jeanie and I were drawn wearing the costumes we had worn the previous year: FF (in her case, it became Invisible Girl) and Spider-Man, costumes that Marvel had had made up for a NY parade years

earlier but which had never been worn in those parades. Far as I know, we were the first people to wear them... and would wear them again onstage at Carnegie Hall in the Stan Lee/Marvel show of January 1972."²⁹ This little parade inspired comic book writers to implement the parade into their stories. 1970 would become legend in the comic book world, and is still talked about today.³⁰

In the coming years of the Rutland Halloween parade it would be featured more times in the comic book world. In 1971 it would be featured in *Batman # 234*, August 1971 in *"Night of the Reaper!"* and a list of other comics that would eventually lead to, book history's first ever crossover event Marvel and DC Comics. In the later years more Batman floats would pop up throughout through years. Tom Fagan would continue to lead the parade, bringing in thousands of fans every year. Tom Fagan passed away on October 21st 2008 just before that year's Rutland Halloween parade. Tom Fagan's, John Cioffredi's, and all of the people who ever worked on the Halloween parade through the 1960s legacy still lives on to this day. You can also view the art that was held on the floats on the Night Legion and more at the Rutland Recreation Department's old building, and the current director Nikki Adams can help guide you through their history there. On the Rutland Halloween parade's true 60th anniversary we will actually see Batman leading the way yet again with his Legion of Superheroes.

Finally, Rutland's 60 years of Halloween parades have stayed true to their original ideas and have drawn crowds from far and wide. In its first 10 years, it was influenced by many comic books which became ever more popular in that decade and inspired many comics in the years to come. Between Tom Fagan and the Rutland Recreation Department, they shaped the

²⁹ Ibid, Interview, Roy Thomas.

³⁰ Ibid, Oct, 30th, Nov 2nd, 1970

parade and used the popular culture to make the Halloween parade what it is today. The use of comics and pop culture shaped this small city's parade, and because of the popularity of Batman and one man's dream, the parade will be forever cemented in comic book history and bring a lot of light to the small city of Rutland, Vermont.

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