BANG-ZOOM!

Typeface Specimen

Midwest Type

BANG-ZOOM!

DESIGNERS: Jesse R. Ewing, Galen Showman

YEAR RELEASED: 2021

STYLES / WEIGHTS: Regular, Regular Italic, Bold, Bold Italic, ExtraBold Italic

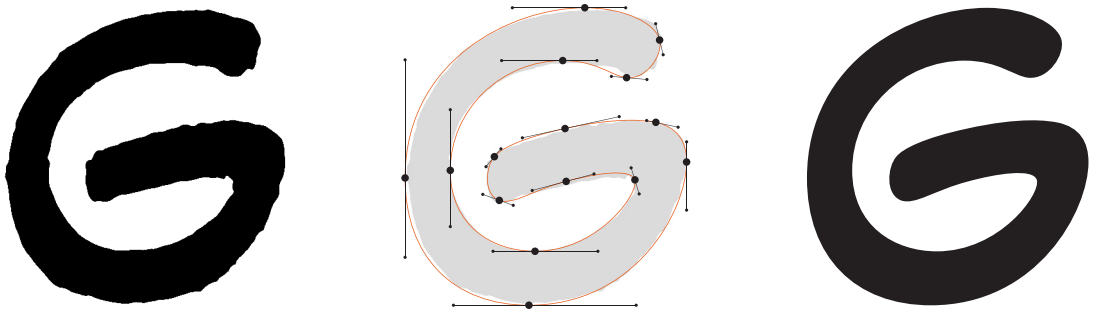
LANGUAGE SUPPORT: 219 latin-based languages, built on the Latin Plus character set developed by Underware. http://underware.nl/latin_plus

Bang-Zoom! is a professional comic book font based on lettering by Galen Showman.

Midwest Type is an independent typeface design studio based in Akron, Ohio, USA, founded in 2014 by designer and illustrator Jesse R. Ewing. The studio specializes in original fonts with a Midwestern sensibility. That means approachable, practical fonts that work hard. The studio also offers custom font, logotype, and lettering solutions. Feel free to drop us a line if you have any questions or if you have a project in mind.

BACKGROUND

In August of 2019, at a private party held at the Zephyr Pub in Kent, Ohio (a city that is home to a surprising number of illustrators and comic book artists), the host introduced me to Galen Showman, an award-winning illustrator and letterer, and mentioned that Galen might have an interest in making a font based on his lettering.



(LEFT) HAND-LETTERED ORIGINAL, ENLARGED. (MIDDLE) VECTOR OUTLINES SUPERIMPOSED OVER ORIGINAL. (RIGHT) THE FINAL GLYPH.

We had a nice chat and exchanged email addresses. A few days later, after trading emails, we both decided to give it a shot. Galen still enjoyed hand-lettering comic books and was concerned that if we released a font in his ususal style he would be competing with himself. Instead, he suggested we try a slightly different lettering style that he sometimes used. Shortly after that he was sending me beautiful lettering samples to review, to see if this could work. I said “Yes, let’s do it!” and started contemplating how to actually go about making it happen. Until that point I had never worked on a handwriting font; there would be some technical challenges to address. We needed to figure out how to work together, too, and how we would evaluate the progress of the font’s creation. For my part, I wanted to make sure I could craft glyphs that would make up a consistent typeface but still be true to the style of his original lettering. And we both agreed that this should be a professional-level comic book font for serious typesetting needs.

IT’S ALL IN THE INTERPRETATION

Initially, we were thinking we would create just one weight, with uppercase letters only. As this was going to be a side project for both of us, we wanted to keep it simple, a proof of concept more than anything else, albeit with a perfectly usable end product. The work started out slowly, mostly owing to the fact that we both assumed we’d need high resolution scans to use as guides to draw the final glyphs. But it turned out that we were getting in the way of ourselves. Low resolution scans scaled up in size, all pixelated and blurry, actually allowed for more freedom of interpretation of the final shapes. This was something

BACKGROUND

HAND-LETTERED SAMPLES.

I had to learn and get used to: that it was okay to take some liberties with the outlines I was drawing in order to end up with a uniform font. A side benefit of this discovery was that it greatly speeded up the process.

MORE, MORE, MORE!

A more efficient workflow opened up doors to other possibilities. Why not draw a second version of each uppercase letter to fill the lowercase slots? This would allow for further visual variety and a more convincing hand-lettered look. And how about adding a bold weight? And italics for both weights? Galen was game to letter the sample sheets for me to work from. I asked him to include symbols and accent marks as well so we could expand the character set.

As I became familiar with the characteristics of his lettering I began to feel comfortable sketching out a few additional glyphs on my own, imagining where his pen stroke might start, and where it would increase in size with more pressure and thin out with less. Before long we were filling in all the slots.

NOT SO FAST

But just as we were reaching cruising speed the world came crashing to a halt. At first, as the COVID-19 pandemic became a reality, and client work slowed down, and as the weeks passed and people found they had extra time on their hands, this seemed like the perfect “pandemic project.” But the opposite happened. After the initial slowdown, my client work

BACKGROUND

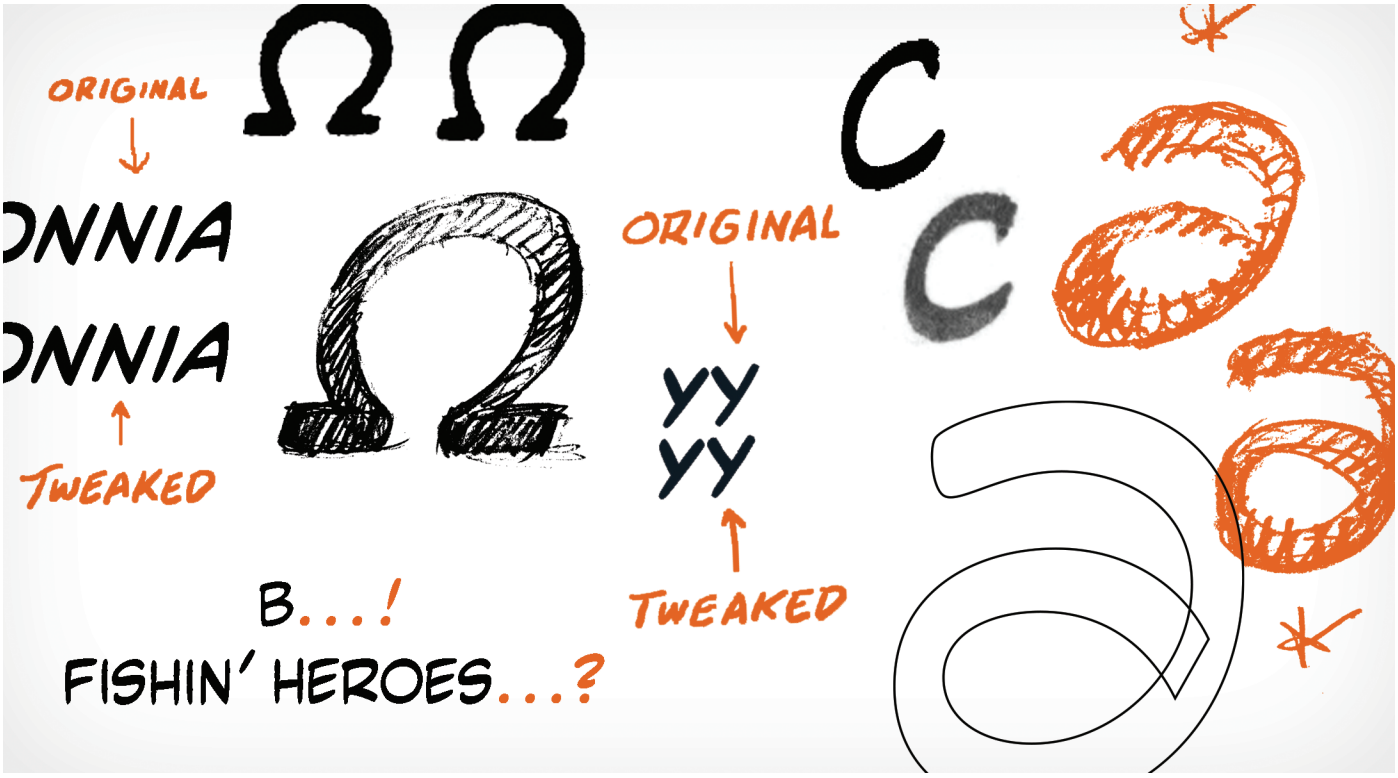
actually picked up, and in fact didn't let up even once for the next year (type design is not my full time job). Galen found he was in the same boat, busy with comics jobs. So from that point on, Bang-Zoom! became even more of a side project that we worked on as we found the time.

In some ways this was good. Working on the typeface in small chunks helped prevent burnout. Focusing on specific elements of the character set (like numerals, or currency symbols, for example), kept things manageable and able to be completed in odd chunks of free time. A longer development schedule also allowed me room to experiment, as well as figure out some tricky Opentype features, such as how to replace the straight capital "I" with the "Crossbar I."

But most importantly, it kept things fun. Which, in the midst of a deadly epidemic, was certainly welcome.

SEE YOU IN THE FUNNY PAGES

One of the best parts of a type design project, to me, is when you're close enough to being finished that you can start using a font in real-life applications. That's the real test. Bang-Zoom! felt like a success when I replaced the lettering on scans of actual comic book pages with the font, and it worked. But I'd like to think that Bang-Zoom has a life beyond the comics. Besides being fun, it's quite legible. That's a testament to the historical evolution of comic book lettering, to be readable by the masses, but it's also very much down to the lettering genius of Galen Showman.



SKETCHES AND NOTES.

BY THE GODS OF SPACE!

BOLD ITALIC

SAY, SOMETHING IS WRONG WITH THAT ROBOT!

ITALIC

WH -- WHAT HAPPENED?!

BOLD

THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK, CHUMS!

REGULAR

K-THOOM!

EXTRABOLD ITALIC WITH DISCRETIONARY LIGATURE

MEANWHILE, IN THE LABORATORY...

REGULAR

KILLIN'S TOO GOOD FOR YA!

ITALIC WITH DISCRETIONARY LIGATURES

AND IF I REFUSE?

REGULAR WITH CONTEXTUAL ALTERNATE

:COUGH: TEAR GAS! :COUGH:

REGULAR AND BOLD ITALIC WITH BREATH MARKS

NNGG! AIEEE!

BOLD WITH DISCRETIONARY LIGATURES

Bang-Zoom!

WEIGHTS AND STYLES

BANG-ZOOM! REGULAR

BANG-ZOOM! ITALIC

BANG-ZOOM! BOLD

BANG-ZOOM! BOLD ITALIC

BANG-ZOOM! EXTRABOLD ITALIC

OPENTYPE FEATURES

fi fl → fi fl

STANDARD LIGATURES

AA BB CC DD EE FF GG ... → AA BB CC DD EE FF GG ...

DISCRETIONARY LIGATURES

I I'M I'LL I'VE I! → I I'M I'LL I'VE I!

CONTEXTUAL ALTERNATES

A NOTE ON TYPESETTING

While Bang-Zoom! includes an alternate version of each uppercase letter in its corresponding lowercase slot, the font is designed to look best when set in all caps.

CHARACTER SET

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
AA BB CC DD EE FF GG HH II JJ KK LL MM NN OO PP QQ RR
SS TT UU VV WW XX YY ZZ FFFI
ÁĂÂÄÀĀĄÅǺÃĄÆǼĆČÇĊĈĎÐÉĔĚÊËĖÈĒĘẼĘĞĢĠĜĞĦ
ÍĨÎÏÌĪĮĨĮIJÍĴĴĶĹĽĻĿŁŃŇŅÑŊÓŎÔÖÒŐŌÕǪǪØǾŒŔŖŘ
ŚŠŜŞŞBŤŢŢŦÚŬÛÜÙŰŪŲŮŨŲẄŴẄẂÝŶŸỲỸŸŹŽŻŊÞÐə
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ÁĂÂÄÀĀĄÅǺÃĄÆǼĆČÇĊĈĎÐÉĔĚÊËĖÈĒĘẼĘĞĢĠĜĞĦ
ĤIÍĨÎÏÌĪĮĨĮIJÍĴJĴĶKĹĽĻĿŁŃŇŅÑŊŃÓŎÔÖÒŐŌÕǪǪØǾŒ
ŔŘŖŚŠŜŞŞBŤŢŢŦÚŬÛÜÙŰŪŲŮŨŲẄŴẄẂÝŶŸỲỸŸŹŽŻ
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TEXT SAMPLES: REGULAR, REGULAR ITALIC

A GENRE IS A TYPE OR CLASS OF STORY THAT SHARES A SET OF CONVENTIONS WITH OTHER EXAMPLES OF ITS TYPE, AND WHICH READERS COME TO EXPECT. MY GUESS IS YOU'RE ALREADY FAMILIAR WITH THE CONCEPT OF GENRE, EVEN IF YOU'RE NOT FAMILIAR WITH THE TERM. COMICS ITSELF IS A MEDIUM, JUST LIKE FILM IS A MEDIUM. WITHIN THAT MEDIUM, YOU HAVE DIFFERENT KINDS OF STORIES THAT ARE ALL SIMILAR. FOR INSTANCE, IN FILMS, WE HAVE ROMANTIC COMEDIES, WE HAVE HORROR MOVIES, WE HAVE WESTERNS, ACTION FILMS, ETC. THE SAME IS TRUE FOR COMIC BOOKS, AND SUPERHEROES IS ONE OF THOSE GENRES, OR TYPES OF STORIES.

15/20 PT, ALIGNED LEFT, RAGGED RIGHT

NOTE THE TWO PARTS OF THE DEFINITION OF GENRE: THE FIRST IS THAT THEY SHARE A SET OF CONVENTIONS. WHEN WE GO SEE A ROMANTIC COMEDY FILM, WE KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT: THERE WILL BE TWO PEOPLE WHO ARE ATTRACTED TO EACH OTHER; THERE WILL BE SOME OBSTACLE TO THEM GETTING TOGETHER; THEY WILL OVERCOME THE OBSTACLE; THEY WILL GET TOGETHER. THIS IS AN OVERSIMPLIFICATION, BUT IT IS GENERALLY WHAT WE EXPECT WHEN WE GO SEE A ROMCOM. THE PLOTS OF A GENRE TEND TO BE FORMULAIC IN THIS REGARD. CRITICS OF WORKS OF GENRE TEND TO DISMISS THEM BECAUSE OF THIS. BUT, THEY ARE SORT OF MISSING THE POINT -- FANS OF ROMANTIC COMEDIES DON'T GO TO SEE THEM LESS TO SEE *WHAT* HAPPENS AND MORE TO SEE *HOW* IT HAPPENS -- WHICH IS THE SECOND PART OF OUR GENRE DEFINITION: FANS OF A GENRE *EXPECT* TO SEE THOSE CONVENTIONS PLAYED OUT. WHEN WE GO TO SEE *THE AVENGERS,* WE DON'T REALLY QUESTION IF THE AVENGERS ARE GOING TO BE VICTORIOUS -- WE KNOW THEY WILL BE. WE GO THE MOVIE TO SEE *HOW* THEY ACHIEVE VICTORY. THESE CONVENTIONS CHANGE SOMEWHAT OVER TIME, PARTLY TO REFLECT CHANGES IN PEOPLE'S TASTES, AND PARTLY IN REACTION TO CHANGES IN SOCIETAL FACTORS. FIGURING OUT WHAT THESE CONVENTIONS ARE -- AND WHAT THEY MEAN -- IS WHAT WE ARE GOING TO FOCUS ON.

11/15 PT, ALIGNED LEFT, RAGGED RIGHT

TEXT SAMPLES: BOLD, BOLD ITALIC

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TEXT SAMPLES: BOLD, EXTRABOLD ITALIC

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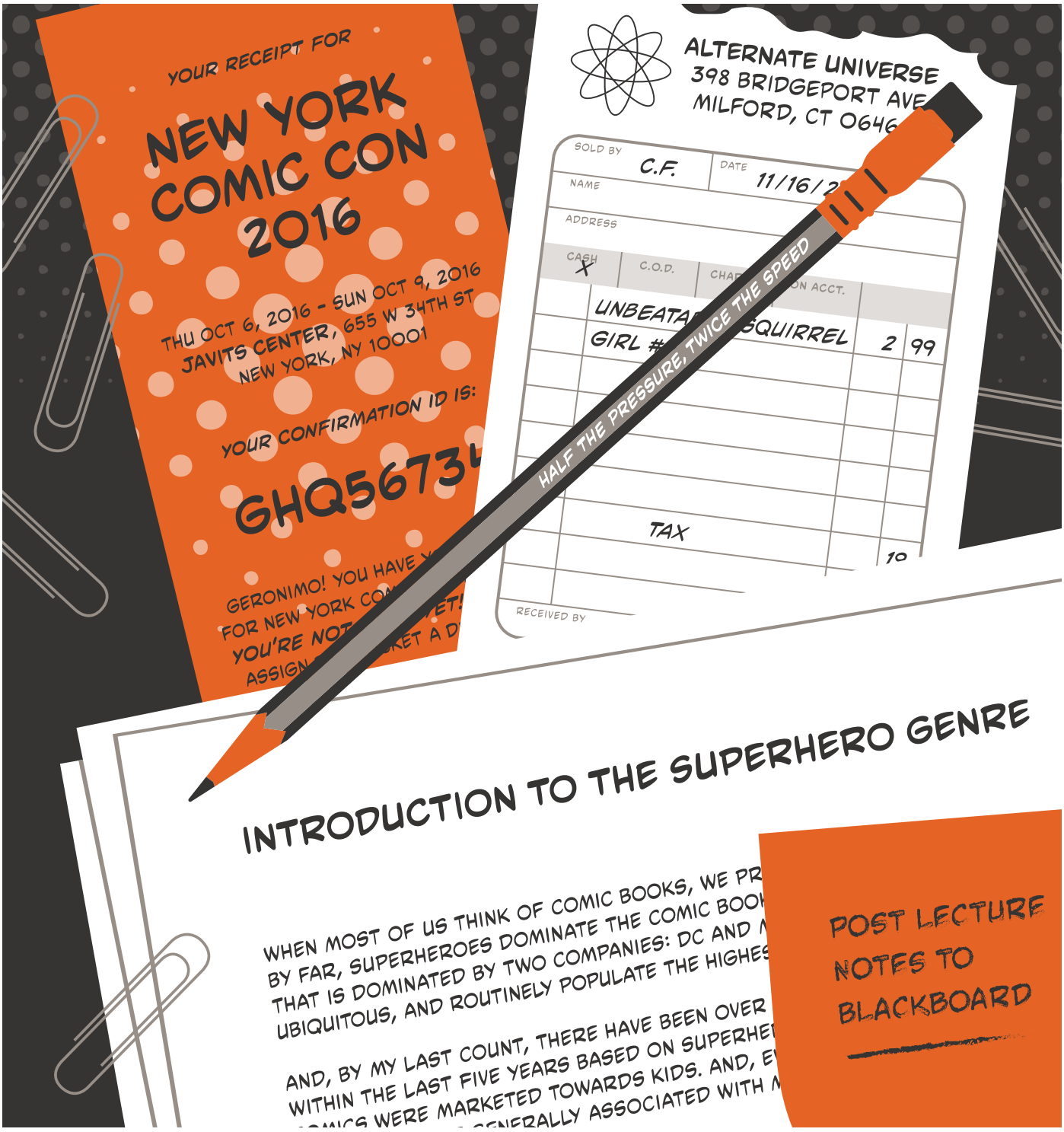
11/15 PT, ALIGNED LEFT, RAGGED RIGHT

SPECIMENS

SPECIMENS

TEE CITY COFFEE
BLAST! SODA
BLACK SQUIRREL
IPA
U.S.A.
THE KENT HOTEL
15
ROUTE 43
THE OUTPOST
PRC
ZEPHYR
FUN SIZE!
BAR
ALL MEDIA
ART
SUPPLY CO.
E. MAIN ST.
-678-8078

SPECIMENS


YOUR RECEIPT FOR
NEW YORK COMIC CON 2016
THU OCT 6, 2016 - SUN OCT 9, 2016
JAVITS CENTER, 655 W 34TH ST
NEW YORK, NY 10001
YOUR CONFIRMATION ID IS:
GHQ56734
ALTERNATE UNIVERSE
398 BRIDGEPORT AVE
MILFORD, CT 0646
SOLD BY
C.F.
DATE
NAME
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CASH
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C.O.D.
GIRL #
SQUIRREL
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RECEIVED BY
HALF THE PRESSURE, TWICE THE SPEED
INTRODUCTION TO THE SUPERHERO GENRE
WHEN MOST OF US THINK OF COMIC BOOKS, WE PR
BY FAR, SUPERHEROES DOMINATE THE COMIC BOO
THAT IS DOMINATED BY TWO COMPANIES: DC AND
UBIQUITOUS, AND ROUTINELY POPULATE THE HIGHES
AND, BY MY LAST COUNT, THERE HAVE BEEN OVER
WITHIN THE LAST FIVE YEARS BASED ON SUPERHE
WERE MARKETED TOWARDS KIDS. AND, E
GENERALLY ASSOCIATED WITH
POST LECTURE NOTES TO BLACKBOARD

SPECIMENS

GREENZ
READY MEAL
100% ORGANIC
BEETROOT WITH GREENZ & GRAINZ
BLAST!
SODA
CLEAN HOUSE
ALL-PURPOSE SPONGES
• RECOMMENDED FOR NON-STICK SURFACES
• FOR EVERYDAY USE
4.7 IN x 3.0 IN x 0.6 IN
(11.9 CM x 7.6 CM x 1.5 CM) EACH
4 SPONGES
ULTRASTIK
LIP BALM
SNACK
SUPER BRAND
BARBECUE FLAVOR
POTATO CHIPS
POWERBALL
POWERPLAY
SATURDAY'S POWERBALL JACKPOT IS THE LARGEST IN US HISTORY AT A RECORD $900,000,000! HERE'S YOUR CHANCE. BUY YOUR POWERBALL TICKETS TODAY!
A . 05 24 32 67 68 EP 11 EP
B . 02 14 33 48 67 EP 08 EP
C . 16 19 32 34 57 EP 10 EP
D . 11 19 33 44 48 EP 04 EP
E . 28 36 51 57 69 EP
SAT JAN09
BUTTER
SALTED
NET WT 4 OZ (113 G)
LIBERTY
IN GOD WE TRUST
1985

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

LANGUAGES SUPPORTED:

Abenaki, Afaan Oromo, Afar, Afrikaans, Albanian, Alsatian, Amis, Anuta, Aragonese, Aranese, Aromanian, Arrernte, Arvanitic (Latin), Asturian, Atayal, Aymara, Azerbaijani, Bashkir (Latin), Basque, Belarusian (Latin), Bemba, Bikol, Bislama, Bosnian, Breton, Cape Verdean Creole, Catalan, Cebuano, Chamorro, Chavacano, Chichewa, Chickasaw, Cimbrian, Cofán, Cornish, Corsican, Creek. Crimean Tatar (Latin), Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dawan, Delaware. Dholuo, Drehu, Dutch, English, Esperanto, Estonian, Faroese, Fijian, Filipino, Finnish, Folkspraak, French, Frisian, Friulian, Gagauz (Latin), Galician, Ganda, Genoese, German, Gikuyu, Gooniyandi, Greenlandic (Kalaallisut), Guadeloupean Creole, Gwich'in, Haitian Creole, Hän, Hawaiian, Hiligaynon, Hopi, Hotcąk (Latin), Hungarian, Icelandic, Ido, Igbo, Ilocano, Indonesian, Interglossa, Interlingua, Irish, Istro-Romanian, Italian, Jamaican, Javanese (Latin), Jèrriais, Kaingang, Kala Lagaw Ya, Kapampangan (Latin), Kaqchikel, Karakalpak (Latin), Karelian (Latin), Kashubian, Kikongo, Kinyarwanda, Kiribati, Kirundi, Klingon, Kurdish (Latin), Ladin, Latin, Latino sine Flexione, Latvian, Lithuanian, Lojban, Lombard, Low Saxon, Luxembourgish, Maasai, Makhuwa, Malay, Maltese, Manx, Māori, Marquesan, Megleno-Romanian, Meriam Mir, Mirandese, Mohawk, Moldovan, Montagnais, Montenegrin, Murrinh-Patha, Nagamese Creole, Nahuatl, Ndebele, Neapolitan, Ngiyambaa, Niuean, Noongar, Norwegian, Novial, Occidental, Occitan, Old Icelandic, Old Norse, Onĕipŏt, Oshiwambo, Ossetian (Latin), Palauan, Papiamento, Piedmontese, Polish, Portuguese, Potawatomi, Q'eqchi', Quechua, Rarotongan, Romanian, Romansh, Rotokas, Sami (Inari Sami), Sami (Lule Sami), Sami (Northern Sami), Sami (Southern Sami), Samoan, Sango, Saramaccan, Sardinian, Scottish Gaelic, Serbian (Latin), Seri, Seychellois Creole, Shawnee, Shona, Sicilian, Silesian, Slovak, Slovenian, Slovio (Latin), Somali, Sorbian (Lower Sorbian), Sorbian (Upper Sorbian), Sotho (Northern), Sotho (Southern), Spanish, Sranan, Sundanese (Latin), Swahili, Swazi, Swedish, Tagalog, Tahitian, Tetum, Tok Pisin, Tokelauan, Tongan, Tshiluba, Tsonga, Tswana, Tumbuka, Turkish, Turkmen (Latin), Tuvaluan, Tzotzil, Uzbek (Latin), Venetian, Vepsian, Volapük, Võro, Wallisian, Walloon, Waray-Waray, Warlpiri, Wayuu, Welsh, Wik-Mungkan, Wiradjuri, Wolof, Xavante, Xhosa, Yapese, Yindjibarndi, Zapotec, Zarma, Zazaki, Zulu, Zuni

FILE FORMATS:

Desktop: OTF
Web: WOFF, WOFF2, EOT
App: OTF (TTF available upon request)

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