

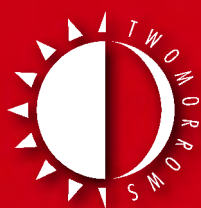
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THIS JUNE: MONSTER MASH

The Creepy, Kooky Monster Craze In America, 1957-1972

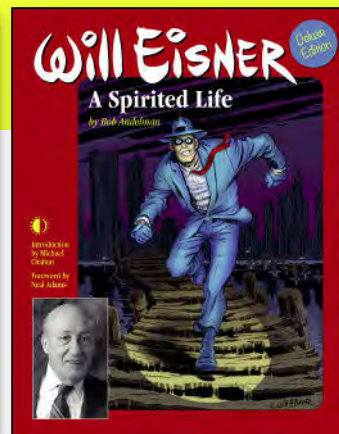
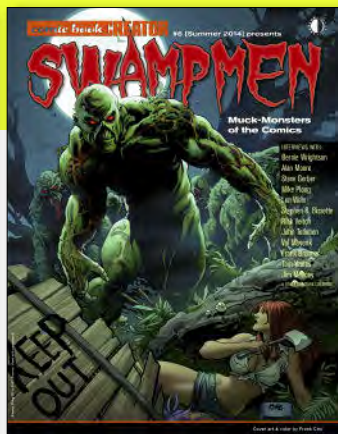
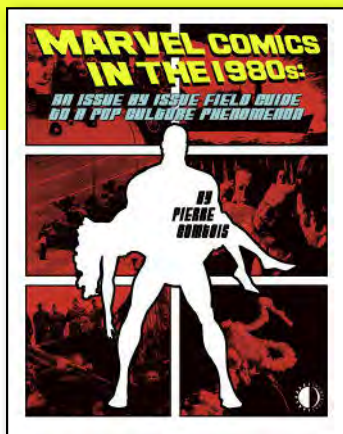
Time-trip back to the frightening era of 1957-1972, when monsters stomped into the American mainstream! Once Frankenstein and fiends infiltrated TV in 1957, an avalanche of monster magazines, toys, games, trading cards, and comic books crashed upon an unsuspecting public. This profusely illustrated full-color hardcover covers that creepy, kooky Monster Craze through features on Famous Monsters of Filmland magazine, the #1 hit "Monster Mash," Aurora's model kits, TV shows (Shock Theatre, The Addams Family, The Munsters, and Dark Shadows), "Mars Attacks" trading cards, Eerie Publications, Planet of the Apes, and more! It features interviews with JAMES WARREN (Creepy, Eerie, and Vampirella magazines), FORREST J ACKERMAN (Famous Monsters of Filmland), JOHN ASTIN (The Addams Family), AL LEWIS (The Munsters), JONATHAN FRID (Dark Shadows), GEORGE BARRIS (monster car customizer), ED "BIG DADDY" ROTH (Rat Fink), BOBBY (BORIS) PICKETT (Monster Mash singer/songwriter) and others, with a Foreword by TV horror host ZACHERLEY, the "Cool Ghoul." Written by MARK VOGEL (author of "The Dark Age"). SHIPS JUNE 2015!

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CONTENTS

ANYTHING GOES!

OPENING SHOT	2
(way to go, Marvel!)	
HEAD-TO-HEAD	3
(Alex Toth vs. Jack Kirby—who's the real King of Comics?)	
UNEARTHED	11
(planet of the Jack-An-Apes)	
HOW2?	14
(Kirby's slashes and squiggles examined)	
GALLERY	18
(Jimmy Olsen vs. Kamandi)	
KIRBY OBSCURA	32
(original, or Archive Edition?)	
JACK KIRBY MUSEUM PAGE	34
(visit & join www.kirbymuseum.org)	
JACK F.A.Q.s	35
(in lieu of Mark Evanier's regular column, here's his 2014 Kirby Tribute Panel from Comic-Con)	
KIRBY KINETICS	48
(Norris Burroughs on Kirby's long, cosmic journey)	
INTERVIEW	54
(a 1987 radio interview with Jack, and special guest Stan Lee)	
INCIDENTAL ICONOGRAPHY	73
(Popeye goes socko)	
RETROSPECTIVE	74
(a look at key moments in Kirby's 1950s career)	
ANIMATTERS	76
(Kirby: King of Beasts)	
KIRBY AS A GENRE	82
(Kirby hits the stage)	
FOUNDATIONS	85
(Surf's up)	
COLLECTOR COMMENTS	91
PARTING SHOT	96

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THE JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR

ISSUE #65, SPRING 2015



This issue's cover is Jack's unused Hulk Marvelmania poster art. It seems Stan Lee felt that too many of the Marvelmania posters were all by Jack, so he chose to have some of them redrawn by other artists who were working on those strips at the time, such as John Romita redrawing Kirby's Spidey poster. So Herb Trimpe got the nod, but unlike Romita (who completely re-drew Jack's), Herb only redrew the main figure, leaving the rest all-Jack. For more on Herb's career at Marvel, check out our new bio The Incredible Herb Trimpe, on sale in July.



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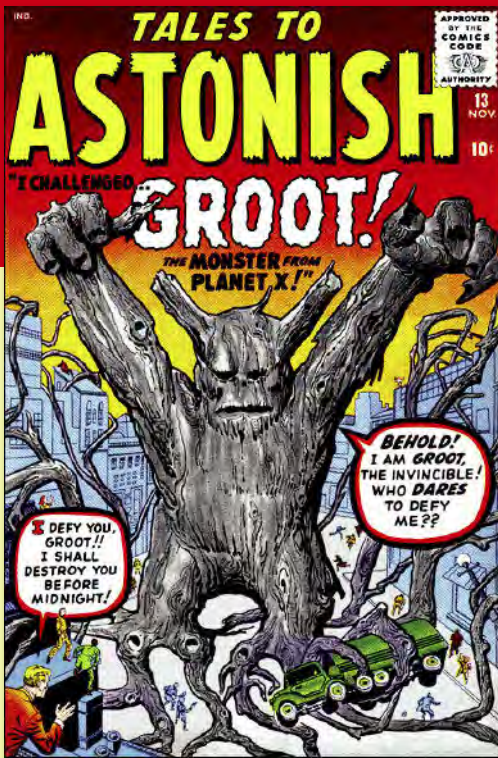
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"WE ARE GROOT!"

OR: "WAY TO GO, MARVEL & DISNEY!"



by editor John Morrow



(above and below) Tales to Astonish #13 (Nov. 1960) featured the first appearance of Groot, a character that no one would've believed could become the break-out star of a big budget Hollywood blockbuster—or my daughter Lily's new favorite Jack Kirby character, thanks to last summer's *Guardians of the Galaxy* film.

I mailed the first copies of *The Jack Kirby Collector* #1 on September 5, 1994, not knowing whether it would catch on, and certainly having no idea it would become such an important part of my life. But the anticipation I had that day is nothing compared to what I felt 20 years later, almost to the day.

On September 26, 2014, after two decades of providing this forum for fans to promote Jack Kirby's accomplishments and persuade others that he was worthy to be proclaimed the co-creator of the Marvel Comics Universe, it was officially announced: Marvel Comics (owned by parent company Disney) and the Kirby family had reached an out-of-court settlement that would ensure credit for Kirby on his co-creations, as well as some long-deserved financial compensation for his family.

We're already feeling some effects. As early as last October we saw the addition of a "Created by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby" line on titles featuring the X-Men, Fantastic Four and others (with a "Created by Joe Simon and Jack Kirby" line accompanying Captain America's appearances). A credit is also on such current Marvel television shows as *Agents of SHIELD* and the *Agent Carter* mini-series, and is expected on upcoming big-budget films such as *Avengers 2*.

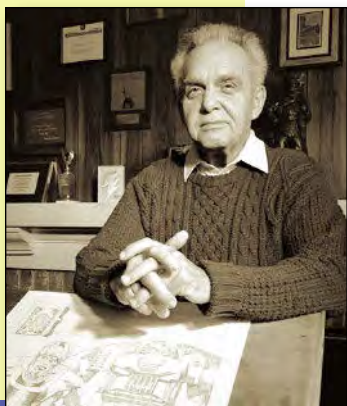
At long last, the fight is over. It wasn't easy, and it wasn't pretty. We could talk for another twenty years about who was right or wrong, and whether it should've taken a possible Supreme Court showdown for it to happen. Instead, I say let's give credit where it's due: to the Kirby family for toughing it out to make sure their patriarch's legacy is permanently honored, and to Marvel and Disney for doing what I firmly believe was the right thing.

All of which leaves me and this magazine in an interesting position. You could argue that a big part of this mag's reason for existence is now moot, since after all, Jack's going to be credited from now on. But while the general public might happen to stay for the end credits of a movie like *Guardians of the Galaxy* and see the line "Groot created by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby," that doesn't mean they—and future comic book readers—will have any idea of the full scope of Jack's work. And that's where you, and I, and this magazine, come in. I had a small part in this settlement happening, and so did you readers, by following this magazine, contributing art and articles, and talking up Jack's achievements.

As was said at the end of *GotG*, we are Groot. And Captain America. And Orion. And Kamandi. And Devil Dinosaur. And yes, even Paranex, the Fighting Fetus. (Hey, if Groot can become a household name, there's hope for any of Jack's creations.) Hats off to all Lee and Kirby fans, as well as Marvel and Disney. We should all feel proud today. ★

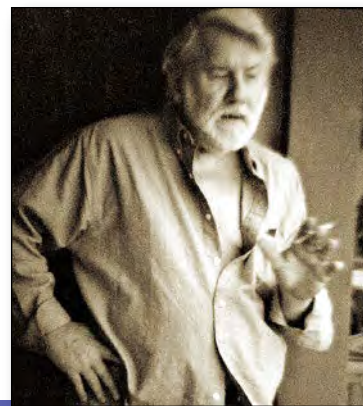
(While I've shelved my plans for a chronological examination of Jack and Stan's quoted comments about their respective contributions at Marvel, I will continue to run both men's comments about the topic, in the interest of setting the historical record straight, but I'll continue to make every effort to keep the discussion civil and respectful to both men.)





Comic books are a true American art form that have been produced by some of the greatest creators ever to hold a pencil or paintbrush. While many can be considered geniuses for the sheer amount of brilliance they have created, two names rise above all the others due to the unparalleled influence they possess. Those two titans of the medium are none other than Jack Kirby and Alex Toth. Their work has stretched decades throughout many genres and continues to inspire creators and fans alike. But which one has the right to be called the one true “King” of comic books?

For the first time, Jack Kirby and Alex Toth will be analytically compared head-to-head as we try to discover the truth. Enjoy a comprehensive and fresh look at these two legends in a way that is reminiscent of the super-hero excitement that they are so famous for.



HEAD-TO-HEAD

JACK KIRBY VS. ALEX TOTH

The definitive examination proving who's the real King of Comics, by John “The MEGO Stretch Hulk” Cimino

(above left and right) Jack Kirby and Alex Toth in their twilight years. Toth's work was grounded in reality (right, from Detective Comics #442, Sept. 1974), while Kirby's imagination roamed the cosmos (below, from the 2001: A Space Odyssey Treasury Edition, 1976).

(next two pages) Kirby's and Toth's approaches to fight scenes were very different, but equally effective. Journey Into Mystery #112 (January 1965) vs. Adventure Comics #418 (April 1972).

TO THOSE WHO WOULD BE CROWNED KING

Genius: extraordinary intellectual power especially as manifested in creative activity.

Genius. A word we hold for those who make such an impact on the world that they inspire generations for years to come. No matter what field someone is in, the ones that excel the furthest and leave a lasting impact on others are considered a *genius* in some way. They are the ones who think outside the box and follow their own paths, carving an impression that lives on well after they are gone. This is what every creator truly strives for.

In the world of comic book creators, there are a select few who can be called a *genius*. They are the creators that defined the field on such a high level that all the creators that have come after them, look to their work for inspiration. Some of these creative *geniuses* are (in no particular order): Stan Lee, Steve Ditko, Julius Schwartz, Carl Barks, Robert Crumb, Gil Kane, Bill Finger, Will Eisner, John Buscema, Harvey Kurtzman, John Romita Sr., Wally Wood, Milton Caniff, Doug Wildey, Harold Foster, Frank Miller, Alan Moore, Barry Windsor-Smith, Frank Frazetta, Jim Steranko, Joe Kubert, Neal Adams, and possibly the two most influential comic creators of all time, Jack Kirby and Alex Toth! For when it comes to pure visceral creativity and total impact on the industry, these two titans of the field have no equal.

WHEN YOU ENTERED THE CITY DARKNESS... WHEN YOU SPARKED THOSE WHO WOULD PREY UPON OTHERS... WHEN YOU ARE ALONE... PREPARED FOR THE SOUNDS OF VIOLENCE... OF FIRE... BUT GENTLE FROM THE TWO WISDOM... NATURE... OF A DIFFERENT... FROM A WHOLELY WHITE-BLISHED... OF A WHOLE... ENDER OVER A HALF-CENTURY AGO... CAN ANYONE BE PREPARED FOR THIS NIGHT...?



Jack Kirby has always been considered “The King” of comics because he took heroic storytelling to a new level. He established a lot of the theories for layout and pacing that became ubiquitous. In that regard, he was instrumental in taking comic books away from their strip roots and toward their own thing. With his unmatched creativity, imagination and dynamism, Kirby made these costumed heroes “Super”! And then he took us to places that we never thought possible, that we never thought could ever exist, and we always wanted to go back for more.

Alex Toth was dubbed “The Artists’ Artist” due to his level of simplistic art, character concepts and unparalleled style of storytelling. He was a gruff perfectionist that wouldn’t expect anything less than the best from himself and others. After he left comics and went into the animation field, his ability to design whole new concepts and storyboarding grew even more legendary, to the point that the industry was never the same.

Both of these creators at their best are unmatched by their peers. When you look at their bodies of work today, you can still see their lasting impact on comics, cartoons and creations. When you ask creators who were some of their biggest influences, chances are Jack Kirby or Alex Toth will be on their lists. How could they not be? These two creators have become *the* standard and that will never change. Here are two examples of their prestige by others.

The New York Times, in a Sunday op-ed piece written more than a decade after his death, on Jack Kirby:

"He created a new grammar of storytelling and a cinematic style of motion. Once-wooden characters cascaded from one frame to another—or even from page to page—threatening to fall right out of the book into the reader's lap. The force of punches thrown was visibly and explosively evident. Even at rest, a Kirby character pulsed with tension and energy in a way that makes movie versions of the same characters seem static by comparison."

Journalist Tom Spurgeon on Alex Toth:

"He had an almost transcendent understanding of the power of art as a visual story component, that he is one of the handful of people who could seriously enter into Greatest Comic Book Artist of All-Time discussions, and a giant of 20th Century cartoon design."

Although I loved their art as a young kid reading comics and watching cartoons, I didn't know why I always returned to their work time and time again. There was just something about it that drew me in. As I grew older and became more aware, I got educated by studying them and their work (a 20-year ordeal). I noticed that they were so admired and heralded by their peers but yet, so vastly different in art styles. Since both of their styles intrigued me, I became curious to find out which one really made more of an impact on the world of comics and popular fiction. Who was truly better at their peak? Who was more influential? Who was more creative? It kinda turned into an obsession of mine... I had to know who has the right to be called the *true* "King" of comics! In order to find out that answer, I had to compare them and stack their talents up against each other head-to-head.

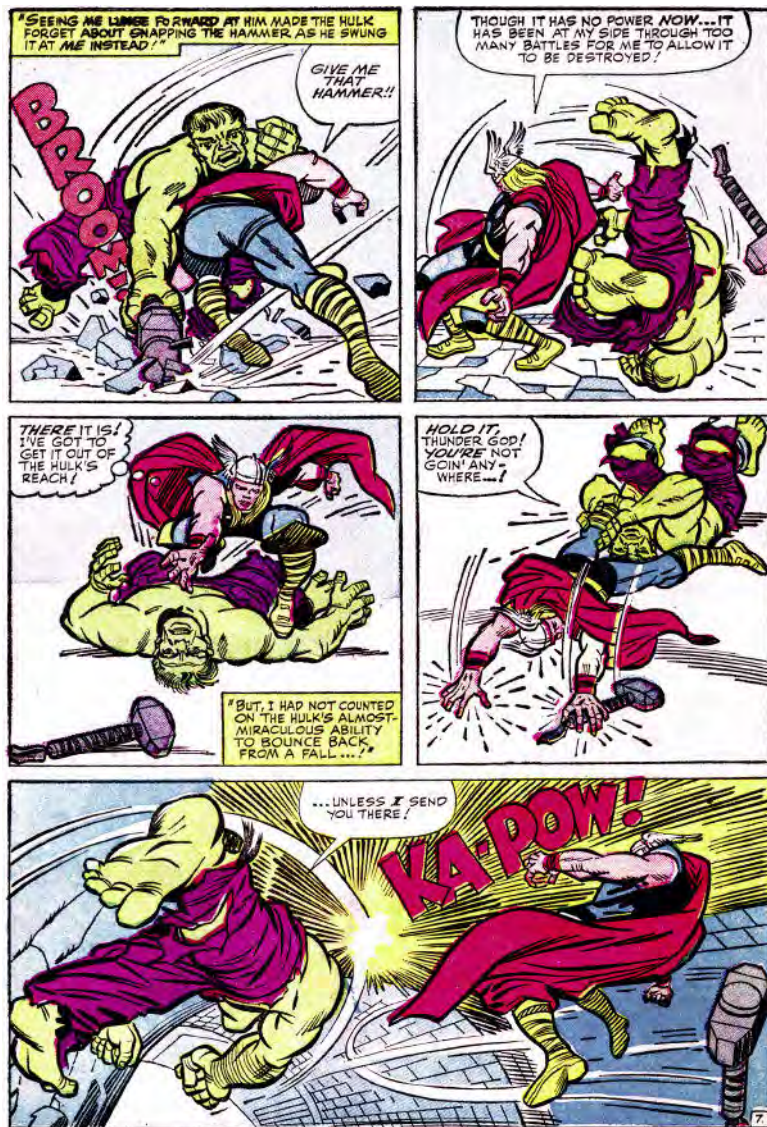
Evaluating and comparing these two genius creators can be purely subjective, especially to their fans—because let's face it, fanboys think that their creator of choice is the best at everything. Hey, I get it, but it's not really the truth (and I pride myself on the truth). If you take a step back and compare each artist based on their greatest strengths and weaknesses, an answer can be found somewhere in the middle. I know this won't be easy, but I want an answer. And just to show the readers how difficult this is, see for yourself how both artists compare to each other with similar action sequences shown in the examples on these two pages. Both are literally flawless... how do you compare perfection?

I didn't write this article to disrespect either of these great creators. Truth be told, they are *both* my heroes (along with Stan Lee)! I couldn't tell you how much their works have entertained and inspired me throughout my life. It also saddens me that I never got a chance to meet either of them, to thank them for everything they've given to me. So here is my chance. I hope you readers will enjoy it as well, because this is a monumental task that is a true labor of love.

Without further ado, let's take an analytically-charged in-depth look at Jack Kirby and Alex Toth, the two titans of comic book creators, and find out who is *really* the best of the best! KAAA-POWWW!

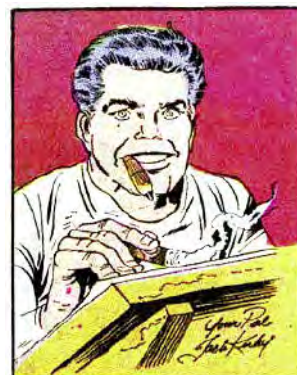
TALE OF THE TAPE

Born Jacob Kurtzberg in New York City, Jack Kirby is regarded by comics historians and fans alike as one of the major innovators



and most influential creators in the history of the comic book medium (he's been dubbed the "William Blake" of comics). He entered into the nascent comic industry in the 1930s in which he drew various comic features under different pen names, ultimately settling on "Jack Kirby." In 1940, he and writer/editor Joe Simon created the incredibly popular character Captain America for Timely Comics (Marvel Comics). During the rest of the 1940s, the highly prolific Simon and Kirby team created numerous characters for both Timely and National (now DC) Comics.

After serving in World War II (fighting under General George S. Patton and almost losing both his legs due to frostbite in the famous battle of Bastogne), Kirby returned to comics and worked in a variety of genres. He produced work for a number of publishers, including DC Comics, Harvey Comics, Hillman Periodicals and Crestwood Publications, where he and Simon created the genre of romance comics. They also launched their own short-lived comic company, Mainline Publications. Kirby ultimately went on his own and found himself at Timely's 1950s iteration, Atlas Comics, soon to become Marvel Comics. There, in the 1960s, he and





writer/editor Stan Lee co-created many of Marvel's major characters (widely considered some of the greatest fictional characters ever), including the Fantastic Four, Iron Man, Thor, Silver Surfer, the X-Men, the Avengers, the Hulk and many others, to give birth to the Marvel Universe. Cranking out hit after hit, the duo quickly became the greatest writer/artist team in the history of the medium. Nicknamed simply as "King" by Lee (and his peers) for his unmatched creativity and work, Kirby still felt treated unfairly. Despite the high sales and critical acclaim of the Lee/Kirby titles, Kirby left the company in 1970 for rival DC Comics.

There Kirby created his Fourth World saga, which spanned several comic titles. While these series proved commercially unsuccessful and were eventually canceled, the Fourth World's New Gods have continued as a significant part of the DC Universe to this day with many legendary characters coming out of it, such as the villainous Darkseid. Kirby returned to Marvel Comics briefly in the mid-to-late 1970s, then ventured into television animation and independent comics. In his later years, Kirby began receiving great recognition in the mainstream press for his career accomplishments, and in 1987 he was one of the three inaugural inductees to the Will Eisner Comic Book Hall of Fame.

Kirby was married to Rosalind "Roz" Goldstein in 1942. They had four children, and remained married until his death from heart failure in 1994, at the age of 76. The Jack Kirby Award and Jack Kirby Hall of Fame were named in his honor.

Born in New York City, Alex Toth did much of his comic book work outside the mainstream of super-hero comics, concentrating instead on such subjects as hot rod racing, romance, horror, and action-adventure with characters like Zorro from the 1940s through the 1980s. He is widely recognized for his unparalleled animation and character designs for Hanna-Barbera Studios throughout the 1960s and 1970s. His work included *Johnny Quest*, *Super Friends*, *Space Ghost*, *The Herculoids*, and *Birdman* among many others that continue to inspire animators and creators to this day.



Toth's talent was noticed early on as a teacher from his poster class in junior high took time to urge him to devote himself to art. Enrolling in the High School of Industrial Arts, Toth studied illustration and soon sold his first paid freelance work at the age of 15, illustrating stories for *Heroic* magazine. Although he initially dreamed of doing newspaper strips, he found the industry "dying off" and moved into comic books.

After graduating from the High School of Industrial Arts in 1947, Toth was hired by Sheldon Mayer at National (DC) Comics. He worked there for five years, drawing the Golden Age versions of The Flash, Dr. Mid-Nite, Green Lantern and The Atom. For a brief time in 1950, Toth was able to realize his dream of working on newspaper comic strips by ghost-illustrating *Casey Ruggles* with Warren Tufts.

In 1952 Toth ended his contract with DC Comics and moved to California. During that time he worked on crime, war and romance comics for Standard Comics and his ability to tell a good story started to become unprecedented. In 1954, Toth was drafted into the U.S. Army and stationed in Tokyo, Japan. While in Japan, he wrote and drew his own weekly adventure strip, "Jon Fury," for the base paper *Depot Diary*.

Returning to the United States in 1956, Toth settled in the Los Angeles area and worked primarily for Dell Comics until 1960. At that time, Toth became art director for the *Space Angel* animated science-fiction show. This led to him being noticed (and hired) by Hanna-Barbera Studios, where he worked as a storyboard and design artist creating legendary works on some of their most famous super-hero cartoons, and single-handedly reinvented the entire process. He continued to work in comic books, illustrating contributions for Warren magazines' *Eerie*, *Creepy* and *The Rook*. During the end of his nearly sixty-year professional career, he was so revered by his peers that he became known simply as the "Artists' Artist."

Toth died at his drawing table on May 27, 2006 from a heart attack, at the age of 77. He is survived by his four children.

COMPARING CREATIVE GENIUS

In all honesty, comparing Jack Kirby and Alex Toth head-to-head is a very difficult task because both artists are so creatively and stylistically different. Kirby's art was more based around originality while Toth's art was more about refinement. Here is a story from DC Comics editor and art director Mark Chiarello discussing a conversation he had with Alex Toth when he met Jack Kirby for the first time. This is a perfect example on how vastly different these two creators are:

"Alex Toth told me... that when he moved to California, he got a call from Jack Kirby. He knew Jack's work, but he never met him. Jack said to him, 'Alex, this is Jack Kirby, I really love your work. So many people say



that you and I are really the two main guys in the industry, and everybody else falls into place behind us. Whether or not that's true, I want to learn why you do certain things. I want to know what you do. Why don't you come over?" It was a short drive to Kirby's house, Alex jumped into his car and went over. Roz Kirby (Jack's wife) made hamburgers while Alex and Jack sat by the pool talking. Jack said, 'Okay, I'm going to tell you exactly what I do and why I do it.' And for the next 35 to 40 minutes, Jack spoke about everything he knew about his art, comic books and storytelling. And Alex said to me, 'Mark, I didn't understand a freaking word he said. And then I started my 45 minutes and I could tell by the look on Jack's face that he didn't understand a word I said. Our approaches were so different. So I thanked him for the hamburger, thanked his wife, and I got up and left.'" (From the Space Ghost Complete Series DVD feature "Simplicity: The Life and Art of Alex Toth.")

With that said, readers need to understand that this face-off isn't just about style, it's about their brilliance. I compared each artist by analytically breaking their work down into seven specific categories: *Storytelling*, *Versatility/Detail*, *Dynamism*, *Simplicity*, *Imagination*,



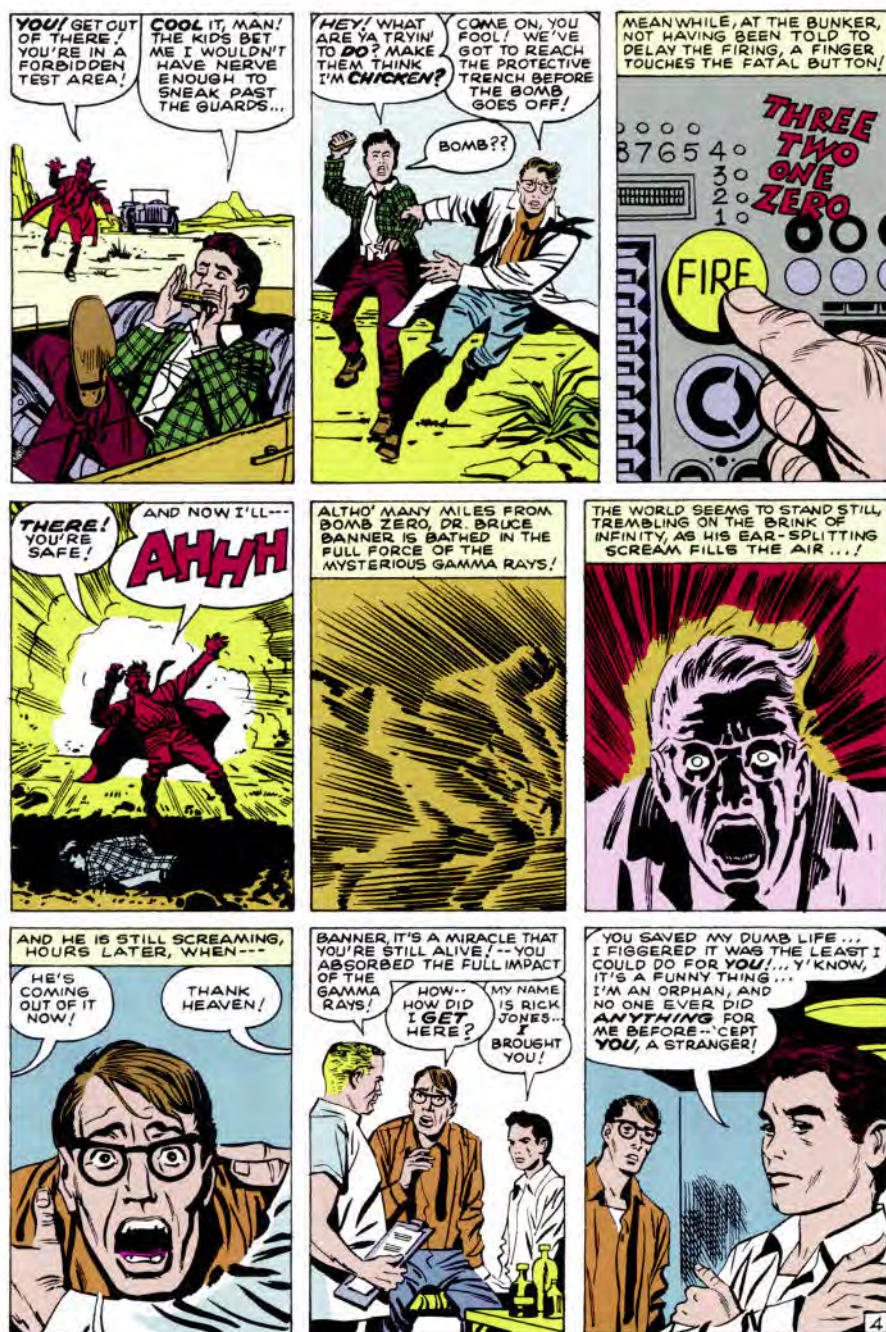
Prolificness, and *Influence*. I will explain how they stack up to each other in that category, who has the edge and why (not to mention, I put in a few pictures of their work as examples). Then I will do an overall analysis at the end, and try to come up with a definitive answer.

1. STORYTELLING

This is the category that separates an artist and a comic book artist. To be a great comic book artist, you must adapt the script of the writer and interpret it through art and panels (known as sequential art). When it comes to telling a story with art, Kirby and Toth are simply the best of the best. They have the visual eye of a movie director, showing exactly what is needed in the comic panel to stimulate the eye and subconsciousness within the reader. They are both so enormously influential at their ability to tell a story that it is truly impossible to determine which artist has the edge. Both are literally as good as it gets. **RESULT: EVEN**

2. VERSATILITY/DETAIL

First off, both artists are completely versatile; there is not much (if anything) that they cannot draw. Kirby had such talent that most of the time he came up with his own interpretations of a particular subject. Toth on the other hand was a master at studying everything he could. He was obsessed with knowing every detail about things, how it worked, how it moved, etc. He was known to have thousands upon thousands of books and magazines in his house (he was a huge fan of *National Geographic* magazine). And when Toth drew something, it was as perfect as it could be, down to the most minute detail. Kirby wasn't like this at all; he was more of a visceral artist that came up with impressions of things on his own. In this area, Kirby was too imaginative, too creative and too dynamic! So in essence, his versatility and detail lacked due to his style, especially when compared to Alex Toth. Kirby was known to have a tough time drawing the specific details on things, most noticeably on the characters Spider-Man and Superman (the two biggest super-heroes ever). It was the inkers that had to help him out considerably to get them right. When a drawing called for something more



(this spread) An example of multi-panel storytelling from each artist. Kirby used a slam-bang, in-your-face approach. Toth, on the other hand, took a more subtle approach, eschewing Kirby's traditional layout, and letting the word balloons become an integral part of the design. Hulk #1 (1962) vs. Detective Comics #442 (1974).



concrete, Toth was better at it because that was his style. This is a big reason why Kirby never reached the level Toth did in the animation field.

Kirby's ability was much better suited for a comic book, while Toth's style could excel at both. **RESULT: EDGE ALEX TOTH**

3. DYNAMISM

When it comes to pure dynamic expression and power in art, *no one* is on the level of Jack Kirby. Exaggeration is the most time-honored technique for dynamism in comic book art and Kirby was able to hone this skill more than any artist before or since. While this ability may have hindered Kirby in the *Versatility/Detail* category above, this is where he excels. Just about every panel Kirby drew (even if characters were just standing around or sitting) screamed with electricity and motion. It was almost as if the page itself couldn't contain the art due to the unbridled power it radiated. It was with this skill that Kirby made heroes "super" and comic battles "slugfests." While Toth was grounded in reality and detailed-oriented, he lacked the explosiveness that Kirby could create. **RESULT: EDGE JACK KIRBY**



4. SIMPLICITY

Where Kirby excels at being the most dynamic artist ever, being subtle was not one of his strong points. As for Alex Toth, he was a total master of minimalism. He was a no-frills artist who stripped out any and everything from a picture that wasn't necessary to get his point across; it was because of this exhaustive approach that Toth was such an incredible storyteller. It's also this level of simplicity that changed the entire industry of animation as well because nobody could do it better or as meticulously. Kirby was never simple—his art and perspectives were in different area codes. Sometimes there was so much going on in a picture that it was hard for the reader to take it all

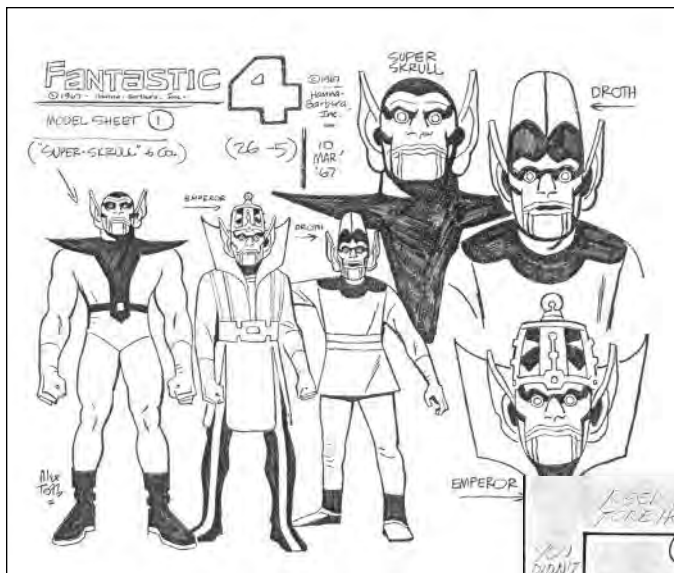


in—they had to step back and look at it for a few minutes to get it. Toth was so excruciatingly precise, with so few lines, that you could see exactly what his picture was from just a glance. **RESULT: EDGE ALEX TOTH**

5. IMAGINATION

When you look closely at both artists' bodies of work, you can see how much imagination they both possessed. They were able to come up with ideas and concepts that were so far ahead of their peers that it was truly amazing. Toth had come up with some of the best character designs, spaceships and worlds ever to come out of a Saturday morning cartoon. About 90% of all Hanna-Barbera's action-adventure toons from the '60s and '70s were designed by Toth himself.





America in the 1940s was completely different from the way he drew romance and monster comics in the 1950s. Then in the 1960s at Marvel when he co-created the *Fantastic Four*, he went on a creative binge producing his best work ever! And even more incredible, if you look at his work from 1961 through 1966, it's totally different and better every time... *and this is 30 years down the line from when he became a comic book artist!* For someone to have that much intense creativity, for that long and for that many pages into his career, is unprecedented. **RESULT: EDGE JACK KIRBY**

7. INFLUENCE

Both artists have legions of fans and their influence is legendary; nobody can deny that. But Alex Toth is an interesting case because his impression on other creators goes majorly unnoticed by the masses (and sometimes even by the creators themselves). Jack Kirby

And if it wasn't, he still had a hand in it. But if you check out all the characters and worlds that Toth came up with, they still pale in comparison to what Jack Kirby thought up and put on paper. To be honest, as good as Toth was, it isn't even close. Kirby was a master of creation and concepts that were so far above any artist in the history of comics that it could be considered a super-power. Although Kirby did create some legendary concepts for DC Comics in the 1970s, Stan Lee was the guy who utilized Kirby's imagination better than anyone else ever did, in the 1960s. Lee would plant a small idea into Kirby's head and then let him run with it, and the results were always extraordinary! Together, they brought new life into the dying field of comic books and came up with characters and ideas that not only saved the industry, but cannot be matched by any other creative team in the history of the medium! Jack Kirby created just about the entire visual look of the Marvel Universe and nobody, not even Alex Toth, can match that. **RESULT: EDGE JACK KIRBY**

6. PROLIFICNESS

Both of these artists have had long and illustrious careers and have produced enormous catalogs of work that crossed over many genres. But Toth had a habit of bouncing around from comic publisher to comic publisher; he never really established himself on any titles before having a healthy stay in the animation field (to his credit, that's what he liked to do). Jack Kirby on the other hand produced many legendary title runs, most famously his uninterrupted 102-issue stint on *The Fantastic Four* with Stan Lee. He was a tireless workhorse that usually started drawing by noon and worked until 4:00 in the morning, seven days a week without any holidays, and amazingly, he never missed a deadline. During the 1940s he was known to draw up to an incredible five pages a day! Kirby was so insanely prolific that he is the only artist that was the top man in his field within three decades, and able to reinvent himself each time. The way he drew *Captain*



(above) Kirby pencils from *Fantastic Four* #90 (Sept. 1969), page 20. Jack originated the Skrulls, and it was up to Toth to adapt Kirby's design for use in the 1960s *Fantastic Four* cartoon series (top left).



Kirby's pencils for DC Comics Presents #84 (1985), which started as a Toth Challengers tale (see next page).

doesn't have this problem. When artists (as well as animators and movie directors) come into the entertainment industry and want to capture the "Supa-Dupa" magic and feel of super-heroes, they are first told to look at what Jack Kirby brought to the table. It's a no-brainer: all novices should become educated on his explosiveness, excitement, and raw power because he is simply *the* master at it! Kirby was the artist that put comic book art into the stratosphere and everybody pays homage to him for it (even Alex Toth himself). And with super-heroes bigger today than ever before with blockbuster movies and merchandise, you can still see Kirby's *influence* on everything. The only other man who I can think of that can match Jack Kirby in influence in the world of comics and super-heroes is his partner Stan Lee. **NUFF SAID! RESULT: EDGE JACK KIRBY**

OVERALL

After comparing these two legends in this write-up, who do you think should be crowned the true "King" of comics? While Alex Toth has the edge when it comes to animation (and could be considered

the "King" in that field), it still doesn't match up to the entire impact that Jack Kirby created in the world of super-heroes. His style, skill and limitless imagination were perfectly built for it. His concepts and ideas are so incredibly popular that it's making Hollywood *billions* today! He just can't be compared to anyone else for sheer creative output, resulting in so many enduring characters. Stan Lee dubbed Jack "The King of Comics" as a nickname back in the 1960s, but he was also telling readers the truth. Even some of the greatest creators ever went to Kirby for advice and tips to be shown how to make a true super-hero comic or layout. Lee was the first to tell his artists to give him action, perspective and impact, "the way Kirby does it." That's why Kirby would do the layouts on so many comics for other artists' during the 1960s; his style *was* Marvel Comics and they crushed the competition because of it. In truth, no one comes close and no one ever will.

But I must say that in the twilight of his career, Alex Toth managed to get even better. Most of his work during the 1990s was among his most brilliant and flawless ever. Even before his death in 2006, Toth was cranking out absolute magic and not many other artists can make that claim. Kirby on the other hand, actually slowed down and fizzled a bit at the end of his career, especially in the '80s and '90s before his death in 1994. Regardless, they were both so far ahead of their peers in terms of skill and talent that they could never be seen as anything less than two absolute geniuses.

COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

While Jack Kirby is, and will always be considered "The King of Comics," let's make no mistake, Alex Toth is right up there with him in the creator hierarchy of the greatest comic book artists ever. While this has been about them head-to-head, how about them as a collaborative team? Believe it or not, as long as they were in the comics field, they have only worked with each other on two stories. The first was *X-Men* #12 (1965, below) which saw Kirby do the lay-

outs and Toth do the finished art. Surprisingly, this issue is more renowned for being The Juggernaut's first appearance, rather than the collaboration of two of the best comic book artists ever.

The other issue was *DC Comics Presents* #84 (1985). This comic is a bit odd through and through. First off, Superman teams up with the Challengers of the Unknown, which was unusual. Then Kirby penciled the first two pages and Toth penciled the next seven pages for a flashback sequence. Finally, Kirby penciled the remaining 15 pages to finish the comic. It has been said that the Toth sequence was originally supposed to be a chapter in the Bob Rozakis/Alex Toth series that briefly ran in *Adventure Comics Digest*, and was modified to fit into this story.



Two super artists depict Superman—Toth's Super Friends and Kirby's DC Comics Presents #84 (with interior page by Toth).



While both artists are also known throughout the animation field for their character designs and storyboarding, 1980 saw them pair-up on the Saturday morning Ruby-Spears cartoon *Thundarr the Barbarian*. While the series was created by comics writer Steve Gerber, it was up to Alex Toth to design the three starring characters. Soon after that, Toth left the show and Jack Kirby was hired to design everything else, due to his creation *Kamandi: The Last Boy on Earth*, which *Thundarr* shared post-apocalyptic themes with. If you look closely when watching this toon, you can clearly identify Toth's art on *Thundarr*, Ookla and Ariel and Kirby's art on everything else—it's a real treat for the fans of both creators. Although this cartoon lasted only two seasons with a total of 21 episodes that ran from 1980 until 1982, it still remains a cult classic today.

It should be noted that though they didn't work together, Toth redesigned Kirby's characters for animation on the Hanna-Barbera *Fantastic Four* (1967) cartoon.

THE END?!

Today we speak of Jack Kirby and Alex Toth as two of the true masters in the industry. Their work is the stuff of legend and still continues to inspire others even today. It really doesn't matter which icon you like better—we need to always honor their legacy and give



(bottom left) Toth designed the main characters for the *Thundarr the Barbarian* animated series, and it was Kirby who was left to design the secondary characters and sets. Jack would draw the main characters in storyboard art, as well as a never-used newspaper strip proposal (left center).



thanks for all the years they entertained us. And as my dedication stated above, this is not just for Jack Kirby and Alex Toth, this is for *all* the creators, many who consistently go unrecognized to the masses. We need to remember those who paved the road for everyone today—especially the creators from the 1930s throughout the 1950s who worked long hard hours in complete anonymity for little to no money. Most of them were frowned upon for working in this “embarrassing” field, yet they made magic on every page for making children smile and giving them the ability to dream. You guys are the *real* heroes in my book, and I thank you.

Agree? Disagree? Let's hear it, fanboys! ★

John “THE MEGO STRETCH HULK” Cimino is a Silver and Bronze Age comic, cartoon, and memorabilia expert that helped create the “Hero Envy” webside series, is the host of the Reckless Sidekick “Swass-Cast” and has contributed to the “Hero Envy” comic book—check it out and his blog at heroenvy.com. John also thinks the wizard Shazam really bestowed him with the powers of Captain Marvel, but in reality he's just an obsessed fanboy that loves to play super-heroes with his daughter Bryn. You can contact John at john-stretch@live.com



PLANET OF THE JACK-AN-APES

by Darrell McNeil

As many of you should know by now—and if not, shame on you—I’ve worked as an animator for the last 30 years. I did Scooby-Doo before Scrappy-Doo. I did *Super Friends* in the ’70s—that’s how far back I go. I’ve worked with Alex Toth, Gil Kane, Mike Sekowsky, and of course the great Jack Kirby.

Jack started working in animation in California in 1978 with the *Fantastic Four*. From 1979-85, he was in high demand from studios like Hanna-Barbera and Ruby-Spears (both owned by the same company, Taft Broadcasting). Kirby worked on shows you wouldn’t believe he worked on! He did design work on *Scooby-Doo*, *The New Shmoo*, *The Thing* (with a teenaged Benji Grimm

who presses two half-rings together and says, “Thing Ring, do your thing!”), and even preliminary designs for the *Drak Pack*.

Alex Toth’s *Space Ghost* (1966) was the show that inspired me to become an animator. Getting to work on the new show (1980) was a dream come true. Getting to work on it with Kirby was an added bonus.

I’d often run into Jack while going into H-B to pick up work. He’d always have a ready grin on his face when we met and would say things like, “I can’t believe I got paid this much money to do this work!”

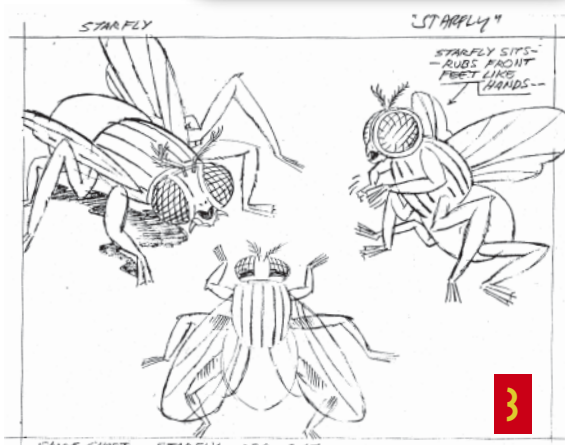
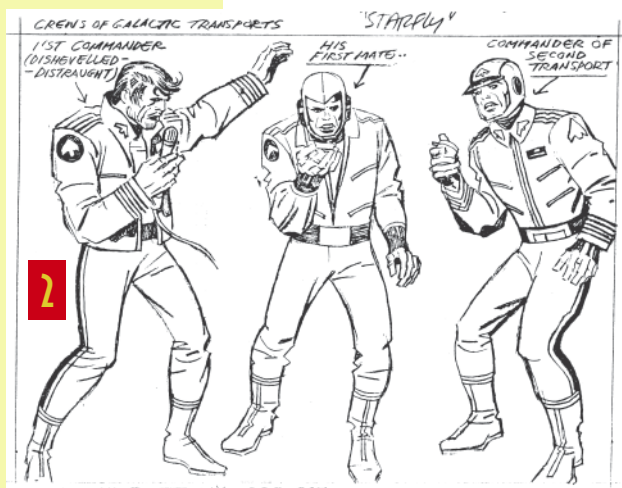
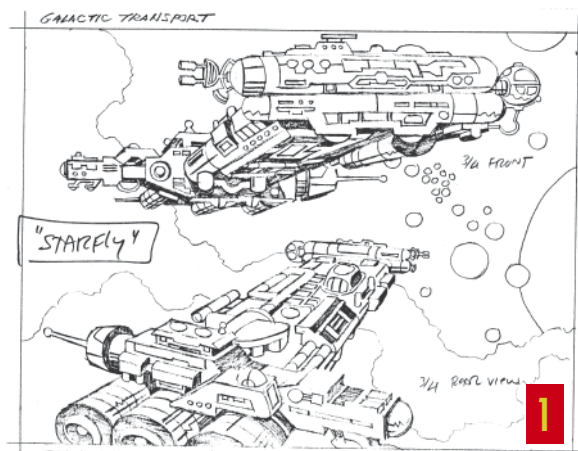
I’d get the King’s designs after they’d been approved by our bosses. Jack’s drawings had to be simplified into animation more so than, say, Alex Toth’s, who knew animation a little bit better than Kirby did (having done it longer), but Kirby’s stuff was excellent, such as these examples from the *Space-Stars* episode “The Starfly,” which first aired September 19, 1981 on NBC-TV.

PLATE 1: The ship you’re seeing was used by the space pilots in Plate 2. Model supervisor Bob Singer wrote “This will be simplified” at the top of Kirby’s design. The Galactic Transport, a beautiful design by Kirby, flew across space with their crew and into trouble to be rescued later. There would be two ships from the same design, actually, because the second plate shows the commander of the second vessel.

PLATE 2: Singer also wrote “for Ruffing only,” at the top. I had a week after the producers approved the King’s designs to lay out the story, using them and the storyboards which



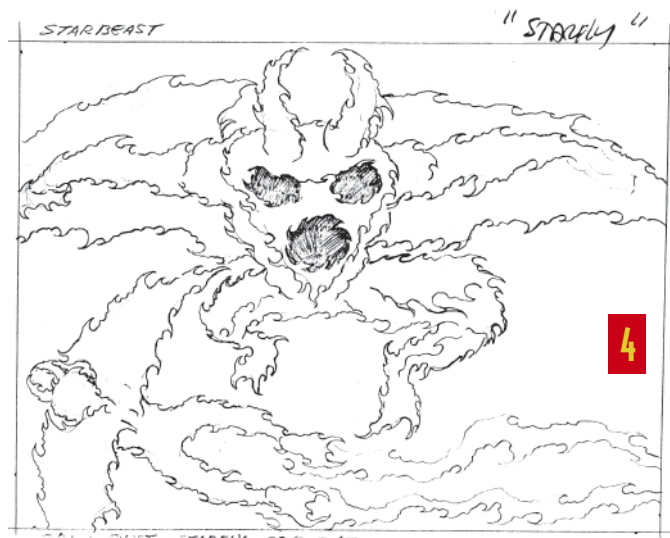
(above) Non-Kirby model sheet for the 1980 *Space Ghost* series in *Space-Stars*.



were being reworked by the model department at the same time! The storyboards were drawn by, among others, Mike Sekowsky. (As you can see, these guys are expecting big trouble!)

PLATE 3: The finished "Starfly" on the cartoon had almost no resemblance to the drawing of Jack's you see here. (But they both had wings!) The model department reworked it a great deal. In fact, they reworked it so much that later on the episode animator accused me of not knowing how to draw! I showed him Jack's original (which you're seeing here) and he went "Oh, ho!" (Actually, he said something else, but this is a family magazine!) Again, Kirby's drawings were wonderful—just sometimes too intricate for Saturday morning fare.

PLATE 4: This piece was fine as it was—and didn't need work at all! The "Starbeast" was a mutated version of the Starfly. The episode began with the Starfly as a pet of Jan and Jace's (Space Ghost's kid pals). Radiation hit it and it wrapped itself into a cocoon. When it reappeared, it became the Starbeast that preyed on starships.



EVERYTHING THAT MAN'S MIND COULD CONCEIVE OF, WAS OUT THERE! NO ADJECTIVE COULD DESCRIBE SOME OF THE HIDDEN SURPRISES IN THAT VAST GALACTIC OCEAN... BUT—READY OR NOT, MAN HAD TO TAKE WHAT HE NEEDED FROM THE UNIVERSE—BY FAIR MEANS OR FOUL... THAT WAS THE MOTTO OF "MULTI-SPATIAL INVESTMENTS— --IF YOU CAN'T TRADE FOR IT-- FIGHT FOR IT!-- BUT GET IT! GAUILLAN'S GORILLAS DID JUST THAT!



J. FENIMORE ROGER (REAR)
FRANKLIN GLASSMAN MAD MAD
HAGRETT

SERGIO
GAUILLAN

(REAR)
BIG JAKE
HOLLISTER

MARVIN
TAYLOR

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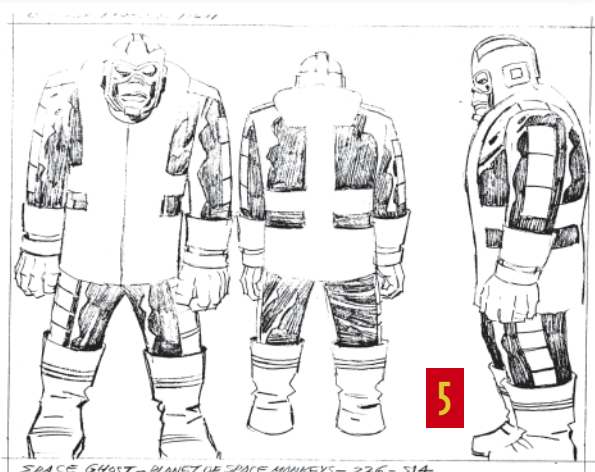


PLATE 5: Blip, the Space Monkey, runs away from Space Ghost and

lands on "The Planet of the Space Monkeys" (a different episode, which first aired October 24, 1981). These warrior apes were servants of the main villain of the entire series, Uglor. (An anecdote: "The Planet of the Space Monkeys" had cities composed of typical, giant hollowed-out trees. Well, by the time I got through with them, the tree-city backgrounds looked more like 'Habitat', the tree-city from Kirby's *Jimmy Olsen* run [#133-134] where the Outsiders lived. So, even when Jack wasn't trying to influence something, he was influencing it. Cool, huh?)



PLATE 6: There were good apes and bad apes on this planet. The gorilla at the far right was a priest. (I named him Judas. "Judas Priest," get it?)

Jack not only worked on the Space Ghost segments (eight minutes long) of the hour-long *Space-Stars* series (Hanna-Barbera, 1980-81), but he

contributed to the *Herculoids*, *Teen Force*, and *Astro and the Space Mutts* series as well. (He had warriors of all types on his mind!) This is a peek into one of the many worlds Jack envisioned, and now you're privy to it, too. ★

(left) While not done for Space Ghost, Jack did monkey around with this unused concept for the galactic group "Gavilan's Gorillas" around the same time, in 1980.

HOW2?

Editor's note: I originally had a different article on this page of my layout file, with the Thor Marvelmania poster in the spot below, since it was about Thor. I later decided to omit that article from this issue, and deleted all the text on this page, leaving only the Thor poster art. Without thinking, I pasted this new article's text here, only to discover the Thor poster was perfect for it, in the exact spot I already had it. Just one of the weird coincidences that have regularly happened over the years, working on TJKC.

When representing the heroic human form, most comic artists draw anatomy, even when, in life, little would be shown clearly. Indeed, many draw heroes with musculature so well defined it's as if they had no skin, let alone clothing. But Kirby doesn't do that. Occasionally, some musculature is hinted at, but usually, he uses his unique slashes and squiggles instead. Why does he do them? What are they? And why do they work so well?

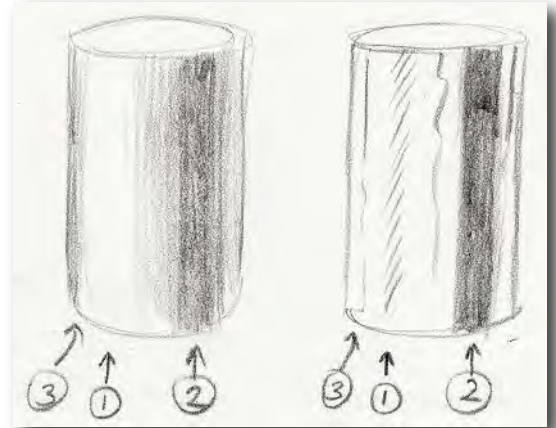
It occurred to me recently there is a simple answer—or at least a simple beginning point for an answer. Allowing for the artistic and creative genius of Kirby, which meant he constantly strayed far and wide from being 'correct' (making any analysis of a 'system' difficult), here I think is what Kirby did.

Rather than drawing heroic anatomy, Kirby was more interested in creating the illusion of solidity by emphasizing highlights and shadow terminator lines!

Here's a preliminary attempt to explain why I think this.

It suddenly occurred to me one day that the marks Kirby used on legs and arms are approximately the same as used when drawing cylinders.

The common way of drawing a cylindrical shape in comics is like this:



On the left is a tonal drawing of a cylinder. On the right is how those tones are often done so they can be inked for comics.

(1) is the feathering for the highlight. Whoever discovered that a feathered black line works well to represent a highlight I can't say, but Kirby used it, as did Wally Wood, John Romita, etc.

(2) is the heaviest shaded part. Where this shadow stops and meets a lighter area is called a 'terminator line'.

(3) is another 'terminator'—a line that represents where the softer left side shadow stops. On the right drawing, there are two more of these lines shown. Many artists never put any of the (3) lines in. Kirby often did. Romita and Wood did too.

Since, on a cylinder, there are many shades of grey, there are any number of 'fuzzy edges' where it is unclear where a dark area stops and becomes a lighter one. So it is all very subjective and entirely at the artists' discretion where (or if) he may put a terminator. So sometimes there might be one terminator and one highlight drawn—other times there might be two 'terminators'.

Occasionally, there is even more than one (1) highlight line as well. Whatever worked.

Now notice that this is basically the same arrangement that Kirby uses on his figures—especially on legs and arms, which are essentially cylindrical. It's all haphazard and changes every time, but very often, there is a heavy line on the shadow side, one or more lighter lines elsewhere, and often a feathered highlight line. But because arms and legs are cylindrical but with all sorts of bumps and uneven areas, the shine/terminator lines he draws are often also bumpy and uneven (which is why they can sometimes look like an attempt at anatomy). The marks are heavily stylized, and no attempt is made to be 'correct', often with multiple lines for added



KIRBY'S

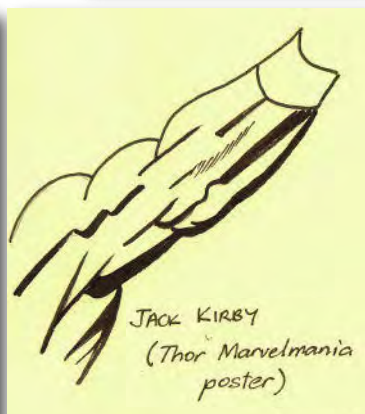
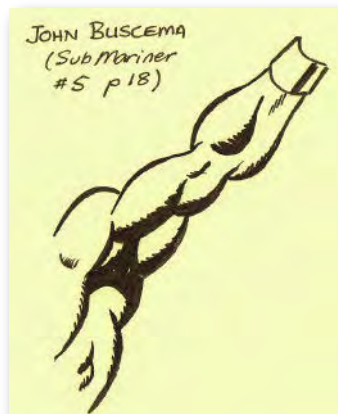
stress. But rather than draw a muscle that is anatomically correct, Kirby's drawing where light and shade may appear most powerfully on the form.

(I'm not saying Kirby is slavishly reproducing any of this—just that this may be a basis for what he's doing. As with his figure proportions, he's exaggerating and beefing things up at every turn.)

Here's an example.

Below left is an outstretched arm drawn by John Buscema for *Sub-Mariner* #5, page 18. As always, Buscema was brilliant at stylized anatomy. Next to it are diagrams of the upper terminator lines (shown in blue) and where highlights would approximately be (shown in red) on that arm. Below that is virtually the same arm position that Kirby drew for the Thor poster done for Marvelmania (previous page), and used most recently on the cover of *Collected Jack Kirby Collector*, Volume 3.

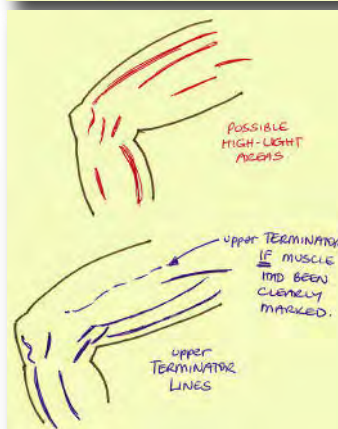
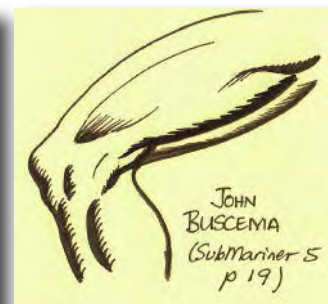
Notice how the lines on Kirby's arm are somewhere near a combination of the terminators and highlights we find on the more 'anatomically correct' arm by Buscema.



Let's try another example.

Below is a powerful leg drawn for the cover of *Fantastic Four* #65 (right). Next to it is another Buscema drawing, of a leg in the same position (from *Sub-Mariner* #5, page 19, shown below). Next to that are diagrams of the terminators and highlights on Buscema's more 'anatomically correct' leg.

Notice, again, how those terminators and highlights are roughly combined to give what Kirby drew; some ignored, others extended. Many superhero artists would have drawn a calf muscle on the lower leg for Ronan, as Buscema has done for Namor, even though such anatomy would never be visible on an armored figure. Kirby didn't draw that. Instead, he put a powerful curved line there to show the form of the lower leg instead. It not only represents shine, but gives the leg a solid appearance, which is why these sort of lines appear even when there would be little 'shine' *per se*.



I believe this 'system' Kirby used is part of the reason why his figures, though often appearing anatomically insane, have a power and solidity that others often don't have. He's creating a solid form, not just representing muscles. And it is why it is often impossible to

SLASHES & SQUIGGLES

An attempt to understand 'em, by Shane Foley

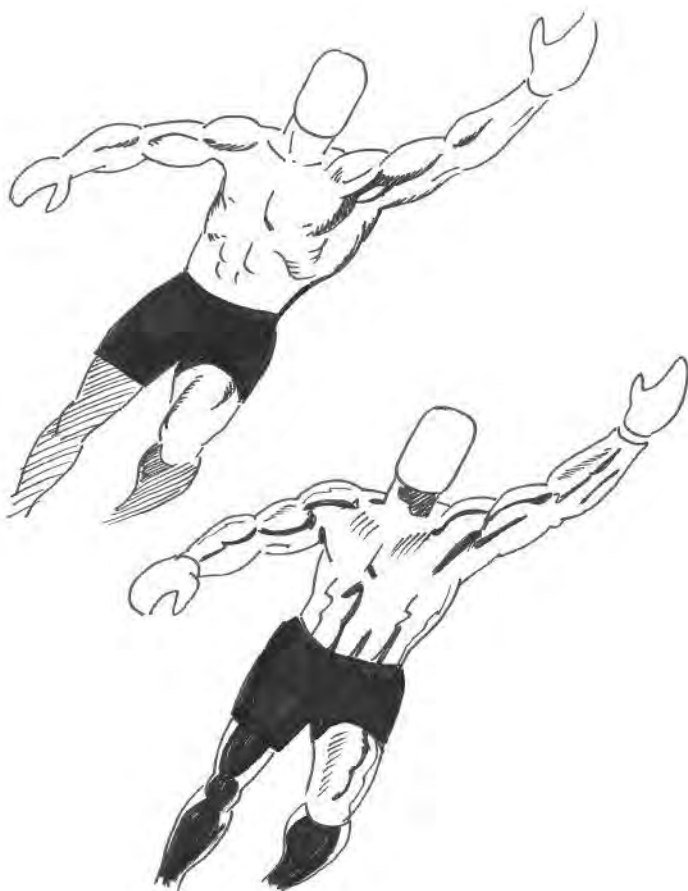
tell whether a Kirby figure is wearing tight clothing or armor, is a human or robotic.

So I would suggest that many of Kirby's lines are suggesting where light and shade meet. Rather than draw muscle shapes, he draws (quickly and approximately) where highlights are, and terminator lines where shadows meet a lighted area.

Lets see if this works from a different angle.

Below is a photo of an athlete, and a drawing (below left) of how most artists would draw him. It's mostly anatomy, much of which is not really visible on a living, moving figure.

Next to that is a drawing indicating where the terminators and highlights seemed to be. Now I am no Jack Kirby and my mind can't possibly produce a drawing as he would do it, but aren't those lines somewhere near where we would expect him to place them? Doesn't it seem likely that these dramatic lines may be the basis of what he saw to produce a dynamic figure drawing?



What of Kirby's famous squiggle under the chin (below, from *Fantastic Four* #67)? Couldn't this be his adaptation of the harsh shadowing that appears on a harshly lit face? Every artist knows the shape of the chin shadow in harsh lighting (right). It looks good and strong and gives good form to the face and chin. It seems to me that Kirby put the shape of the shadow there. It's stylized so that it's not exactly the real shape at all. And there is no other shadow—it's simply a terminator line, showing where the light and shadow meet.



A couple more examples at right (*Fantastic Four* #65, page 17, courtesy of the Jack Kirby Museum's Kirby Digital Archive).

Panel 3—Ronan's legs. The upper leg has the form-giving terminator lines on the underside, another line on the lower leg suggesting the part closest to us, then the feathered line at the top where the shine would be.

His other leg is similar, except that the shine line is not feathered but solid. All the lines suggest light and form, rather than direct anatomy.

Kirby often drew so fast that unnecessary lines appear. On the lower calf, there is the feathered shine on the left, then a line at the closest point to us, then another long way line. Then there's a form-giving terminator line on the right. Either one of those two middle lines, it seems to me, could be eliminated with no detriment to the strength of the figure.

Back to Panel 1: Ronan's leg has a heavy terminator line on the underside, another line at the point of the cylindrical leg closest to us, then a lighter shine line above. On many figures, those two lines are reversed—they are there, not to show anatomy, but to suggest form.

On the lower leg there is a form-giving line at the back of the calf. The slash through the knee to the ankle is harder to understand. It is lines like this that make such 'analysis' difficult. Perhaps it shows that my understanding is wrong? Or is it, as I would suggest, just a quick line with little thought? Maybe if Kirby were to do it again, the line would be bowed more to the right, following the form more precisely.

But hopefully my idea is clear—I believe the lines are mostly suggestive of highlights and terminator lines, there to give solid form to a two-dimensional drawing.

Two final notes:

When Kirby's characters are clothed more loosely, form/shape is shown by clothing pull lines and wrinkles, and there is a significant decrease in the use of these slash lines. The *Fantastic Four* figures were usually defined by Kirby by the wrinkle marks on their bodies. Apparently, Kirby thought those wrinkles gave enough solidity to their form, making his other marks unnecessary. When figures had normal clothing and overalls on, he defined their forms by dynamic stretch lines and folds and wrinkles.



Also, notice that on many of Jack's Golden Age characters, those long black slashes appear on legs and thighs, but when he inked himself, often there was added shading between the slash and the outline. This adds weight to the suggestion that the slash is not simply an anatomy line, but a terminator line of where shadow meets light. When no longer inking, or wanting an inking style which had a lot of cross hatching ('hay' as Joe Simon put it), the terminator line was kept, with the shading, more often than not, being deleted.

So that's how I've come to see it. Any other ideas out there? ★

JIMMY OLSEN VS KAMANDI

Commentary by
Shane Foley

Some people can see similarities and conspiracies anywhere. Very rarely are they right. Now TJKC's esteemed editor has a new one himself. It goes like this: Are there just too many similarities between Kamandi and Kirby's run on Jimmy Olsen to be a coincidence? Say what?

Yes, you read it right. Did these two strips have far more in common than previously thought? I can't say it's ever occurred to me before. But what a revolution in Kirbydom there would be if this is found to be true! His evidence is common subject material in both strips. Following are examples of his best evidence. My task is to see if our ageing editor's newfound theory is right, or whether he's overdosed on too much Kirby yet again. So without further ado, let's see what he has to offer.

(pages 18–19) Exhibits 1a and 1b: Kamandi #29 cover and Jimmy Olsen #147, page 9.

Hmmmm—Supes certainly featured prominently in Olsen—such as in this page from the sequence where he has a brief foray into New Genesis. (Hard to believe DC were unhappy with Supes' face as drawn here by Kirby, isn't it? Looks close to spot-on to me.) But Supes in Kamandi? He nearly, but not quite, appeared but once! (Note that on the published cover, all the background above Kamandi and the ape has been omitted!)

Sorry, John, you haven't been very convincing yet.



BOTH HAD:
SUPERMAN!



(pages 20-21)
Exhibits 2a and 2b:
Kamandi #13, page
13, and Jimmy Olsen
#147, page 4.

You'd expect, with a subject like this, our editor would have chosen Dr. Canus from Kamandi, wouldn't you? But no, he goes for his childhood favorite, Kliklak. Still, you have to admit, that big grasshopper brought our quick-shooting hero to tears when he died, so maybe this is a good call.

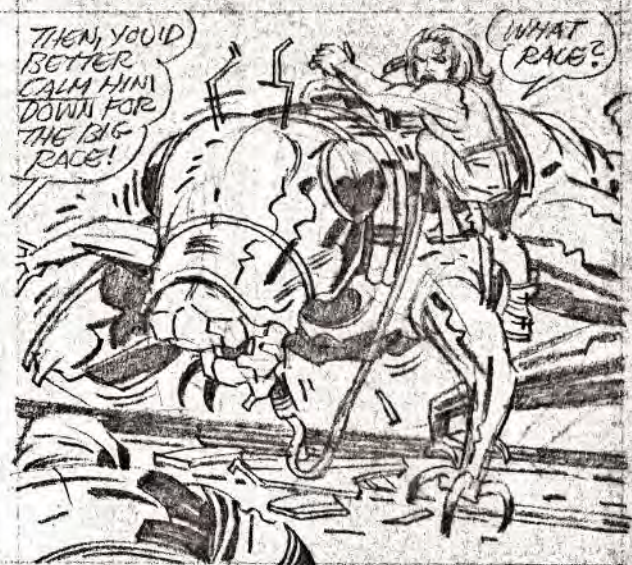
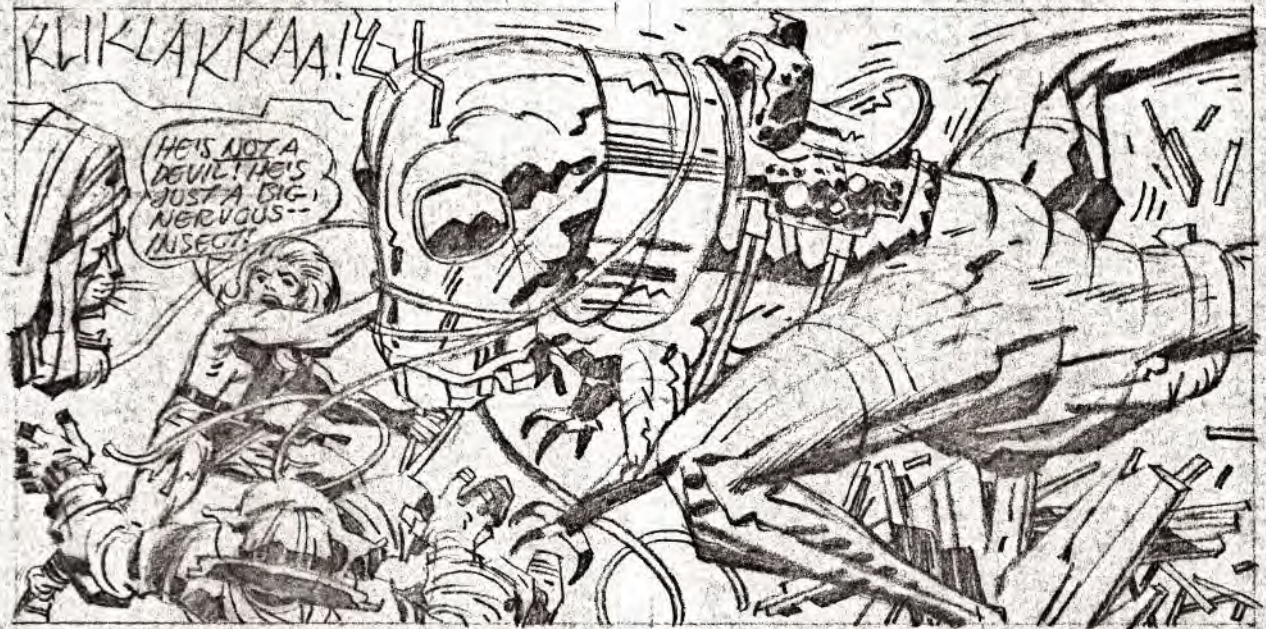
Olsen's 'Best Friend' is—Angry Charlie? At least Scrapper seems to have thought so.

But since both these 'best friends' appeared in only a handful of issues, we can't say our Editor's case is very strong yet.

MAN'S BEST FRIEND!



(pages 22-23) Exhibits 3a and 3b: Kamandi #19, page 1, and Jimmy Olsen #143, page 12.
Now c'mon, John. Kirby put gangsters in everything he did. It's only because the OMAC and Devil Dinosaur series were cut short that there weren't gangsters there too. Bzzzt! Court rules evidence inadmissible! (Note how in the Olsen page Kirby makes even a featureless wooden corridor look exotic and interesting. And when it's followed by a spectacular Kirby bomb it becomes a terrific page. Nice gangsters too!)





WELL! THERE GOES A GOOD HIDEOUT! IF THOSE LITTLE PUNKS COULD FIND IT--SO, CAN THE LAW!!

YA SLEAZY NO-GOOD CRUM! WE'LL CATCH'A! AN HOE-TIE YA, DIS TIME!!



FLYIN A PLACE OF EVIL--THERE ARE HIDDEN COBRAS!!!

HEY! WHERE'RE YOU GOIN'??!! HERE'S NO PLACE TO RUN!

YOU HAD YOUR CHANCE! NOW, INTER-GANG'S CANCELLING YOUR CONTRACT!

BOMBS!! THIS JOINT WAS BOOBY-TRAPPED! --ALL THE TIME!!



AT THAT MOMENT, IN THE CRYPT BELOW, BLOODMOON'S CEMETERY SUPERMAN'S FEIGNED SLEEP COMES TO AN END!!!

WELL, I'VE PLAYED ALONG WITH THE VISITING FIREMEN FROM TRANSILVANE LONG ENOUGH!!

THEY HAVEN'T HARMED JIMMY! SO, PERHAPS, WE CAN DEVOTE SOME TIME TO A DIALOGUE!



SOUND--BLAAAANN!!

ANIMALS RULE THE WORLD!! THIS IS EARTH A.D.
AND, IF YOU WANT TO SEE WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO HUMANS IN A
NEW AND SCARY AGE!!! RIDE WITH--

KAMANDI

THE LAST
BOY ON
EARTH!!

CHAPTER
ONE

WHAT
IN BLAZES--!
HUMANS!

GET OUT O'
THAT CAR,
SIDANIGG!!
YOU WON'T NEED
IT HERE!!

YEAH--!
I WELCOME TO
CHICAGO!--
--SUCKER!

EDITED-WITTEN
DRAWN BY-
JACK KIRBY
INKED AND
LETTERED BY-
D. BRUCE
BERRY





COULIC X-445

"ALL MEN IN TANKS...
ALL DOLPHINS IN FEAR!
RED BARON!"

KAMANDI
THE LAST BOY ON EARTH!



(pages 24-25) Exhibits 4a and 4b: Kamandi #22, cover and Olsen #148, page 19.

Kamandi's evidence for 'air superiority' is an underwater scene? Well, I suppose later in the story the Red Baron did actually fly! (Aren't Kirby's plexi-glass shields/windows/view ports great? Often they are actually way too small and the perspective is totally wrong—but they are so effective.)

Now on the Olsen page, we see real air superiority! That Whiz Wagon design is superb! How I wish I had bought the first Olsen issue with it (#133) off the newsstand and felt the adrenalin rush from the shock!

But this is a similarity to Kamandi? Sorry, John, you are not doing well!

(pages 26-27) Exhibits 5a and 5b: Kamandi #15, page 9 and Olsen #139, page 10.

The Kamandi story is certainly about a past President and some mysterious taped 'Hearings' (every reader at the time knew who Kirby was talking about, but he made sure the issue never became a hot, controversial one).

The Olsen story is one about a trusted figure in authority abusing that trust and really being a bad guy manipulating behind the scenes. And since he was a President (of Galaxy Broadcasting), maybe John has a point? (I wonder why Colletta chose to use a different perspective for the black background in panel 3? His blacking out of detail is one thing—and there's a bit of it here and in panel 1—but to alter the shape entirely?)

But back to our subject—maybe Edge played presidential politics throughout Olsen's series, but for Kamandi, there was but one issue John! One!



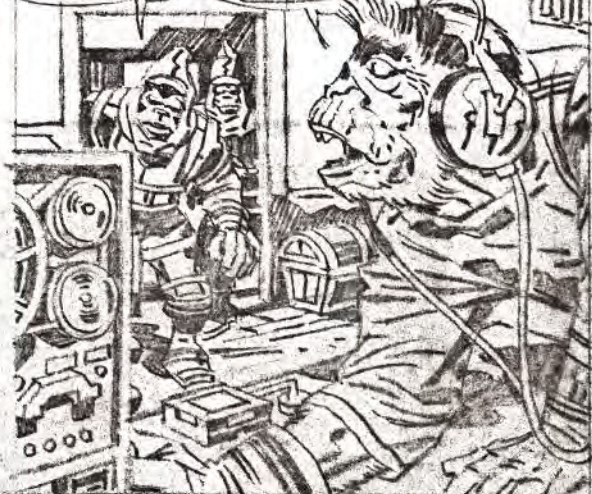
IN A HIDDEN CHAMBER, BELOW THE OLD HOUSE...

VOICES... WE'VE GOT A "BREAK IN!"



DID YOU PICK UP ANYTHING?

-- A DEFINITE "BREAK-IN!" JUST PICK OFF THE TWO LEADS!



THE SPIRITS OF WATERGATE NEVER DESERT US! THEY ALWAYS PROVIDE US WITH NEW CAPTIVES FOR THE ANNUAL "HEARINGS!"

PRaise THEM!

OUR "PLUMBER'S SQUAD" WILL BE HONORED WHEN WE RETURN HOME FROM "STAKE-OUT!"

WE SHALL BE GRANTED "IMMUNITY" FROM EVIL FOREVER!



THEN... I GOT THE TIGER SENTRY!

TO WORK, "PLUMBERS!"

UNWARE OF THE DANGER, KANANDI AND HIS FRIENDS DISCUSS THE MYSTERY...

THERE HAVE BEEN OTHERS HERE, IN "STAKE-OUT," BUT IT'S SAID THAT THEY VANISHED SOON AFTER THEY ARRIVED...

DON'T TELL ME THE "BUGS" HEARD THEM AND GOT THEM!

BUT, HOW-E



(pages 28-29)

Exhibits 6a and 6b:
Kamandi #3, page 8
and Olsen #145,
page 19.

No comment
needed for Kamandi,
since he met more
intelligent apes than
Tarzan did! (Okay,
one comment. Look
at that fantastic ape
face in panel 3!
Hasn't Jack got so
much power and
emotion in it?
Wonderful!)

And yes, Simyan
was also a regular
feature in Olsen.

So John, you think
such Apes point to a
previously unrecog-
nized connection
between these two
strips? And perhaps
because Tarin in
Captain Victory (who
has long blond hair
like Kamandi) is a
talking lion, we
should look to see
parallels there too?
Ooh—and Mr. Mind
has a big head—
like the Misfit in
Kamandi #9 and 10!
Wow! This conspiracy
is bigger than we
thought! Lord of
Light has nothing on
this! (Sigh...)

John has one final
piece of evidence—
it's make or break
time:



APES!



(pages 30-31)
Exhibits 7a and
7b: Kamandi #6,
page 1 and Olsen
#146, page 6.

Flower! You
chose Flower as
a 'voluptuous
woman'? Very
feminine—yes.

But voluptuous?
You chose the
one female that
Kirby created who
was definitely
meant to be not
voluptuous?
(Well—apart from
Agatha Harkness.)
I quote a response
in the Kamandi
#11 letter column:

IS IT WOMAN STUNNING VOLUPTUOUS WOMEN?



THE WORLD OF KAMANDI IS ONE THAT'S RECOVERING FROM A GREAT NATURAL DISASTER IN ITS PAST... IT ONCE BOASTED CITIES WITH NAMES LIKE NEW YORK, LONDON AND PARIS. BUT, THOSE NAMES HAVE BEEN FORGOTTEN. SO, HAVE THE TERNING HUMANS WHO LIVED IN THEM. THE DISASTER HAD WIPED THE SLATE CLEAN! AND, NOW, LIFE AND ORDER IS BEGINNING ANEW. THINGS ARE DIFFERENT. ANIMALS ARE ON TOP OF THE LADDER. MEN HAVE THE STATUS OF CATTLE! ONLY IN KAMANDI, THE LAST REASONING BOY ON EARTH IS THERE A GUMMER OF HOPE FOR MAN. BUT, WAIT!-- THERE IS ALSO--

FLOWER!

CHAPTER ONE

FLOWER HEAR NOISE! LIKE BUZZING OF BEES!

NOT BEES, FLOWER... -- MOTORS! AND THEY'RE GETTING LOUDER!



EDITED, WRITTEN AND DRAWN BY
JACK KIRBY
INKED IN WIDE-SCREEN INKSCOTCH
BY MIKE ROYER

SEE DETAILS OF HOW
KAMANDI AND FLOWER
LIVED IN A DUNE-WAGON
ON THE NEVADA DESERT,
SEE PREVIOUS ISSUE!
IT'S LIKE NOW!
J.K.

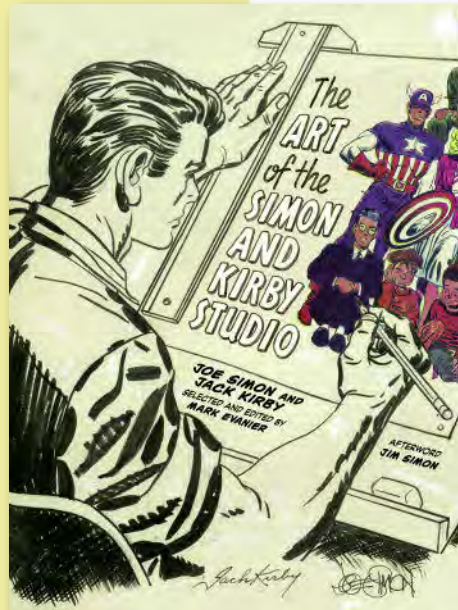
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"A few letters criticized the way Flower's anatomy was displayed (or lack of same)...(snip)...Jack drew it that way because that's the way some girls at age 15 look". Flower was (at 15 anyway) very different compared to Olsen's Terry Dean, who, as we see on this page, was certainly voluptuous. **Bzzzt!** Sorry John, you failed miserably. There's no previously unknown Kirby conspiracy here. Pity. Thanks for the submissions though. Great art. (Pam!! John had too much Kirby input again! Pa-a-a-a-m!!)



Barry Forshaw is the author of *British Gothic Cinema* and *The Rough Guide to Crime Fiction* (available from Amazon) and the editor of *Crime Time* (www.crimetime.co.uk). He lives in London.

The Art of the Simon and Kirby Studio is available now. At right is an example of the reproduction you'll find in the book—in this case *Double Life of Private Strong* #1 (1959) from Joe Simon's files. (next page) To read from the original, or the Archive Edition? You decide!



A regular column focusing on Kirby's least known work, by Barry Forshaw

THE ART OF THE SIMON AND KIRBY STUDIO: A DEFINITIVE COLLECTION

For those of us (such as this writer) who have tested our financial resources over the years by collecting the highly distinctive comics work of Joe Simon and Jack Kirby, the current embarrassment of riches provokes a wry smile on our lips—all those glorious books that we spent money (and years) collecting are now readily available in handsome, fully restored reprint editions, usually between hard covers and showcasing the work of the greatest illustrator in comics in something close to Jack Kirby's original vision. But while the ongoing Simon & Kirby Library series from the publisher Titan have made available such science-fiction titles as *Race for the Moon* and bizarre horror classics from *Black Magic*, they have always been in something approximating the finished work as they appeared in the original books—in other words, fully colored (usually, in fact, re-colorings by such talented craftsmen as Harry Mendryk). But the American publisher Abrams, celebrated for its deluxe fine art books as well as its ventures into popular culture, has attempted something special in this massive, oversized volume (coming in at nearly 400 pages); *The Art of the Simon and Kirby Studio* reproduces much of the original pen-and-brush artwork, sans colouring and closer to the size

at which the duo originally worked. While the publisher of *The Jack Kirby Collector*, John Morrow, has made a great deal of original Kirby artwork available to readers (and kudos to him for that), there is much here—under the stewardship of Kirby Expert Emeritus Mark Evanier and Joe Simon's son Jim—that Kirby aficionados will not have seen—and be assured that it is a veritable feast for the eyes.

ADDED VALUE

The book includes many complete Kirby classics from such books as the aforementioned *Race for the Moon* (the all-too-short run of which is a particular favourite of this writer). But

OBSCURA



we also have some delightful material from such books as *Stuntman* and *Boys' Ranch*, which over and over again demonstrate the prodigious imagination (and impeccable design sense) of King Kirby. And there is a bonus in this arm-straining volume; also included is some of the work from the other talents in the Simon and Kirby studio, such as Bill Draut and the matchless Al Williamson, much renowned for his science-fiction work for EC Comics. Some might argue that Kirby's work is best seen in the full-colour representations for which it was always ultimately created, but the most dedicated followers of the artist will want to see this highly collectable volume, which is a reminder—if reminder is required—that in the whole chequered history of comics, there was no one like Jack Kirby.



And it's safe to say that there will never be anyone like him in the future. (*The Art of the Simon and Kirby Studio* is published by Abrams; ISBN: 9781419711602)

INTRODUCING THE MEN LIVING ON BORROWED TIME

Here's an esoteric debate which only those who care about comic books of an earlier era will be concerned with—the outside world would scratch its collective head in wonderment at the following issue. Here's the debate: you possess the original issues of DC Comics' *Showcase* which featured Jack Kirby's death-defying Challengers of the

Unknown, along with the two *DC Archive Editions* that collected the books. So... when a few years have elapsed since your last reading and the stories have grown a bit hazy in your memory, which do you read? The fragile original books or the hardcover *Archive* reprints? The latter, of course, are on glossy, quality paper and recolored, with none of the printing imperfections that blemished the original books—such as shifts in the colour registration (anybody who collects Mort Weisinger-era Superman will be well aware that either the red or the blue of the Man of Steel's costume would almost invariably be shifted an iota, leaving a white blank space exposing his midriff or the area above his boots; one hoped that Kryptonians weren't troubled by draughts). And the colours in the new *Challengers Archive Editions* positively leap off the page—but most importantly, all of the matchless line work of Jack Kirby (or at least of his various inkers) is crystal clear and pin-prick sharp—so why would anyone want to read anything other than the deluxe reprint? What's more, for some people the reprint is all that they could afford to possess, given the price of the highly collectable original books—my own collection of them took a while to compile, and they are not in the best condition.

But here's the reason why one should read the originals (if one has to make that case). The bright poster colours of the reprints allow for very little nuance (despite the greater sophistication of the new medium), and everything has the flat, uniform impact of a Manga strip (and Manga strips are not noted for their nuance). The original books utilised—perforce—softer colours which were often more natural. Ah, but wait! You have to put up with the imperfections of the printing of the day and the poor quality paper that was used. In fact, the people behind recent hardback reprints—such as the wonderful series of Simon & Kirby libraries from Titan—have become aware of this problem, and now routinely utilise matt, non-glossy paper to get a closer approximation of the original books, while retaining the virtues of an enlarged size and crystal-clear printing.

SO—ORIGINAL OR ARCHIVE EDITION?

All of the above is a prelude to saying that I had something of a problem when I realized it was time for me to read Jack Kirby's run on *Challengers of the Unknown* again. Do I re-read the original books—the four issues of *Showcase* in which the team had a try-out plus the Kirby-drawn issue of the *Challengers* magazine before Bob Brown took over on art chores? Or do I read the glossy *DC Archive Editions* which—in fact—I've never read? Having considered the options, I finally decided on the latter—the reprint books—despite my arguments against doing this detailed above. The reason? My decision was based on the fact that this was, finally, the best way to appreciate the actual artwork. And reading the first two *Showcase* issues (#6 and 7) was a revelation even though Roz Kirby and Marvin Stein's inking for the first two issues, and Bruno Premiani's inking for *Showcase* #11 only hint at the exquisitely detailed glories which Wally Wood was to unleash when he took over the inking of the book and took it to stratospheric heights (I'm prepared to bet that the inkers named above would have been happy to concede that Wood finessed Kirby's art better

than anyone—although in so doing, he made the books as much Wood efforts as Kirby efforts; nothing wrong with that where this writer is concerned).

I realized that although I've covered some Wally Wood *Challengers* issues for this column, I've never touched on the books which introduced the team. And all the astonishing Kirby design sense and figure dynamism that makes Kirby's work so memorable is on display here, starting from the very first cover for *Showcase* #6, in which Challenger Ace Morgan smashes open a gigantic egg from which emerges a grotesque monster's arm. The book-length story that follows, "The Secrets of the Sorcerer's Box" has the complexity and muscular narrative which distinguished all these

early Kirby efforts, and the writing is ingenious (credited here to Dave Wood, although as Kirbyites know there is some dispute about the actual authorship—were Kirby and Simon involved, as both claimed?).

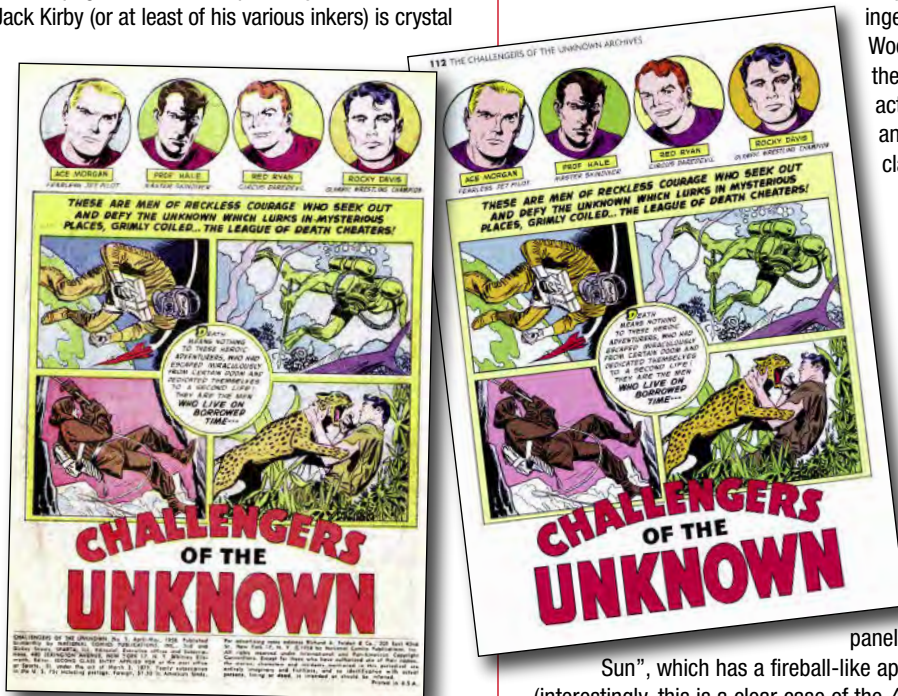
IN-YOUR-FACE SPLASH PANELS

The distinguishing aspects of many of these books are (story art apart) the phenomenal Kirby splash panels. Interestingly, the first chapter showing the Challengers for the first time is nothing out of the ordinary, but in Chapter 2, "Dragon Seed", they have a gigantic red stone creature rising from the waves and overturning boats—classic Kirby, as is the splash panel for Chapter 3, "The Freezing

Sun", which has a fireball-like apparition freezing the challengers (interestingly, this is a clear case of the *Archive Edition* winning over the original, as the 'bleedout' effect of the colour in the recolored hardcover is far more effective).

Similarly striking is the second *Showcase* appearance of the Challengers in issue #7 with a gigantic walking computer, Ultivac, shown carrying June Robbins (her debut in this issue, and the female Challenger is treated with the customary surprise that a woman could hold down a job as a scientist—but let's not blame Jack Kirby for that). The splash for this story, with the menacing computer smashing through a door as the Challengers variously cling to it or shoot at it, is quintessential Kirby, and by the time of issue #11, The King is firmly on a roll, even before Wally Wood's appearance as inker. Take the cover, in which the Challengers shrink back from an exploding model of the planet Earth while a bizarre, spindly orange-skinned alien clutches its fist in the foreground: it's Kirby design at its most kinetic, and interestingly reminiscent of such Julius Schwartz science-fiction books of the era as pre-Adam Strange *Mystery in Space* in which Gil Kane showed the Earth being subjected to some cosmic indignity. Inking here is Bruno Premiani, who imposes his own personality to such an extent that some panels look like his own work—whereas Wally Wood always allowed Kirby's personality to shine through. But there are wonderful things here, such as the splash in which the Challengers and towering alien adversaries are seen floating down a gravity-free corridor. And it's seen from above—another example of Kirby's instinctively finding the exact angle to show a scene. Seen from the side, it would not have had the sense of a vertiginous drop.

So far, I've only re-read these three issues; but they have made up my mind. I think I can now unequivocally say to those who don't have the original books—don't worry about my strictures in the first paragraph; these handsome *Archive Editions* are the perfect way to read them. ★



JACK KIRBY MUSEUM

Newsletter

www.kirbymuseum.org

Kirby @ Angoulême!

We were thrilled to be asked to participate in a Jack Kirby show at the Angoulême comics festival in France this past January. Frédéric Manzano pulled together a great display of Kirby pieces—many from our Original Art Digital Archive—and Jean Depelley con-

tributed a fine interpretation of Kirby's life, work, and career. Trustees Rand Hoppe and Tom Kraft attended the festival, spending time with such Franco-Kirbyphiles as Jean-Yves Mitton, Reed Man, and Jean Marie Arnon. Other luminaries attending were Paul Gravett, Sofia Carlota Rodríguez Eguren, and the folks from Neofelis Editions (publisher of Jean Depelley's massive two-volume French Kirby biography) and the folks from Album Comics (publisher of Kirby's DC work in France, who co-sponsored the exhibit).

The Museum, once again, thanks all the collectors and dealers who have allowed us to scan their Kirby original art—it made a wonderful show like this happen! The show may also travel within Europe, so don't be surprised if it is mounted in Brussels, Berlin, or Barcelona!



(above, L to R) Rand Hoppe, Frédéric Manzano, Tom Kraft, and Jean Depelley at the Jack Kirby: King of Comics display at Angoulême.
(below) The entrance to the show.



Have you seen...

...Abrams Books' *The Art of the Simon & Kirby Studio*? Mark Evanier, editor Charlie Kochman, and the Simon & Kirby estates pulled together a great book. Again, scans from our Original Art Digital Archive were used to help the project along. It's a great book!

We thank our new and returning members for their support:

Craig Peters, Steve Coates, Antonio Iriarte, Don Rhoden, Laura Knechtel, Wade Stewart, Alex Adorno, Bernard Brannigan, Russell Payne, Tom Kraft, Paul Gleave, Michael Ryan, Richard Pineros, Andrew Bonia, Christopher Harder, Christopher Horan, Levi Bagwell, Christopher Boyko, Daniel Reid, Steve McFarland, Glenn Garry, Tom Brevoort, Melvin Shelton, Patrick Markee, Bill Kruse, Andrew Kolasko, Dusty Miller, Glen Brunswick, William Turner, Wendell Lowder, Steven Sherman, Kris Reiss, Corrina Dejong, Kevin Goring, Carlos Borrico, Richard Mancini, and Jung Hoon Kim.

For their help with our programs, we'd like to thank:

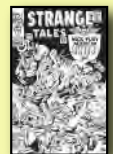
Richard Howell, Tod Seisser, Bechara Maalouf, Lisa Rigoux-Hoppe, Bev Hoppe, Scott Dunbier, Albert Moy, Mike Burkey, Hans Kosenkranius, Anthony Snyder, Frank Giella, Kat Kraft, Mike Thibodeaux, Pete Koch, John Plauche, Srihari Naidu, and Scott Eder.

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TJKC Edition Spring 2015

The Jack Kirby Museum and Research Center is organized exclusively for educational purposes; more specifically, to promote and encourage the study, understanding, preservation and appreciation of the work of Jack Kirby by:

- illustrating the scope of Kirby's multi-faceted career,
- communicating the stories, inspirations and influences of Jack Kirby,
- celebrating the life of Jack Kirby and his creations, and
- building understanding of comic books and comic book creators.

To this end, the Museum will sponsor and otherwise support study, teaching, conferences, discussion groups, exhibitions, displays, publications and cinematic, theatrical or multimedia productions.

Jack Kirby Museum & Research Center
PO Box 5236
Hoboken, NJ 07030 USA
Telephone: (201) 963-4383

Thanks to the Kirby Estate for their continued support!

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2014 JACK KIRBY TRIBUTE PANEL

Held at 10:00am on Sunday, July 27, 2014 at Comic-Con International: San Diego. Moderated by Mark Evanier, and featuring Len Wein, Scott Shaw!, Charles Kochman, and Paul S. Levine. Transcribed by Jon Knutson, edited by John Morrow and copyedited Mark Evanier. Photos by Chris Ng.



In lieu of Mark's regular column this issue, we proudly present his 2014 Kirby Tribute Panel, featuring (below, l to r) Mark, Len Wein, Scott Shaw!, Paul Levine, and Charlie Kochman.

(above) Kirby is interviewed by an unknown journalist at a mid-1970s San Diego Comic-Con. Photo by Shel Dorf.

MARK EVANIER: I'm Mark Evanier. This is the panel I look forward to the most at this convention every year, because this is the closest I can come these days to spending time with a man named Jack Kirby. It's been 20 years since we lost Jack, and as I've said before many times, there

isn't a day I don't

think of him, quote him, get asked about him, find myself figuring out something that years ago, I didn't understand, and now I go, "Oh, that's what he meant." We're going to talk about Jack for a while today. We will not be discussing current legal matters. We're going to talk about Jack and his work. I've asked to join me here a couple of people who knew Jack, and helped him out over the years. This is my friend, Mr. Scott Shaw, ladies and gentlemen. (applause) On the far end is the publisher... not the publisher, what's your title there?

CHARLIE KOCHMAN: Editorial director.

MARK: Editorial director of Harry N. Abrams Books, the company that published the Jack Kirby book I did a couple of years ago. This is Mr. Charles Kochman. (applause) The gentlemen between them is, full

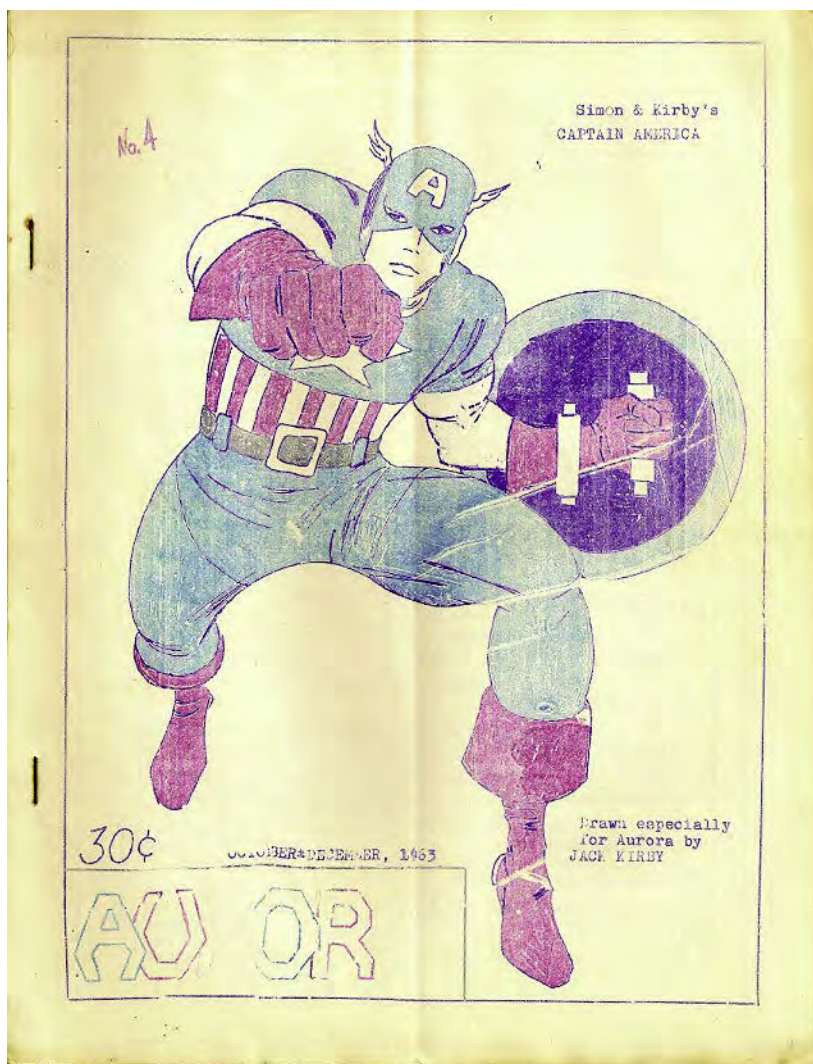
disclosure, my attorney, and he's the attorney for Lisa Kirby, and what's the official title of this? It's the Rosalind Kirby...

PAUL S. LEVINE: The Rosalind Kirby Family Trust.

MARK: This is Mr. Paul Levine. (applause) We will be joined by Len Wein, who is—I've never heard of this happening before—late! (laughter) One of the things I like about this panel is that we have here a lot of Jack Kirby fans. They're a smarter, cleverer batch of people, and I'm pleased that a lot of you keep carrying the torch for Jack. Seated somewhere down here is John Morrow of *The Jack Kirby Collector*. (applause) There's Rand Hoppe, who's running the Jack Kirby Museum. (applause) There's Tom Kraft, who's also running the website *What If Kirby.com* and works on the Kirby Museum with Rand.

A few years ago on this panel, I said, "Everything Jack ever did that can be reprinted will be reprinted." The other day, somebody calculated that the first ten issues of *The Fantastic Four* have now been reprinted 85 times in this country. I don't know if that counts digital, which would probably be another ten times right there. Jack's work had a lasting quality, and on two levels—first there was just those wonderful pages he worked on himself, and then how his work inspired other people to do new series based on his characters and his concepts. They keep coming up, they keep coming out, and I don't know any other creator in comics who had that kind of track record and influence. I sometimes run into people who say, "Oh, I like the way John Buscema drew the Silver Surfer more than Jack Kirby," or, "I like somebody else's X-Men more than Jack's X-Men." Okay, fine. I don't even have any interest in those arguments. The thing that people sometimes don't get is that John Buscema, as brilliant and talented as he was, did not have the same job description that Jack assumed for himself. Jack's job description was not filling pages with beautiful drawings. Jack's self-appointed job description was always, "I've got to take comics to the next level. I've got to invent something brand new to build an empire on." And he did it over and over again throughout his career, not always successfully... sometimes he





Jack's cover for the fanzine Aurora #4, edited by a young Len Wein. The October 1963 cover date means that Kirby drew this about the time Captain America got a try-out in Strange Tales #114 (which would've come out around September 1963), and before he officially returned in Avengers #4 in 1964.

was sabotaged, sometimes he was ahead of himself, sometimes he had some projects that maybe weren't as good as others, but he did it more often than anyone else in comics, in terms of revolutionizing and spotting something brand-new in comics. It always seemed to come from Jack. And it's not a coincidence, I think, that comics took an enormous downturn in sales right after Jack died. It was like he left and took the business with him for a while.

I want to talk a little bit about upcoming Kirby projects. I'm going to start with Charles. Charlie, tell us about this book that's coming out.

CHARLIE: This is a dummy for the book, it's 384 pages, and it's called *The Art of the Simon & Kirby Studio*, and thanks to Mark Evanier, this book will be coming out in October 2014. The genesis of this was, when Mark had done his Kirby: *King of Comics* book, we had a bunch of *Fighting American* pages that were shot off the original art. And when I went to drop the book off at Joe Simon's house—coincidentally, he lived on the same block I lived on in Manhattan—he was looking through this book, and saw this *Fighting American* page and suggested we do a book of all original art. He wanted to do a book that was a reading book, complete stories, unpublished stories, covers, alternate covers, that would be in this format. This was before I even got the company started doing books of original art, and what's wonderful about this, again, it's a reading book, and a chance to show Joe and Jack as artists, and the people who were in the studio. So, we put this together. Joe had thousands of pages of original art,

but thanks to Rand Hoppe and the Kirby Museum, and Tom Kraft and everybody who generously supplemented pages and stories, this is the book, it's coming out in October, it's got commentary, Introduction by Mark, and notes, and Jim Simon wrote a beautiful Afterword, sort of talking about his dad, and talking about Joe and Jack.

MARK: And this is not just art by Simon & Kirby, we also cover people like Bill Draut, and Joe Albistur, and Doug Wildey, there's a couple of Doug Wildey stories in there, and Leonard Starr, Al Williamson, Mort Meskin are represented. We have this story that was in Joe Simon's archives. It was a Mort Meskin story called... it's a horror story, it's kind of a grisly horror story.

CHARLIE: "Credit and Loss."

MARK: "Credit and Loss," and we have this story, and it's a beautiful story, it's the best example we have of Meskin's work. But I said to Charlie, "This isn't really a Simon & Kirby story. This was done for one of Harvey's horror comics that Joe and Jack had nothing to do with." And Charlie said, "It was in Joe's house, Joe had the original art. Doesn't that mean he had something to do with it?" So, I now had this moral dilemma: do I put this in as the best example we have of Mort Meskin work, or do I keep the book true to Simon & Kirby, because it's not a Simon & Kirby story? I swear to you, this is true. I'm sitting there thinking about it, and the phone rings. It's Sid Jacobson, who was the editor of Harvey at the time. He called me up and said, "Can you arrange for me to have a room for a panel? I've got this new project I'm doing," and I said, "I'll arrange it if you can answer a question for me, Sid. Do you remember this story by Mort Meskin? Why would that artwork have been in Joe Simon's collection?" He said, "Give me the issue number, I'll look it up, and call you back." He calls me up ten minutes later, and says, "Oh, we bought that story from Simon & Kirby." (laughter) And that's all he knew. He was sure it came from Joe and Jack. Possibly it's a story that they bought for *Black Magic*, and maybe they thought it was a little too grisly for *Black Magic*, so they shunted it off on Harvey—Harvey was down the hall from

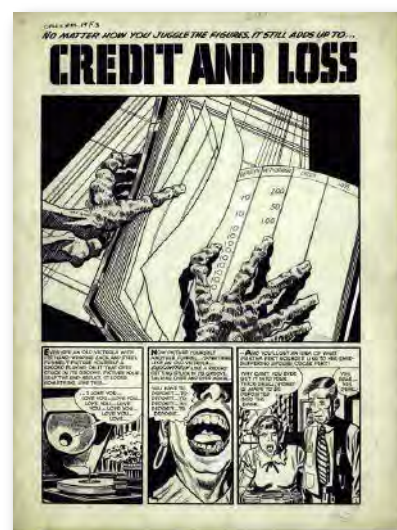
where they were working at that point. One of the reasons Sid knew he didn't commission that story was, he never met Mort Meskin in his life. So he knew it had to come from Joe for that reason alone. That story is in there, I don't think in the notes I even explained that.

CHARLIE: In your blog, you gave that story.

MARK: Oh, I did. That story is in there, I'm very pleased that we've got it. It's a neat book, and it was put together lovingly by Charlie and his staff, and I thank all the people that contributed artwork to that.

Does anyone else in the room have a Jack Kirby project? Barry? This is Barry Ira Geller, by the way, this is the person responsible for the *Lord of Light*.

BARRY: It's been a full year since the announcement,



promoting the true *Argo* story. Last October, I was at ComicFest, again, giving a whole panel just on the creation of those prints when I worked with Jack. A year has passed now, Tom Kraft has completed two-thirds of a total digital reconstruction of the original negatives that I made before I took the prints to Sotheby's. So, that's going to be available now in two different sets, and at *LordofLight.com*, anyone can buy that. But there's a second announcement: I just signed a deal with Heavy Metal Productions to take those prints and turn them into variants. There's a re-imagining by a real top artist, Chris Burnham, who's doing *Batman*, and that's probably going to come out in the next two or three months. Again, it's taking Jack's work—it's his only, I feel, architectural work, that was for sets; it was for a theme park—into reality. I think I said that last year. The word just gets out more and more that people are recognizing that that happened, and it makes me so happy.

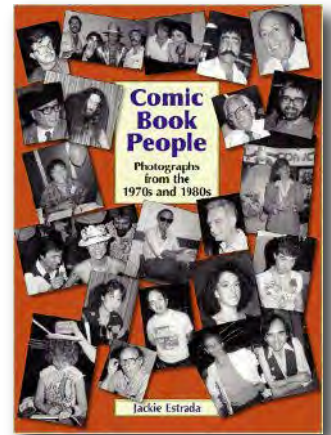
MARK: Thank you, Barry. (applause) Does anyone else have an announcement of that sort? Good, let's move on. Clayton?

CLAYTON MOORE: Down at the exhibit hall, there's a new book at Jackie Estrada's table, it's called *Comic Book People*. It has photographs of Jack and Roz dancing at your party, and of the Inkpot Awards, the Eisner Awards, those are in the book. Photographs like that are in the book.

MARK: Thank you. How many people here were at that party? Scott designed the cake for it.

SCOTT SHAW!: I have that on my resumé.

MARK: Was it the 70th birthday, I think? We had a surprise party for Jack at this comic convention that year, and it was kind of put



© Jackie Estrada



For America's 200th birthday, Kirby created this Colonial Cap pin-up. Pencils from the Captain America's Bicentennial Battles Treasury Edition.

together sloppily, because I didn't know how to put together a party. I can't put together a lawn chair. We decided to have a party, and I rented a room at the old Hotel San Diego, which they tore down a few years ago in the name of civic improvement. It was the kind of hotel where people would wipe their feet when they left the hotel so they wouldn't track up downtown San Diego. (laughter) We rented this big room, and we snuck this flyer out to different people, it said, "You're invited to the party, give Mark Evanier money towards defraying the costs of the party." I walked around the San Diego Convention that year, and people were just handing me money. I would just say, "Thank you, thank you," and stuff money into my pockets. I got fives and tens and twenties left and right. The party was Saturday night. Friday night, Len Wein and I were at a party at the Holiday Inn down by the water, which was maybe a mile from where we were staying at the convention, and the only way to get back that night was walking, for some reason. People were handing me money at the party, and Len and I said, "We're going to walk back." This is at 3:00 am, and we were walking back through downtown San Diego, which is not what it is now. There were tattoo parlors, and strip joints, and a lot of sailors on shore leave, and women who were catering to them in the middle of the night, and I'm walking through downtown San Diego with Len, with about \$4,000 in cash in my pocket in fives and tens! (laughter) And that night, if somebody had mugged us, he would've hit the jackpot, he would not have believed how much cash I had on me. The next morning, which was Saturday morning, I took it all to a bank, and I turned it into a money order, and I just was standing there putting fives and tens on the counter, and people were looking at me like, "What kind of business are you in?" (laughter) And we had that lovely party that night, and when Jack came in, it was one of those moments you'd never forget. We had hired a band, we found this guy with a Hawaiian

three-piece band that played 1940s songs, because it was for Jack and Roz. Jack and Roz were dancing. And somebody came up to me and asked, "Why do you have this square, awful band? You should have rock here, we want to dance." And about 50 people jumped on him, screaming, "This is Jack's party, this is his music!" And he said, "Oh, I'm sorry, I'm sorry." And Jack and Roz had the best time. Jack went around and I think he kissed everybody at the party, men and women both, and he was just so happy that night. It was one of those great memories I have of the two of them. They just had a great time that night.

SCOTT: Can I just tell a short story about another party? I believe this also was at a birthday party that was put on by a company that designs theme parks, and they had it at the Smokehouse, which was right there in Burbank, across from where UPA used to be, and they had a lot of people there: Neal Adams, of course Mark was there, Steve Sherman... Dave Stevens was there, Paul Power, just everybody in town that loved Jack. And I'd heard that they were going to hire a stripper for Jack. And I told the guys in charge, "That doesn't seem like a good idea." I was probably being a little too cautious, but the last thing I wanted to do was see Jack embarrassed in front of everybody. Well, presentations came and went, and it was like a roast where nobody was putting Jack down. Finally, here comes Wonder Woman in, she's not sleazy at all, she's probably a college girl, and came in, and took her top off, and Jack reacted... he wasn't embarrassed in the slightest, but like Jack Kirby was, he also accepted this topless Wonder Woman with dignity! In fact, he sounded like he was accepting an award! (laughter) And he said, "Well, you're a beautiful young woman, and I certainly appreciate this gesture," he was looking her right in the eye the whole time! (laughter) And then after things had kind of calmed down, and she'd put her Wonder Bra back on, and I asked Roz, I said, "Roz, I hope that wasn't offensive to you." And she said, "Are you kidding? When we get home, I'm going to take one of those photos of Jack with Wonder Boobs and I'm just going to paste a photo of my head on her body." (laughter) So that, to me, was something that could've gone terribly wrong. The Kirbys just took it in stride according to their personalities, it was great.



1975 photo of Kirby with Len Wein at Comic-Con.

MARK: And we are joined by Mr. Len Wein, ladies and gentlemen! (applause) I talked about you in your absence. I told the story about us having to walk back, the year of Jack's birthday party, through downtown San Diego when I had all those



thousands of dollars in cash on me, and you were my bodyguard.

LEN WEIN: Oh, yeah. If somebody had tried to mug us, you would've turned around, and I probably would've been back in Pittsburgh! (laughter)

MARK: You were never in Pittsburgh! (laughter) We're just going to tell stories about Jack. You were on this panel a long time ago, and I think you told that story then. I want you to tell the one about Jack's beard.

LEN: Oh, God. I met Jack when I was 13. It was a long progression of professionals trying to get rid of me and Marv Wolfman. It turned out my aunt lived next door to Mike Sekowsky, and we visited Mike—this was before fandom, this was back in the early days of... "What the hell are you doing here?"

MARK: How old are you in this story?

LEN: Probably 12 when it starts. And then, to get rid of us, Mike sent me to meet Joe Giella, Frank Giacoia, and at that point, Frank was saying to me, "Meet Jack!" So Marv and I biked over to Jack's house one Saturday afternoon, no appointment, just, "Hi, we're kids, and we love your work," and the others are passing us on to other people. We spent Saturday afternoons at their house, at least once a month, watching Jack create universes as Roz fed us milk and cookies; it was really lovely. Because we had become friends for many years, when I was 17, I had a very bad illness, I was in the hospital for

several weeks, and Jack and Roz decided to come visit me, which was wonderful of them. But Jack had decided for the first time in his life to grow a beard. It was the late '60s, hippie era, all of that, and he said, "I'm going to have a beard, I'm going to see what I look like in a beard." It was a two-week growth probably at that point, and if anybody's seen a two-week growth of anybody's beard, except an Italian, it looks scraggly and horrible. Jack said, "All right, let's go to the hospital," and Roz looked at him and said, "We're not leaving the house until you shave off that beard and look like a respectable person again." And so Jack did, he shaved the beard off, and came to visit me, and Jack told me the story, and said, "So, you owe me one beard sometime." *(laughter)* "I want the beard back!"

MARK: So then, years later, you were visiting me when you were still living in the east, and Jack was in the hospital.

LEN: Yes, right.

MARK: And I'm driving you to the airport, and I suddenly said, "Do you want to go visit Jack in the hospital and shave your beard off?" Do you remember this?

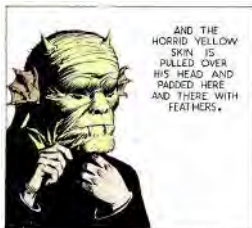


(left) Jack's original flamboyant color scheme for Mister Miracle.

(above) The Demon made his first appearance in the last panel blurb in New Gods #10, and Jack based his look on Hal Foster's character from Prince Valiant (below). But while the yellow face was established by Foster, it was Len Wein who did the rest of the color scheme for the character (right).

LEN: Ahh, no... at my age, Mark, I'm happy if I remember pants. *(laughter)*

MARK: *[looking behind the dais]* Well, I don't know how to tell you this... *(laughter)* I was driving you to the airport, and I told you Jack was in the hospital. This was in the early '80s. The official story was that he had been in a car accident, and injured his back. That was true, but while he was in the hospital, they discovered he had a blockage, and he had a quadruple bypass while he was in the hospital. So, we were talking about how Jack was in the hospital, and I said, "Len, Jack's in the hospital, you should go there and shave your beard off." And you got all excited about this, and we tried to move your ticket to see if we could delay it to see if we could go...



LEN: Right!

MARK: ...and you couldn't move your ticket, or at least you claimed you couldn't, because you didn't want to shave off your beard! *(laughter)* No, you were willing to shave off your beard.

LEN: In those days maybe, not so much anymore.

MARK: There might be nothing underneath it now.

LEN: That's what I'm afraid of. My wife of 22 years has never seen me without this beard, and on the rare occasion that I've suggested to her it might be a nice change of pace, she won't let me finish the sentence. She doesn't want to see me without the beard.

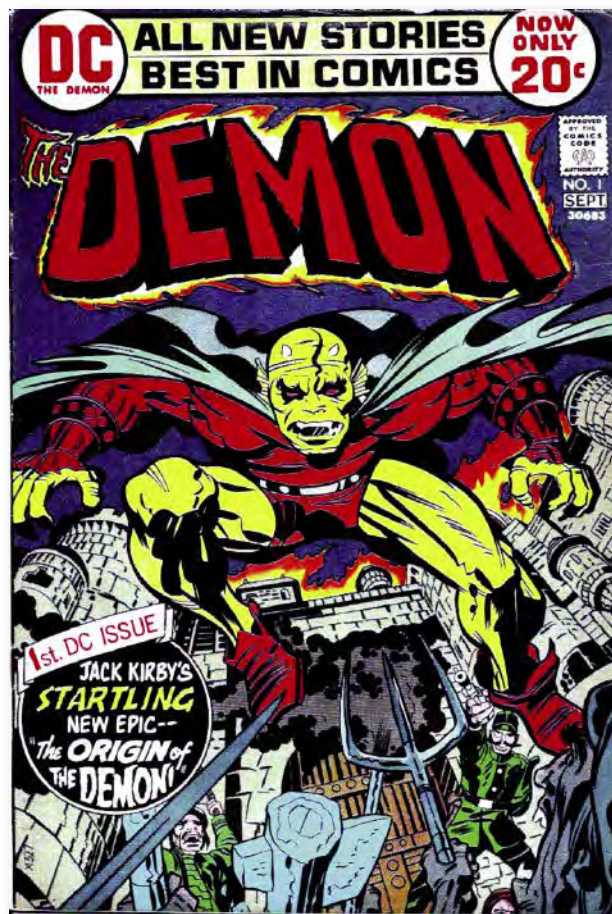
MARK: Sergio, when he was just married to Charlene first, was shaving one day, and she said, "You know, I've never seen you without the mustache." He goes, "Oh, okay." He takes the mustache off, and Charlene goes, "Aaagggghh!" And she wouldn't let him touch her until it grew back. *(laughter)*

SCOTT: Sergio needs to keep it shaved, but have a false one made, because... I always sit next to him at the exhibit hall, and that poor man, when he has to go to the bathroom, he's stopped 40 times to get 100 yards to the bathroom. But if he could just take that mustache off, nobody would know him, and he wouldn't have to worry about peeing himself. *(laughter)* He could commit a crime, and no one would ever catch him!

MARK: Len, you've worked on an awful lot of Jack's characters at times. Talk a bit for a moment how, whenever you were assigned to write a Jack Kirby character, what the value was, apart from the fact that he gave you a lot of neat things to play with—about the inspiration, and what you learned from Jack, maybe.

LEN: It was always intimidating to work on one of Jack's characters, because they're Jack's characters. I think possibly my greatest contribution to anything of Jack's was, I actually designed the color schemes for both the Demon at DC and Ikaris of the Eternals. In the case of the Demon, I was walking through production at DC with Jack Adler, who was one of the great colorists... Jack [Kirby] sometimes did and sometimes didn't have color schemes for his characters, and when he did they were flamboyant, there was a lot of color. And I guess Jack Adler was following Jack Kirby for inspiration, and I walked by, there were 50 colors on this really simple character, and I said, "Really?" That's all I said. He said, "Can you do any better?" I said, "I don't know that I can do any worse." So that's how the Demon got his colors.

MARK: Jack Adler hated Jack [Kirby's] coloring, and Jack Kirby hated



Jack Adler's coloring. This is why Steve Sherman and I did the color scheme for Mister Miracle, and you'll notice in the first issue of *Mister Miracle* as printed—not as reprinted, as printed the first time—Mister Miracle had a different color scheme, because Jack [Kirby] had sent in a couple of color schemes on his own. At that moment at DC, I think the official policy was nobody could come up with a good color scheme except Jack Adler, so they jettisoned all of Jack [Kirby's] color schemes. I think Jack got off to a very bad start at DC when he was signing his contract. He said the words, "Can we get someone like Marie Severin or one of those great Marvel colorists to color my work?" And that was, you know, a slap in the face to the coloring department that had repercussions. Yeah, Jack did not like DC's coloring, he thought it was not very colorful, he thought it was too many dark greens. He said, "They color everything like a war comic, everything's khaki!" And actually, he asked a couple of times who was actually coloring and they wouldn't tell him. He was the editor of the book, and they wouldn't tell him who was actually doing the coloring. Later on, I looked through the records, and it was Jerry Serpe, Tatjana Wood a little bit, and Paul Reinman colored

some of them. [pause] Len just did a Jimmy Finlayson double-take. And probably others, and Jack Adler probably did all the covers. Jack never liked the coloring on the books there. One of the reasons Mike Royer did so many open panels, with no panel borders, is Jack kept saying, "We've got to make these books lighter," so Mike would open panels to force them to put some more white on the page, and frequently they would ignore it, sometimes they would close up the panels, they'd add panel borders where Mike had left them open, because they wanted to put color back there.

SCOTT: Mark, wasn't this also pretty soon after that short period, where DC was also coloring the interior of the borders dark purple and dark green, and it really made the books tremendously ugly?

MARK: Yeah, they tried that. Another thing they did, which I don't think a lot of people noticed—this'll sound like a diversion for a second. Gold Key Comics, Western Publishing, had an East Coast office and a West Coast office. When Gold Key started their own line of comics away from Dell in the early '60s, they brought in this designer who had all these theories about how comics should look, and one of them

was that balloons should not touch panel borders; there should be space all around the balloons, so the balloon doesn't touch panel borders. And the East Coast office did this on most of their books, a couple of books they didn't—*Little Lulu* didn't have them. Then the West Coast office did it for about four months, and said, "This looks stupid." The balloons started crowding the artwork too much, and they stopped doing it. For a long time, the way you could tell the difference between a West Coast and an East Coast Gold Key comic was the West Coast book, the balloons touch the panel borders, and most of the East Coast books did not. DC tried for a period, around the time of the early Fourth World books, John Costanza was told whenever possible—if there was no room don't worry about it, but whenever possible—float balloons away from the panel borders. Now, Gold Key had sometimes done this by making the balloons rectangular or square. John Costanza was doing round balloons. There was some weird balloon placement in those books because of this. The idea was you could put color around the balloons and it reduces the distraction of the white on the page. There was a long theory about this that I don't pretend I can replicate... I



Jack gave this piece to young fan Len Wein in 1967—it looks like it could've been a discarded page meant for *Fantastic Four* #57.

don't think even the people doing it understood what they were doing. You look at some of those Fourth World books, they do have that in there for a while, and then you could see where they just gave up.

PAUL LEVINE:

Mark, you're triggering a memory that I'd forgotten. Back in 1981, I graduated from law school and went to work for a law firm in Los Angeles, where one of the biggest clients the firm had was Jack, who of course I had no knowledge of, but that's another story. I was, in the early 1980s, negotiating Jack's deal with DC, and going over the contract with Paul Levitz back and forth, and I remember Jack asking me to put in what basically was like a Key Man Clause, saying, "This person shall not do such-and-such. This person shall do such-and-such." Or, "This list of people shall do the coloring," and Paul would have none of it. I couldn't get him to agree to commit to anything. In fact, Jack cared more about that kind of thing than he did about the money, or anything else.

MARK: Yeah, he was not happy with the production of his books at DC. It's too bad Steve Sherman isn't here, because sometimes I need a witness when I tell people this, but we went up to the DC offices for the first time in 1970, which was the day I met Len Wein as a matter of fact, and Marv Wolfman, Julius Schwartz, Neal Adams and all those people. Sol Harrison, the head of production, sat us down and said, "Listen, you're Jack's assistants, you've got to talk to him about trying to draw like a real artist. Take a look at the way Curt Swan draws. These square fingertips, we don't want them in our books, this is not how a DC book should look." And he sat there for 20 minutes, trying to convince us that we should convince Jack Kirby to change the way he drew comics. *(laughter)* Now, even if we had wanted to, you couldn't do that, but we thought, "Didn't you guys just hire Jack Kirby? Why do you want him to draw more like Curt Swan? He's Jack Kirby!" But there was that attitude... that was a holdover, Jack had encountered that when he did *Challengers of the Unknown* for DC and other things. One of the reasons he never did a real ongoing book, one of the reasons Mort Weisinger wouldn't put him on *Superboy*, which he applied for at one point, was they thought that's not how a DC comic is supposed to look. "Green Arrow" was unimportant enough that they thought they could get away with his odd, aberrant style on that, and even then, Mort Weisinger was complaining, "That's not how my character is supposed to look." So, that was part of the story of Jack's time at DC, he just had a hostile environment there, and it would've been worse. At the '70s panel yesterday, I mentioned a man named Nelson Bridwell, who was a



very brilliant—odd, but brilliant—man who worked at the DC offices at that time. He was an absolute fount of information. He was a guy who could remember what was in every issue—that's why he was the guy who picked the reprints—but he also knew everything about everything else... literature and history and poetry and porn and all these other things. *(laughter)* And he was a very clever writer and such, and he was also a person who was—*[looking at Len]* now, you witnessed this—abused by some people on the editorial staff the way you shouldn't treat a cocker spaniel. Yelled at and screamed at, and it was a little like *[The Dick Van Dyke Show's]* Alan Brady with Mel Cooley at times. And the people yelling at him, none of them were as smart as Nelson was. But he was one of Jack's big champions up there. That's the point I want to make, and he saved a lot of Jack's stuff from being ruined. He'd call Jack, or he'd call me, and say, "They want to do this to Jack's book," and I'd alert Jack. Nelson was our spy on the inside. He was the only guy really sympathetic to what Jack was doing up there, who had an integral position at that time.

Anyway, let's talk a little bit about other things about Jack. Scott, in case anybody here doesn't know it, what's your son's name? Tell us about that.

SCOTT: "Kirby." Well, I met Jack in 1970 or so. I also met you that same day. Like with most people, Jack hit it off with us pretty well, and Jack wasn't particularly put off by the fact that we were long-haired weirdos, he thought that was great. He was completely comfortable. It's not like Jack and I hung out. Over the years, I was actually smart enough to keep my mouth shut a lot of the time. But we went to Jack, my wife and I knew we were going to have a baby, we were going to have a boy, and we went and told Roz and Jack, and asked if it was okay if we named him "Kirby," because Kurtzberg didn't really work that well. *(laughter)* I would've done it, if they'd thought so. Kirby's middle name was my father's name, Garland, and my middle name was kind of like a family name that goes back into the prehistoric Ozarks, but when we told him, Jack said... He literally did this, and Jack wasn't the kind of guy who'd intentionally do it, he went, "He'll be a man of action!" and he was like holding his hands together...

(laughter) Jack... as Mark said, Jack says these things, and years later, they turn up. Anyway, Kirby never forgot that. Is he a man of action? Well, yeah, Kirby's a man of action in ways that I like. First of all, he's the assistant manager of a vintage toy store, so I'll have somebody good to sell off all my stuff when I croak, but he also, he's got a really popular band in the LA area, they play at all the big clubs and everything, and he's been at every convention... he's 22, and he's been to every convention since he was minus nine months old. So, when Mark says, "Yeah, we were at every Comic-Con," I say, "We didn't do one every year of our life."

MARK: We didn't have a pre-natal experience. *(laughter)*

SCOTT: I think maybe Harry Knowles may be the only other person who grew up in this community that way.

MARK: Yesterday, at *[the]* Quick Draw! *[panel]*, we had like 3,000 people in that room, and I asked how many people in the room had been to every single San Diego Con, and Scott and I put up our hands, and there was one other person in the audience, I couldn't see who it was, who put up their hand.

SCOTT: It was the zombie of Shel Dorf. *(laughter)*

MARK: No, he doesn't have a hand to put up, because zombies don't



(top) Shel Dorf with Roz and Jack Kirby.

(above) E. Nelson Bridwell.

have hands. *(laughter)* Scott, tell them about your band, another member of which just walked in. Bill Lund is back there. That's Bill Lund, ladies and gentlemen. You'll hear the story and know why he's important in a moment.

SCOTT: I'll try to make it brief, but that same day, Jack was being very expressive, he's not a wild man like Stan, but he'd go off on a tangent, and be very emphatic about it. At some point, he said, "I can turn anybody into comic book characters, even you guys." And it was not even out of his mouth when I noticed this kind of shift, like, "Oh, what have I done?"

(laughter) I mean, Jack was always kind to us, but now he'd really kicked things off. I went, "Yeah, Jack, do it, do it!" And he said he would do it in *Jimmy Olsen*, which made me very happy, because I loved all the stuff he was doing at the time, but the *Jimmy Olsen* stuff was by far the most oddball stuff Jack had done since *Fighting American*, I would say. It was just like every couple of issues was an excuse for him to try out a new concept. So, we wound up hoping it'd come out sooner than it did, but it wasn't long, probably about six months later, kind of like waiting for them to deliver those Sea-Monkeys in the mail, *(laughter)* and you're out there every day, hoping it's going to show up. But finally it did, and he'd turned us into a band called "The San Diego Five-String Mob," and we were assassins from the planet Apokolips, and Bill Lund was one of the members, I was another, the third was Dr. Roger Friedman, who's [now] a physicist, the fourth was Mike Towry, who runs the San Diego Comic Fest, and the fifth was John Pound, an artist you probably know for his *Garbage Pail Kids* cards. But typical for Jack, the San Diego Five-String Mob had six members *(laughter)*, and that was a guy named Barry Alphonso, who's written a lot of music things and is a music critic. But he gave us this beautiful full-page drawing that was fairly competently inked by Vinnie Colletta, and then he got us off-camera as fast as he could; he had like an explosion happen, we don't know why it happened, but there were bodies flying everywhere, and we were like, "Where did they go?" "We don't know, but they'll probably be back." *(laughter)* Not to plug Comic Fest too much here at Comic-Con, but in October, John Pound's going to come down, and I think Barry Alphonso's going to come down, so we're going to have the first full reunion of the San Diego Five-String Mob and I believe we will be in a battle of the bands with the Dingbats of Danger Street. *(laughter)*

MARK: There are probably now cover bands touring as the San Diego Five-String Mob. Has anyone ever brought them back into the comics, even for a panel?

SCOTT: Like a lot of the things I've created, they've never been brought back.



MARK: Or are they the only Jack Kirby characters who've never been revived?

SCOTT: In the "New 52," they'll be pimps from space or something. *(laughter)*

MARK: Charlie, I'm going to drag you back to the discussion here. Can you tell them a little bit about why you came to me to do that Jack Kirby book?

CHARLIE: The first one?

MARK: Yeah, the first one.

CHARLIE: I'm the only one on the panel who, unfortunately, never got to meet Jack, but growing up as a fan, obviously a huge fan growing up. I was at DC Comics and *Mad Magazine*, from '93 to 2005,

then I came over to Abrams, which is an art book publisher, we first published Norman Rockwell, and Richard Avedon and really great artists, and one of my missions was to sort of do comics and treat it like art. I had a triumvirate of artists I wanted to do monographs on, and one was Harvey Kurtzman for humor and war comics, Will Eisner for creating the graphic novel, and top of that, first of that, was Jack Kirby, and I really felt like having a monograph on Kirby, published by a company like Abrams, putting him on the same shelf as all those other artists was really, really important. So, that was one of the first things I did when I came to Abrams.

MARK: Did people from the art book community know Jack? Did they know of him?

CHARLIE: They didn't, but what was really great is, because of Abrams' distribution for a lot of art books, what was really gratifying was that all the museum shops we sell to—and that's everything from the Met to we have offices in France, our parent company's in France—we were able to get the Kirby book into pretty much every major museum, so it was in the Louvre, it was in the Met and MOMA, and we really didn't get much resistance. I think people were a little confused by it. I remember one story was, when I first pitched the book, we have a publication board where I have to present the book that I want to do, and somebody said to me, "You want to do a monograph on an artist that nobody in this room has heard of but you." And I'm still employed there, but I did say to the head of my company, "That's a problem with the fault of the room, not the fault of the artist." (*laughter, applause*) The good thing was, they sort of backed down, but it was enough to just mention all the characters Jack created, and all the work that he had done, and the fact that Mark and I had done a book called *MAD Art*, it really helped to sort of show that not only was it important to do a book on Jack, it was important to do Mark's book on Jack. That was the other point, somebody said, "Maybe we should get a really famous art writer or art critic to do it," and my point was that it wasn't just a book on Jack, it was Mark's book on Jack.

MARK: Thank you, Charlie. I want to ask the panel, does anyone have a Jack story we haven't told lately in public? Scott, Len? Do you have a story about Jack?

LEN: Aside from his tremendous generosity, when Marv and I...

MARK: Oh, you left out the part of your story where Jack called other companies! This was when Len was sick in the hospital, and people thought he was dying.

LEN: Yes, that's true! Jack being Jack, said to... I was very, very sick. He did a Get Well card for me, which was a huge Captain America drawing; it's still on my wall, it's just amazing, but he called DC and said to them basically, "One of your biggest fans is really sick in the hospital, and you guys should do something to acknowledge him." And a week or so later, I'm still in the hospital, and I get this huge art board about yay big, with a montage of prime DC characters, penciled I think by Curt Swan and inked by Murphy Anderson, and signed by the entire DC staff. A Get Well card, and that's because of Jack. I've still got that somewhere too.

SCOTT: Now, DC sends out Get Sick cards. (*laughter*)

LEN: About Jack's generosity, we didn't stop showing up on Saturdays, Marv and I, and when we got older, and in our late teens, when we were planning to become comics

professionals, we would tell Jack our ideas—here's what we have in mind, and Jack would volunteer concepts! He offered us the Mountain of Judgement... a number of things. These were all concepts he later used in his own books, and I was incredibly flattered... "Let's get these ideas out there," even if he didn't do it himself.

MARK: It's amazing. When Steve and I were working for him, we would come to him with an idea for something, and Jack would say, "That's great, that's terrific, that's brilliant. And here's what else you can do with it," and he'd give you a completely different idea. (*laughter*) And you'd sit there going, "How did he just come up with that? How did he take our thing, our concept, take 10% of it and turn it into a completely different idea?" That's how his mind worked, he was always coming up with things on the spot that sounded so fully developed, you'd have thought he spent months coming up with them.

LEN: On the other hand, once my wife asked Jack—he liked my wife very much, because he was actually taller than her—she was reading the reprints of the *New Gods* stuff that I was giving her, and she said—and I don't even know why she said it this way, but she said,

done. As he was drawing on paper one magnificent scene after another, he was creating visual images of what our creation could be like. It was absolutely amazing. He knew more about the character than we did.

And that is the secret behind Jack Kirby. Whereas most creators will take a character and do the obvious things with him, Jack will take an idea and stretch it for everything that can possibly come out of it. When he does something, it is not a half way measure... he goes all the way, leaving nothing untouched. If Jack leaves a strip, there is no way that anyone could follow him, for he has said it all. You can only stand in awe of what he does, wonder how he does it, and just hope that someday you might be able to do half as well as he can.

Jack's imagination is not just Earthbound. The universe itself is his to play with. Time and space bend under his will. Whatever can be conceived, is. If there is an explosion, you just don't see an explosion, you see the universe itself shattering at the seams; you watch raw energy strained to the utmost. The imagination of Jack Kirby has no boundaries, no limits. Nothing is too bizarre to be tried, nothing is too incredible to be conceived. A wise man once said that when man eventually reaches the far end of the universe, he will undoubtedly find the name Jack Kirby signed on the lower right hand corner.

So there we were, the two of us, sitting in Jack's den, and he was telling us more about something we created than we could possibly ever conceive. And then he told us, almost four years ago, of ideas that he someday wanted to try... to try when he had the freedom to experiment. There was one idea about a mountain that could be moved across the country, and it was to be called the Mountain of Judgment. And living inside the mountain was to be a group called the Hairies. When Jack made his move back to National, he brought this concept with him, and it is appearing in Jimmy Olsen comics.

He then told us about an idea of how to create people out of cells. This, too, will appear in Jimmy Olsen. And he told us other ideas. Ideas that were so incredible, so mind-staggering, that we could not wait to see how they would eventually be handled. And wait we did, for four long years. Four years thinking that we would never see them printed. But then Jack came back to National, and he brought these ideas with him... ideas that he had fully developed in the guise of THE FOREVER PEOPLE, THE NEW GODS, and MR. MIRACLE.

There is an entire world of imagination awaiting you in the pages of these books. What Jack has done is create a new mythology for our times. These three books comprise a trilogy which, along with Jimmy Olsen, form one huge, continuing novel... the likes of which have never been seen. And all this is the product of one man acting as Editor, Writer, and Artist... Jack Kirby.

a visit with JACK KIRBY by Marvin Wolfman

X-119

Approximately four years ago, just before selling our first scripts to National, fellow writer Len Wein and myself, Marv Wolfman, went to visit the home of Jack (*The King*) Kirby. We had both been fans of his for many years, following him through such creations as *Boy's Ranch*, *Bullseye*, *Challengers of the Unknown*, *Green Arrow*, and his work at Marvel Comics.

We walked down the stairs to his den looking at the framed copies of his early comic book covers that lined the paneled walls. On another wall stood a collage that was at least eight feet long by three feet wide. For Jack it was simply an exercise in design in which he took commonplace photographs from magazines and arranged them interestingly on a cardboard surface. For us it was the most beautifully composed, incredibly arranged and the most mind-staggering creation we had ever seen.

We walked into his art room, and there, sitting by a small drawing board was Jack. His cigar placed carefully in an ashtray, Jack greeted us and asked we sit down. He was working on a page for one of the books and would have to speak with us while drawing. As we spoke, we looked about the room and saw that it was lined with bookshelves, in every empty space were crammed science fiction books, magazines, and anything else that could fit.

We mentioned to Jack that we had just created this new character that we thought was very original in concept. He asked us what it was about, and we gave him a very rough idea. Jack thought for a moment and then began telling us about the character. That's right, he was telling us about a character that we had created, and he was telling us things we never realized could be

(previous page) Someone needs to bring back *Magnar*, a one-issue throwaway *New God* that Kirby used to humble *Superman* in these Jimmy Olsen #147 pencils (March 1972).

(above) Len's pal Marv Wolfman wrote this text page for *New Gods* #1 (Feb. 1971).

Jack did get Cap into the realm of outer space sci-fi in Captain America Annual #3. Who knows? Maybe his conversation with the kid mentioned here, sparked the idea in his head.



"I understand why the Black Racer is flying around on skis, but what's with the medieval armor? Why are you putting him in two different things at once?" And Jack said, "He wants to get noticed that way." (laughter) That was his whole explanation.

MARK: He'd tell things on the spot. A kid came up to him at a comics convention one time and said, "What's Captain America's shield made out of?" And Jack had that moment where he thought, "That kid asked a question and deserves an answer," and Jack stood there and ad-libbed for ten, fifteen minutes a complete story which I wish I'd been recording, about how Captain America found a meteor one time and carved his shield out of it, and he goes on and on, and it was a story he was just making up on the spot, but you could put that story in a comic immediately. It was a terrific story. Scott was witness to one of Jack's greatest moments of creativity, you saw this... we had a group called CAPS that was founded by Sergio Aragonés, and a wonderful man named Don Rico who was a former editor at Marvel, and myself. One of the interesting things about CAPS is that it was a



professional society for cartoonists in Los Angeles, and the less someone had done, the more they tried to make noise and assert themselves as important in the group. If you're amidst a bunch of people you don't feel you belong among, you've got to try to exaggerate your importance so you feel like you belong there. Jack showed up, no ceremony, didn't get a hand, didn't shout "I'm Jack Kirby, folks, created zillions of comics," completely unobtrusive, quiet. So we had this little coffee room, Jack goes in there, there's a cartoonist in there, a Hispanic gentleman who was drawing for Disney and Hanna-Barbera—let's leave his name out of this...

SCOTT: But he was one of these guys that always assumed that people had a hard time communicating with him because of his Spanish accent. But what it really was, this fellow thought in the most non-linear way, sort of the Bizarro version of Jack's non-linear thinking, so it was like... I've been in situations where you're just saying the simplest thing imaginable, and yet get this answer like you'd hallucinated the whole thing. So imagine Jack talking to this guy.

MARK: So, Jack had not put on his name badge. We all had name badges, but Jack had not put his on, because he didn't care if anybody knew who he was. Jack's pouring some coffee, and this cartoonist says to Jack, "Oh, hello, who are you?" And [Jack] says... what was it?

SCOTT: It was great, he says, "My name is Ramon De Las Flores." (laughter) Jack is saying this to a guy from Mexico, and it's pretty good pronunciation! I think that was the only Spanish stuff Jack knew!

MARK: Jack used to listen to the Spanish language TV station when he worked, because he didn't understand Spanish, so he didn't have to listen to what they were saying; it was just like the equivalent of white noise. So, then he says, "What do you draw?" And Jack says...

SCOTT: "Pornographic cartoons." (laughter) And it was just matter-of-fact...

MARK: And the guy bought it! And he says, "Really?" And Jack starts this little discourse about drawing the Tijuana bible cartoons and Maggie and Jiggs having sex, and he goes on and on in great detail about, "Hey, nobody wants the Alley Oop ones anymore, but there's a resurgence of Maggie and Jiggs and Blondie, Blondie and Dagwood are always selling..."

SCOTT: He never mentioned the coming of Galactus. (laughter)

MARK: [pause] ...two, three, four.

SCOTT: [looking at warning printed on his name placard] Oh, "Please

be aware many members of your audience may be under 18 years of age." They aren't now. (laughter)

MARK: It's on the back of all these placards here, that tell us who we are. So Jack goes on with this for about ten minutes, and the guy's buying every bit of it, and I think what was going on in Jack's mind was the fun of inventing a story, and just seeing how long he could make it credible. He wasn't trying to make fun of this guy. Jack didn't have a mean streak in him. He wasn't being mean to this guy. It was just an interesting experiment in his head, because he didn't need to say, as somebody else might, "I'm Jack Kirby, I created Captain America." He didn't need that admiration or respect. He was just amusing himself, and he goes on and on, and I'm listening to all this, you heard this, and finally we started laughing enough that we gave him away, and I introduced Jack.

SCOTT: Jack started laughing, and again... there was not a scintilla of meanness in Jack.

MARK: I introduced him, and there was a moment here where this cartoonist thought, "Jack Kirby has been ghosting Jiggs and Maggie porn under the name Ramon De Las Flores?" (laughter) The thing that struck me was this total lack of malice, there was no... Jack was capable of being very angry at certain people at certain times for certain reasons, most of them good reasons, but this guy hadn't done anything to him, and he didn't try to harm him in any way. I think he was trying to amuse him a bit.

SCOTT: Well, I'm not going to go into any great detail, obviously,

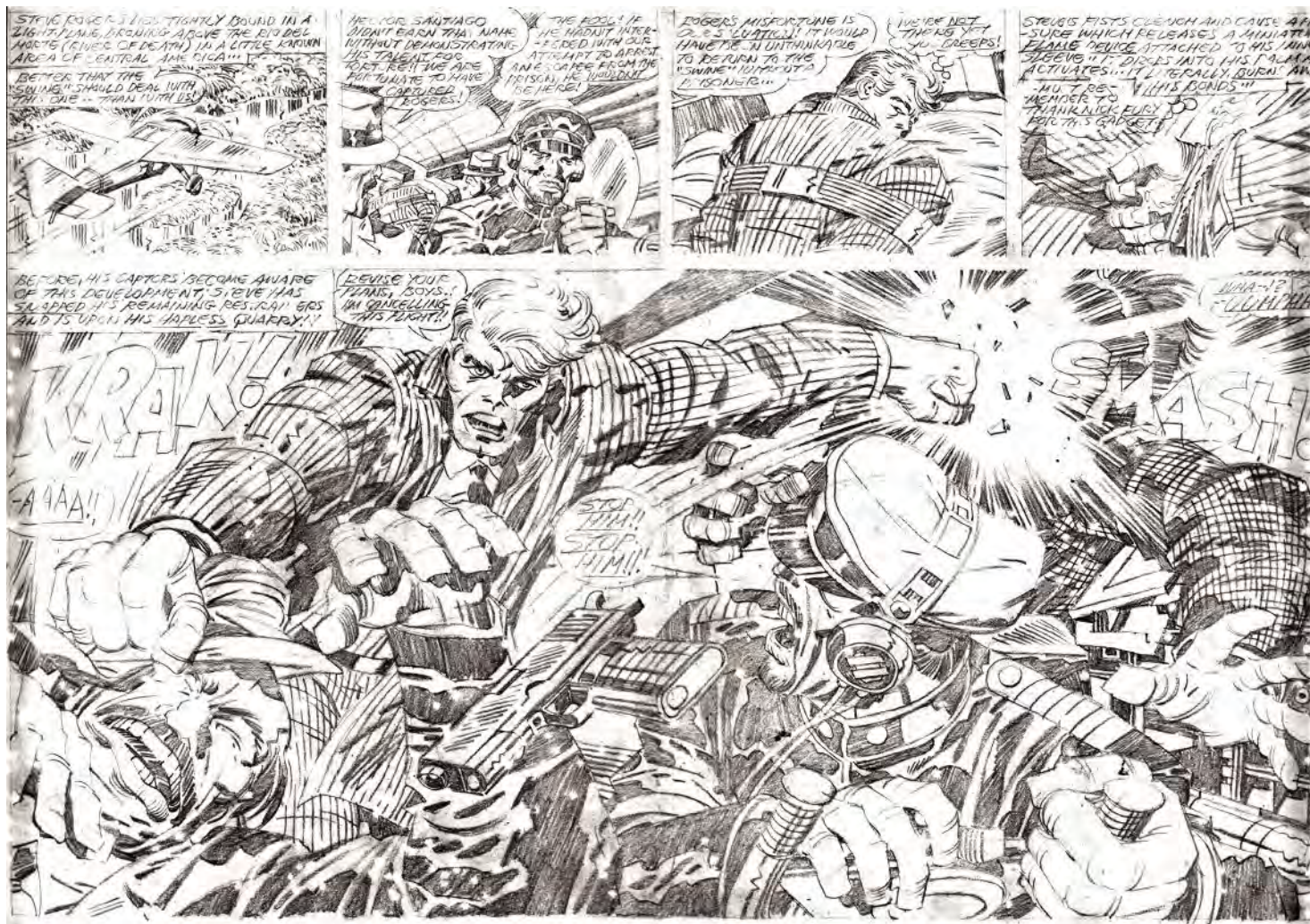
but I did something in Jack's honor once, because he had said, "I like underground comics," and I didn't realize he meant, "I like the concept of guys doing stuff in their own style and owning it, and the stuff getting alternate distribution." I thought he meant he liked sex, drugs, rock 'n' roll, and dirty pictures.

(laughter) I brought this poster to him, and it was really offensive, and I thought, "Hey, he likes underground comics." Jack didn't get mad at me at all; I mean, if a kid brought me something like this, I'm sure I would get some sort of legal action going there.

"NO HUMAN CAN BEAT ME!"



Scott's poster was a riff on this Strange Tales #98 splash, but with the word "off" added to the headline.



Pencils from the two-page spread in Captain America #207 (March 1977). All that Spanish TV in his studio may've inspired him to take Cap to Central America.

MARK: And it was a Kirby swipe.

SCOTT: It was a Kirby swipe, I'm not going to say any more about it, but it was... I mean, I said, "Jack, this is in your honor," and he just looked at me... and says, "Well, I'm a family man." (laughter) I said, "Well, you can hang it in a closet." (laughter) I swear, and I wasn't joking, like that might work, he'd want to open it up and look at it. (laughter) Then slam the door and shut it. They were so nice to people, and they were so nice to crazy people. (laughter)

MARK: I think the next panel is starting to filter in, we've got about five minutes, if anybody wants to shout out a question or two before we get out of here.

SCOTT: Can I get a real quick plug? I've got a couple of books, I didn't want to say anything at the beginning, I don't know if Chris Wisnia is here, there he is, he does all those *Doris Danger* comics. [Len's cell phone rings] This is the craziest book I've ever seen, that only people in this room would care about. It's a children's alphabet book called '*S' Is For Spanko: A Frightening and Realistic Giant Monster Alphabet Book*, and it's all made-up versions of the same kind of monsters that Jack hated drawing so much back at Marvel. (laughter) I mean, gasp, this is "Jiffy Juptoi," "Clingo, the Monstrosity who Loves Climbing," so see that man if you like weird stuff like this. And I've been working on a thing called "Annoying Orange" and in this story called "Transformers," I did... I get paid so little, I had to do things I really wanted to do, so this is a 25-page story with food processors from outer space, and it's called "Monsters on the Prowl For Creatures on the Roam," so kids aren't going to get a thing out of this, but if you're reading it to your kid, you'll laugh your butt off. (laughter)



MARK:

Thanks, Scott. [Len's phone rings again] We'll take just two questions here while Len takes some calls. (laughter) Sir?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thank you very much for this great panel. Growing up reading comic books, I just realized after going to college and taking classes on Shakespeare, that I believe I might be right or wrong, I don't know how you guys feel about it, but I believe the young Thor and the Warriors Three and all that, wouldn't you say that was basically patterned after Prince Hal, and Volstagg instead of Falstaff and all that?

MARK: Yes, it's amazing how many Jack... one of the core things that begins to explain Jack's creativity is that he had a tendency to put things together and make odd associations. Last year, did I tell you my odd theory about the Lava Men in *Thor*? Quickly, the Stone Men from Saturn are in *Thor*, the first *Thor* story... why them? Why are they the villains in the first *Thor* story? It has something to do with this, I'm sure. Jack was very intrigued by the Stone Men of Easter Island, and one of the places he read about them was in the book *Kon-Tiki* by Thor Heyerdahl.



(laughter) Wow! And I can't quite explain how you get from one to the other, but if you said a name to Jack, or a word or a concept, or he came up with something, that's how his mind went. It was grabbing things all around, and putting things together that nobody else would've put side-by-side. This is my theory that that's why the Easter Island type guys were in the first Thor story.

LEN: It feels to me like Jack's mind worked like you were playing Plinko. You drop a thought, it'd ricochet off of five other thoughts, and finally it'd get down to the place of something... [pauses, looks at Mark] it's no worse than yours! (laughter)

MARK: But yours has Drew Carey in it! (laughter) Last question here.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Related to that same question, Jack created a vampire planet, and a last human boy in a world full of animals, and a surfer that heralded a cosmic god. What is the weirdest thing Jack created to the people on the panel, what's the weirdest thing that when you saw it, you went, "What?" Just one thing. The Surfer now makes sense, but at the time...

LEN: Don Rickles. (laughter)

MARK: Jack once showed me a drawing of a new character, and he started explaining it to me, and at the end of it, I said, "Let me see if I have this straight, Jack. He's a black paraplegic on skis," and Jack went, "No, no!... well, I guess so, yeah." (laughter) And that concept [the Black Racer] was originally a stand-alone concept. It was not supposed to be part of the Fourth World, but Carmine asked him to stick it in the Fourth World, and Jack said, "Okay." He was very accommodating. I think it would've been a much more intelligent comic and made more sense as a concept if it had been done the way Jack originally explained it to Steve and myself. Anyone else?

SCOTT: I don't remember the name of the character, but when Marvel was doing all these monster comics, they even extended it to their western comics, and there was a monster that was a totem pole who was an alien from outer space. He had five faces going up his torso, he was like the prototype to Arnim Zola, but he was fighting the Rawhide Kid (Rawhide Kid #21, June 1961, shown at right).

LEN: Tim Boo Ba?

SCOTT: That wasn't Timm Boo Ba, that was another one.

MARK: Charlie, do you have a weird favorite Kirby character?

CHARLIE: I'm trying to remember the name, it was from *Strange Tales*, Googam or something like that?

MARK: The son of something like that, two gumdrop monsters?

CHARLIE: Yeah.

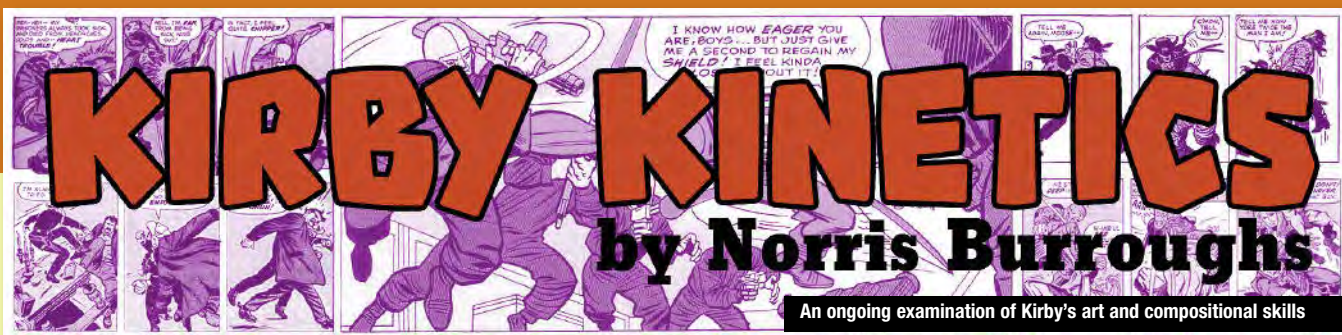
MARK: Googam, son of Goom. Paul, did you ever see a Kirby character you thought was really, really strange?

PAUL: Unfortunately, I think I've told everybody this before, but growing up I was a DC fan, no Marvel comics at all, so the answer is sorry, but no.

SCOTT: Xeen Arrow?

MARK: We're out of time here, I want to thank everybody in this room here who keeps writing about Jack, talking about Jack, keeping his name alive. I don't think it's necessary for us to do that. I think the work keeps itself alive, but it's very nice to make sure his name is always attached to what he did, that people remember him, and that some of the press lately has been quite wonderful reminding people about Jack's involvement in the *Avengers* and things like that, characters who are now gaining a much wider audience and such. I've got a feeling the day is going to come when we will not need to do Jack Kirby Tribute Panels because the whole damn convention will just be considered a Jack Kirby Tribute Panel. (applause) Thank you, Len Wein, Scott Shaw, Charlie Kochman, Paul S. Levine for joining us this year. Friday night, Kevin Eastman asked if he could be on the panel next year, so next year we'll have Kevin Eastman up here. Thank you. (applause) ★





THE EVOLUTION OF KIRBY'S COSMIC JOURNEY

(below) *Mercury* from *Red Raven* #1 (August 1940), and the *Green Sorceress* from *Blue Bolt* (1940).



If one studies the career of Jack Kirby, writer, artist and creator, one begins to see a powerful preoccupation with mythology and by extension, the source of life energy in the universe. Often, that preoccupation spilled from the mythological realm into the area of science-fiction, and Kirby would meld the two until one wasn't entirely certain where science ended and magic began or vice versa. In making a connection between mythological godlike powers and the little understood forces of the universe harnessed by technologically advanced beings, I am essentially elaborating on the

quote by science-fiction author Arthur C. Clarke that follows, "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic."

Certainly at some point, Kirby's artistic direction became a journey of unfolding cosmic realization and the exploration of inner and outer landscapes. Kirby's preoccupation with

immeasurable power seemed to suggest that his psyche was tapping into spiritual or psychological archetypes that powerfully affected his worldview. One often encounters the notion that an exceptional artist is touched by genius. People of a different metaphysical perspective might even suggest that such an artist is divinely inspired. Looking at the work of Jack Kirby, I am inclined to agree with both positions. Kirby's work possessed an energy that is so prodigious that it suggests forces beyond ordinary human comprehension. Kirby seemed to be directly accessing what he would later refer to as "The Source."

To describe what I'm getting at, it is helpful to speak of an outdated 19th Century philosophy known as

"Vitalism", which in Webster's dictionary is defined as "a doctrine that the functions of a living organism are due to a vital principle distinct from biochemical reactions." Interestingly, 19th Century chemist and philosopher Carl Reichenbach later developed the theory of the *Odic* force, which could be described as a field of living electro-magnetic energy that permeates all things. Kirby, a chronicler of Thor's Norse mythology and no stranger to all things *Odic*, appears to have a direct conduit to such an energy source, which is apparent in the extraordinary vitality of his artwork.

It is easy to dismiss a quaint concept such as Vitalism, particularly if one has a scientific reductionist perspective. However, Ernst Mayr, one of the 20th Century's leading evolutionary biologists, stated, "It would be ahistorical to ridicule Vitalists. When one reads the writings of one of the leading Vitalists like Driesch, one is forced to agree with him that many of the basic problems of biology simply cannot be solved by a philosophy as that of Descartes, in which the organism is simply considered a machine."

Vitalism, or something resembling it, would continue to evolve as an idea. In the 1930s, influential psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich developed the idea of a universal life force that he called Orgone.

At the start of his career, Kirby seemed to merely use the Cosmic angle as just another gimmick, but by the mid-to-late 1960s, as the world moved further into the realm of cosmic consciousness, Kirby's imagination drove him to explore areas of that vista that were as advanced as any artist in the vanguard of the cultural movement. By the mid 1960s, cutting edge artists, musicians and writers were inspired to depict the inner reaches of outer space and vice versa. This preoccupation was especially embraced by a growing youth counterculture. Experiments with mind-expanding drugs by such musicians as The Beatles, The Byrds and The Grateful Dead as well as various avant-garde writers and artists were common. Those who eschewed drugs preferred to utilize meditation to attain higher levels of consciousness.





logical themes in his stories, featuring a gangster impersonating the Norse god Thor in an S&K Sandman story, "The Villain From Valhalla" appearing in *Adventure Comics* #75 (June 1942, above). Clearly Thor had a strong hold on Kirby's imagination, making repeated appearances in various incarnations throughout the artist's career.



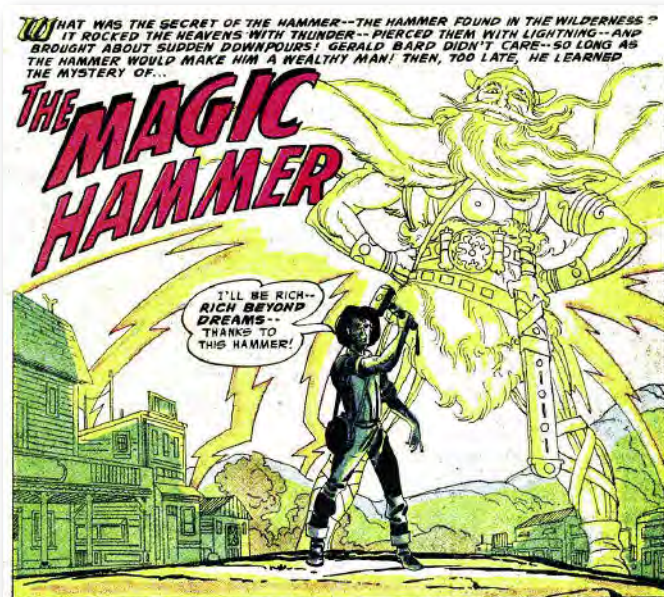
A fascination with space exploration and a growing understanding of Earth's place in a vast and mysterious universe paralleled this preoccupation with mind expansion. With his ever open and curious mind in touch with the culture at large, Kirby was drawn into the strange orbit and rapidly became one of its most powerful expressers.

One of Kirby's first super-heroes was *Blue Bolt*, published in June 1940 with Joe Simon. This character was fairly mundane with powers derived from atomic energy, but the story's background had a vague mythological basis as well with the introduction of a villainess, the Green Sorceress.

In Timely's *Red Raven* #1 (August 1940), also done with Joe Simon, the team introduced a character named Mercury, who was the son of the Greek God Jupiter. Mercury's father dispatches him to Earth to combat an evil dictator named Rudolph Hendler, who is actually the demonic Pluto in disguise. Here we see some of the earliest instances of Kirby using gods interfering with the destiny of modern humanity, as they were supposed to have done in antiquity.

About six months later, the identical character appeared in Timely Comics' *Captain America Comics* #1, but this time he was called Hurricane, and Kirby, strangely mixing his mythologies, introduced him as the son of Thor, god of thunder.

As his career progressed, Kirby continued to exploit mythological



In August 1957, Kirby, who was working less with Joe Simon, wrote and drew a story appearing in DC Comics' *Tales of the Unexpected* #16, called "The Magic Hammer" (above). A representation of Thor appeared in the story bearing a hammer very similar to the one that we would become familiar with five years later when he would begin working for Marvel. Even the costume of the DC Thor had some distinctive attributes that would appear in Kirby's Marvel version (left, from a 1970s sketch), including circular chest plates, a horned helmet and leather thronged boots that circled the hero's calves.

Kirby's early forays with Marvel were for the most part science-fiction and mild horror, featuring a vast array of creatures great and small, alien and terrestrial. It was only in 1961, when Kirby and Lee introduced *The Fantastic Four* that the cosmic concepts really began to flow forth from Kirby's pen as if he was attuned to some inexhaustible collective unconscious.

If I had to come up with two words that embodied the late 1960s, they would be "Cosmic Consciousness". *The Fantastic Four*, conceived at the height of the space race, certainly shared in that zeitgeist, but eventually ended up in the forefront of the actual cosmic consciousness movement. The FF



began their adventures by attempting to journey into space, but altered by "Cosmic Rays", they brought space back to Earth with them. The team continued to explore intergalactic sci-fi themes in its early years. In issue #13, an intriguing character known as the Watcher was introduced. This benevolent huge-headed creature was from a race of beings that theoretically could only observe and not interfere with others. This remained more or less true, until *Fantastic Four* #48. The Watcher was suddenly compelled to interfere on a grand scale to protect the Earth from a creature that was so far off the ordinary scope of power that he was like unto a god. Galactus, monstrous consumer of planets, was so awesome that the cover announcing his appearance did not even feature him. The cover of *Fantastic Four* #48, dated May 1966, showed the shock and awe of our heroes as the Watcher pointed upwards at approaching doom. We could only imagine what could inspire such trepidation.

Unlike earlier antagonists the FF had faced, Galactus was a cosmic force of nature beyond good and evil. Representing the inevitable destructive aspect of the life cycle, he consumed a planet's energy simply for its nutritional value. However, Galactus' herald, The Silver Surfer became his conscience and was the heart and soul of the story.

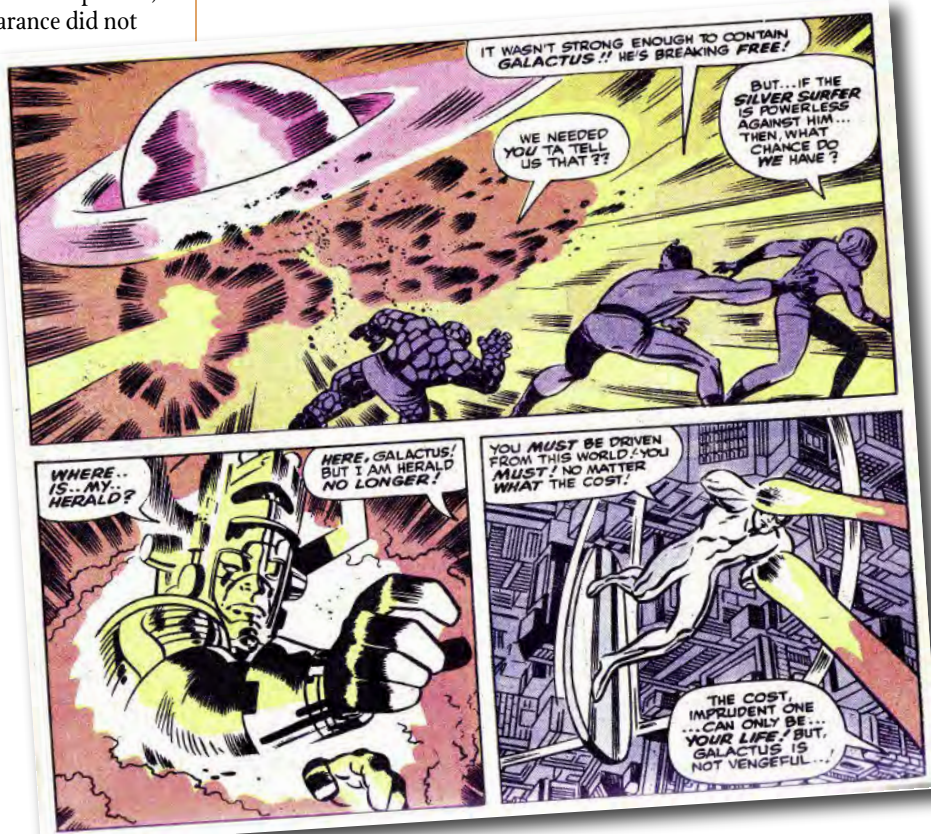
The tale began with the completion of the previous issue's plot line, as the FF attempted to return to normal life after their encounter with the Inhumans in their Great Refuge. This was not to be. The doorway to weirdness had opened and there was no going back. A small panel at the bottom left of page seven opens a window to the vista of the infinite cosmos. This is followed by our first view of The Silver Surfer as he zooms towards Earth. The camera does not linger. It changes Point of View again to another observer, as the speed trail of the Surfer's board leads our eye to the nefarious Skrulls who are watching the herald's approach with dread (above).

This attitude of looking up in awe characterizes many of the images in the first part of the Trilogy, until in the final panel it is we who are staring up at the looming figure of Galactus himself. The first book was essentially about the fearful anticipation of the arrival of a force beyond comprehension, and the visuals underline this.

Cosmic energy is a force that can barely be conceived by the human mind. In attempting to depict it, Kirby drew upon a palette of visual shorthand devices that he had invented specifically for the occasion. When the Silver Surfer turns upon his master and encases him in a cocoon, Galactus bursts out with a blast of explosive light emanating from a spinning Saturn-like shape that sends our heroes reeling. Kirby's lines delineate speed and concussion. We can literally feel the force as the figures are driven away from the maelstrom (below).

In order to defeat Galactus, the Watcher sends young Johnny Storm, the Human Torch, through a space warp in order to retrieve a weapon. As a representative of mid-1960s youth culture, the Torch's journey can easily be seen as a mind-altering psychedelic trip. Kirby was inventing new symbolism for things that prior to this tale have had little solid visual reference to draw from. The artist graphically illustrated the mind-expanding energy that Johnny was absorbing by the black spotting across the planes of his face.

In the pages of this saga, we see a sudden profusion of what will become known as "Kirby Krackle". The King had toyed with this effect intermittently prior to this series, but it is in the "Galactus Trilogy" that it occurs in profusion. One begins to notice it in the introductory shots of the Surfer. Kirby is exploring and depicting the interstellar environment more clearly than he has done before, and the Krackle is his ultimate original special effect.



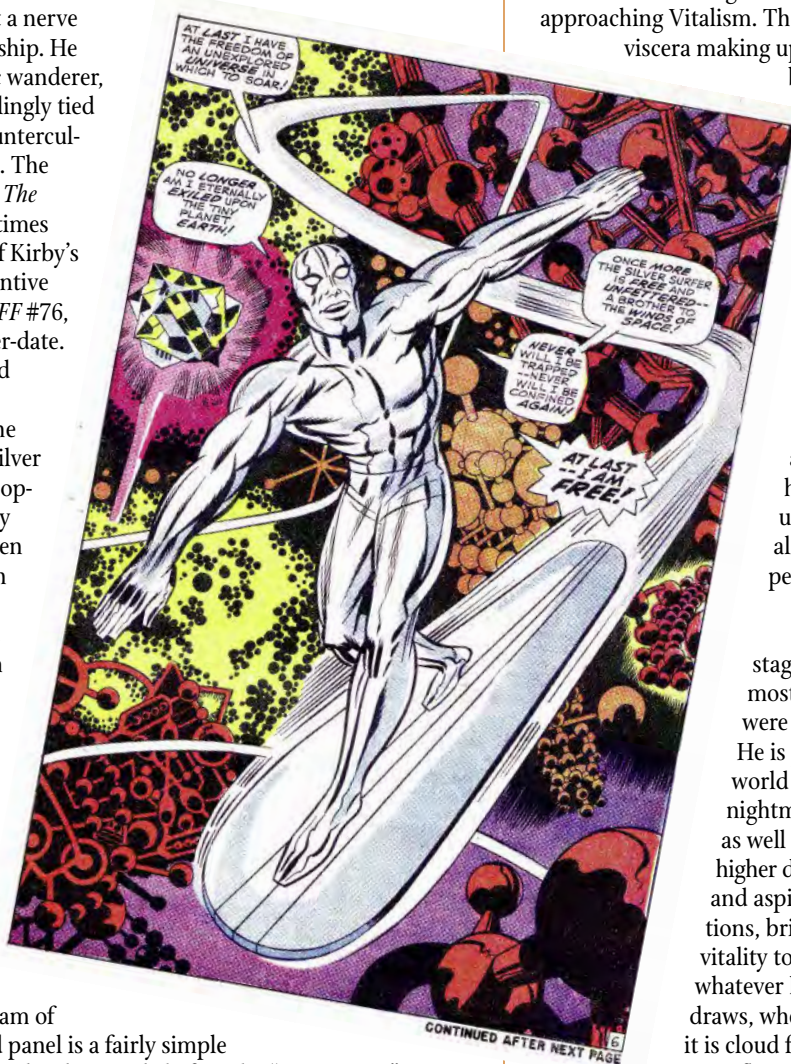


When Johnny returns through sub-space to his own space-time continuum, he passes through an inter-dimensional pathway. His flame trail weaves through swirling bands of “un-life” (left) and he reemerges in his own dimension amidst a halo of Kirby Krackle, his mind seemingly blown by the experi-

ence. Apropos to the 1960s worldview he is part of, Johnny Storm has truly attained Cosmic Consciousness.

With what became known as “The Galactus Trilogy,” we could feel the stakes growing higher as Kirby stretched to explore larger and deeper themes. The Silver Surfer had clearly hit a nerve with Marvel’s readership. He represented a cosmic wanderer, and also was compellingly tied in with the youth countercultural sport of surfing. The Surfer reappeared in *The Fantastic Four* many times and notably in one of Kirby’s most artistically inventive stories of the ’60s in *FF* #76, with a July 1968 cover-date. The issue was entitled “Stranded in Sub-Atomica,” wherein the group followed the Silver Surfer into a microscopic universe. This story appeared to have taken a bit of its inspiration from the 1966 sci-fi film *Fantastic Voyage*. Kirby’s plot gave him license to dream up an incredible series of landscapes that only an artist of his caliber could execute, starting with page four, wherein in *The Fantastic Four* fly their ship into a microscope’s slide and enter a stream of molecules. This third panel is a fairly simple composition, as the molecules recede before the “micronauts”, giving the frame a wonderful sense of deep space. It is an entry into a ’60s era psychedelic dimension of Kirby style phantasmagoria.

Almost immediately, they encounter the Surfer, whom we are used to seeing zoom through galaxies embellished by Kirby Krackle. In this case, he appears on page six (above), zipping around an obstacle course of molecular structures that somewhat resemble Tinker Toys designed by Buckminster Fuller. There are liberal amounts of Krackle as well, weaving together Kirby’s sub-atomic dreamscape.



The Surfer spreads his wings, like a free soaring bird here, exulting in the newly discovered limitless expanse. This story is another clear example of Kirby keeping his eyes and his hungry mind open to new ideas. Although obviously not literally a child of the sixties, the King’s vivid and boundless imagination blossomed in that era of mind expansion and daringly experimental visual and spiritual creativity.

Another of Kirby’s most popular series with Marvel was *Thor*, a character whom, as mentioned before, had a powerful hold on the King’s imagination. Initially a fairly pedestrian earthbound superhero, Thor’s adventures would evolve until he would spend increasingly more time in Asgard, home of his race of godlike beings.

Eventually, Kirby’s run on *Thor* tapped him back into his connection to The Source, inspiring him to display increasingly deeper and more profound levels of reality, including the realms of higher evolved beings as well as conceptualizing other dimensions and more complex levels of organic possibility. One such concept was Ego, the Living Planet, introduced in 1966 in *Thor* #132. Ego as a planet is a complete organism, whose natural functions make him a self-sufficient biological entity. Here is certainly something approaching Vitalism. The planet pulses with life, with its seething viscera making up the terrain. The world is described as a

bio-verse, an idea that would be applied later to a more holistic understanding of the Earth by New Age philosophy. When Thor and his companion the Recorder land on the planet, Ego initially tries to repulse them with various ploys, including an attack of antibodies. As the atmosphere around Thor crackles with some sort of bubbling ectoplasm, an explosion of spinning molecular energy coalesces into an anthropomorphic antigen attacker. The being suddenly develops before our eyes as if it were a higher life form evolving at high speed from protoplasm. Kirby’s brilliant use of black patterning (below) gives the alien being a horrific and virulent character perfectly suited to such a creature.

Kirby seemed capable of depicting every stage of life, from its most mundane to its most otherworldly, as convincingly as if he were a witness to the strange events he records. He is plugged directly into the subconscious world of our nightmares as well as our higher dreams and aspirations, bringing vitality to whatever he draws, whether it is cloud formations, flame, lightning, explosions or indescribable cosmic forces. His brilliance finds the artistic shorthand that cuts to the essential nature of his subject matter.

In 1970, Kirby left Marvel and returned to DC Comics to



singlehandedly produce what many consider to be his *magnum opus*. In *The New Gods*, the artist refers to "The Source," an ineffable power that exists beyond even the comprehension of the New Genesis beings. The New Gods can harness the vital forces, but they are not the source of them. On page 20 of "The Pact" in *New Gods* #7, Izaya, New Genesis warrior, turns to the power of "The Source" to regenerate him in his new identity as Highfather. Kirby depicts the flaming hand writing its message on the wall (below), as vivid an image as the Old Testament's Burning Bush. We can easily envision the hand ablaze as Kirby's, compelled to create this modern mythology.

In Kirby's dualistic exploration of godhood there were in fact several races of higher beings, co-existing beyond the earthly sphere. Orion represented the Cosmic Clear Light of the Source. Here (at right), encircled by bands of energy which guide him, Orion returns to his home planet. Having explored various magnificent depictions of a world fit for gods in *Thor* with his designs for Asgard, Kirby gives us a new twist here. It is a city that floats above a more pristine world below.

The energetic opposite of New Genesis was the dread planet known as Apokolips, which represented the dark aspect of the Source. We soon discover that Orion was born on Apokolips and is the estranged son of the planet's ruler, Darkseid (below).

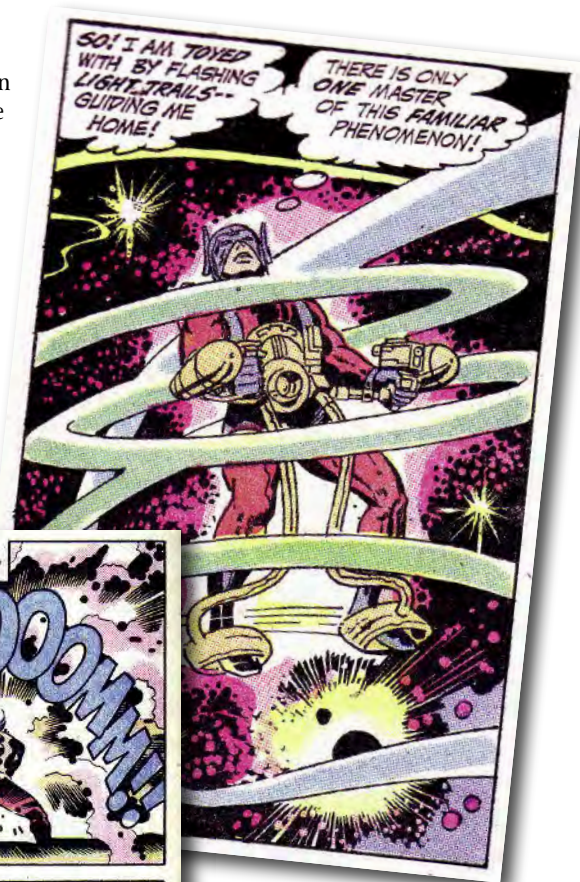
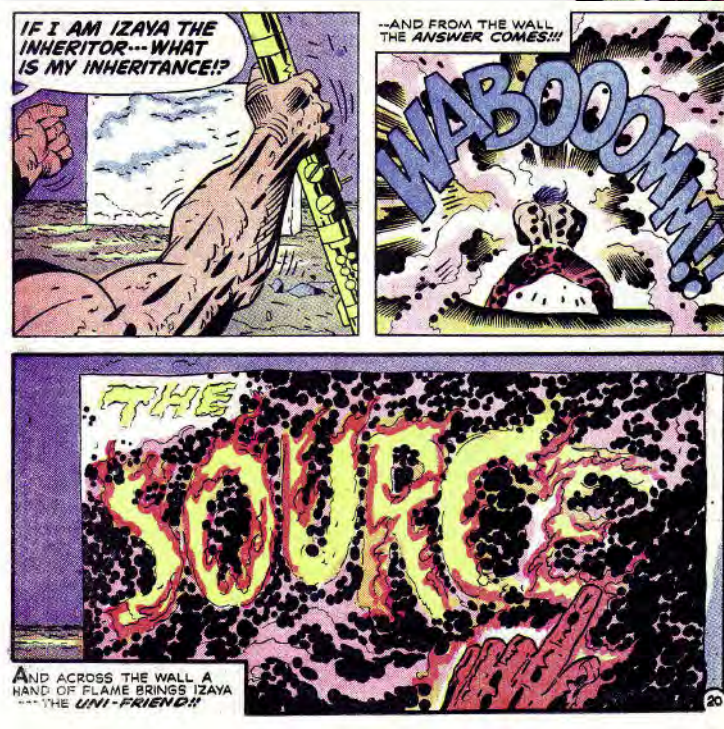
Darkseid is the culmination of decades of Kirby's fascination with defining and depicting the embodiment of evil. He is a dictator, cunning and savagely bullying and manipulating those that serve or oppose him. Like Doctor Doom and Adolph Hitler, he embodies Anti-life and he literally represents the dark side of a dualistic Manichean universe.

In 1976, Kirby returned to Marvel and presented his audience with the most explicit rendering of the idea that Arthur C. Clarke had delineated in his sentence about technology and magic. Clarke, collaborating with director Stanley Kubrick for the film *2001: A Space Odyssey*, had basically suggested that a higher alien intelligence had been responsible for terrestrial human evolution. The Kubrick film, released in 1968, was one of the most powerful cultural harbingers of cosmic fixation. A black monolith was at the center of the film's mystery and was the force that intervened in human development at pivotal points of history. In his comic book adaptation of *2001: A Space Odyssey*, Kirby presented his interpretation of the monolith and continued his exploration of that same phenomenon in a *2001* series as well.

Extraterrestrial intervention in human history continued to motivate the King. Next, heavily influenced by Erich von Däniken's best-selling book *Chariots of the Gods*, Kirby proceeded to give us an extended riff on the notion that the gods worshipped by humanity in antiquity were actually technologically advanced aliens. Kirby's series *The Eternals* had its requisite *Thor*-like muscular blonde hero to hold together a world of humans, demigods and ponderous Celestials so remote as to make Galactus appear sympathetic and approachable in comparison.

In Kirby's plotline, the Celestials had visited Earth long ago, and performed genetic experiments on proto-humanity creating the Eternals and the grotesque Deviants. In this scenario, the Eternals are far from being immortal and are condescension from their seemingly omnipotent creators.

After leaving Marvel for the last time, in 1981 Kirby produced *Captain Victory* for Pacific Comics. Through the 1970s, as a result of a boom in science-fiction based films such



(next page, top) Kirby's 2001 collage (1976).

(next page, bottom) Captain Victory #12 spread (Oct. 1983).





The Fantastic Four, Thor and the space spanning Silver Surfer. It is no surprise that the mystery of the cosmos beckons us as well as we follow the continuing adventures spawned by the magnificent mind of Jack Kirby. ★

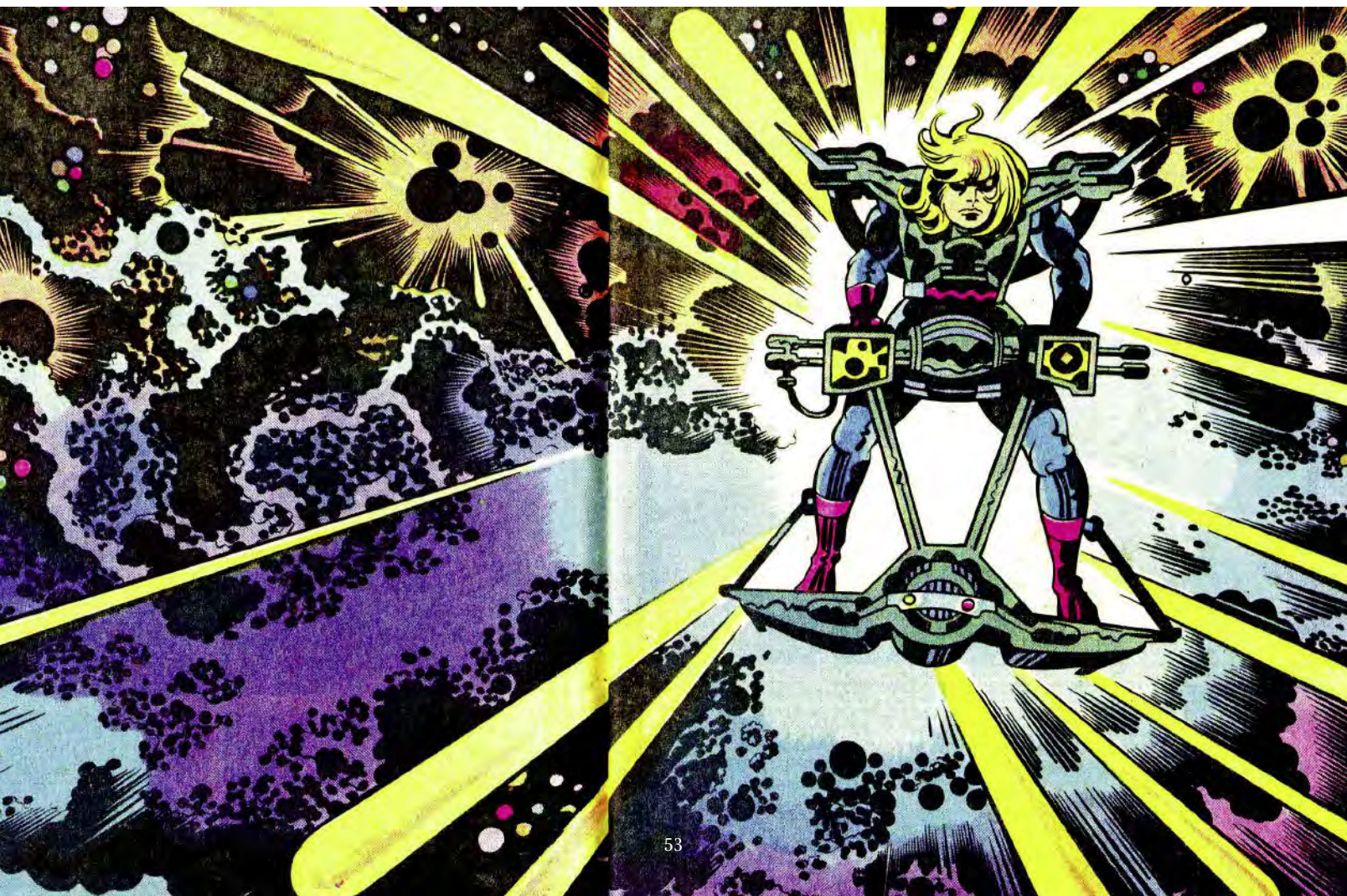
as *Star Wars* and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, extraterrestrial visitation was a popular topic. However, for Kirby, as for many of us, by the '80s there was a pervasive sense of disillusionment and cynicism that had taken the place of the optimistic faith that enlightenment would prevail. As a result, In Kirby's series, the extraterrestrials visiting Earth were not nearly as friendly as the cuddly *E.T.* or the seemingly benevolent aliens from *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, and a force of Intergalactic Raiders was necessary to fend them off.

The seemingly heroic Captain Victory protected helpless planets invaded by hordes of creatures called Insectons. Led by a female of their species called Lightning Lady, this race of creatures would destroy each world by transforming it into a global hive to support them.

Captain Victory ran for only thirteen issues, but at its completion, Kirby had tied up and resolved several threads that had run through his life's work. In issue twelve he showed the young Captain Victory confronting a fearsome entity called Blackmass, who was merely the disembodied life force of the hero's grandfather. Using his voice, Blackmass could command other minions to do his foul bidding.

Through several pages, it became clear that Captain Victory was the son of the New Gods' Orion and Blackmass constituted what was left of Darkseid after his destruction. The young Captain Victory escapes from Blackmass, traveling through space on a craft quite similar to Orion's Astro Harness (below). As we see him zoom across the "cosmos", which is a word he often uses as an oath as we might say "God", the youth looks back at his horrific home planet Hellikost, a name obviously meant to suggest Orion's birth world, Apokolips.

As I see this series as one of the last and certainly one of the least meddled with, testifying to his preoccupation with the "Power Cosmic", I feel that there is a sort of culmination here as we near the end of Kirby's career. Despite all, Kirby never loses his sense of wonder. In that two-page spread we see the cosmos beckoning the young Captain Victory as it beckoned Orion the warrior of the Source,



KIRBY ON WBAI RADIO, 1987

(below) 1940s photo of Jack and Roz Kirby.



(right) Wilton of the West detail by Kirby, some of his earliest comics work.

(bottom) This 1938 model sheet for Betty Boop gives you an idea of what Jack would've had to follow as an "in-betweenner" on the cartoon series.

(next page) A 1980s private commission for a fan. If Jack loved nature, it didn't get more natural than this!



O Jack Kirby was interviewed on New York's WBAI Radio's "Earth Watch" program on August 28, 1987—Jack's 70th birthday. Near the end, Stan Lee calls in to wish Jack a happy birthday, and an interesting conversation about their working relationship ensues. This interview is taken from an audio recording donated to the Jack Kirby Museum by J.J. Barney, and transcribed by Barry Pearl. It was edited by John Morrow. You can hear the full audio at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A1yJZKDwIRE&list=UU7A3MBhur6JWinw2i7kLOeg#t=46>

ROBERT KNIGHT: This is *Earth Watch*, and we now join Jack Kirby, speaking with us live. Good morning, Jack.

KIRBY: How are you?

KNIGHT: Just fine. The first thing I have to say is, happy birthday and thank you.

KIRBY: I understand Warren Reese is in the studio and I'd like you to say hello to him and—

KNIGHT: Well, let him say hello to you.

WARREN REESE: Jack, happy birthday. We all love you.

KIRBY: Warren, it's a pleasure talking to you and I want to thank you for the picture and it was just beautiful.

REESE: I couldn't miss, Jack, because I say in all sincerity, and I did try to do it in the period style, I learned how to draw that way looking at things that you did. And as I've said before, although people take formal lessons in art, I don't think that the youngsters can catch on quickly looking at classical paintings and classical illustration. But you have that magnificent fusion between cartooning and straight illustration that made it comprehensible so that even a guy like me could at least begin to catch on. I know I waited years and years just to be able to maybe spend an hour with you sometime and so I gotta tell you, I am thrilled to be able to share this moment with you like this.

KNIGHT: We're also assisted in this program by Max Schmeid and Creative Unity and a lot of other people who love the work that you have done over the years, Jack. When you went to what became Marvel Comics, you were something of a pioneer in the way that comics came to be produced in terms of the artist having a controlling influence in the direction of the

book; is that right?

KIRBY: The artist always had... the artist's influence is the visual part of the book and the visual part of the book is what attracts the attention. And in order to make sales, the visual part of the book is what attracts the eye. You can see it from a newsstand, you could see it from the store window. Whatever you see is what attracts you. And the job of the comic book artist is essentially sales, and therefore I felt that was my job and I did it as spectacularly as I could.

KNIGHT: Okay. Now, part of that work at Marvel included a most astonishing, to coin a phrase, collaboration with Stan Lee. How did you two guys start working together?



KIRBY: Stan Lee was the editor of Marvel and I had worked at Marvel much earlier, and in fact when I first went to work for Marvel, it was in partnership with Joe Simon, who was a fine artist and a fine storyteller and a wonderful guy. And we got along great and we sold Captain America to Marvel, the idea of Captain America, and Captain America began what you might call the comic revolution.

REESE: Talk a little bit about your early days in the business, and in fact take it from your early life as a tough member of the Newsboy Legion on the Lower East Side here in New York.

KIRBY: Well, I thank you for asking. The Lower East Side was a... well, it was a "people place."

REESE: You lived on Suffolk Street, didn't you, Jack?

KIRBY: Yes, I lived on Suffolk Street.

REESE: Do you remember which number? We want to put a bronze plaque out front.

KIRBY: I believe it was 131 Suffolk Street.

REESE: And your brother Dave once told me, Jack, that your mother used to draw also. Perhaps you could clarify

it for us, and then away you go waxing philosophical, which I always find fascinating because I never even wax my kitchen floor.

KIRBY: No, I'm not gonna wax philosophical right off the bat, but I can tell you my mother was a marvelous storyteller. The immigrants who came to the United States were all storytellers because they came from a storytelling heritage. The immigrants were all either former peasants or former royalty. And they all had stories to tell, and naturally coming from different countries, this was their format for getting acquainted.

KNIGHT: While we're in the early days, Jack, I'd like to go to one of the things that you worked on with which I have been most impressed, and that is back with Max Fleischer; he is known, of course, among other things for the *Betty Boop* cartoons. And you worked with him in the animation of those, did you not?

KIRBY: Yes, I did. I was an animator. I certainly didn't hold any position of importance. I remember the managing editor was a fellow called Seymour Kneitel, and I possibly saw Mr. Fleischer just once. I think I saw Dave Fleischer.

KNIGHT: Well, you were, I believe, what was called an in-betweenner, and that's someone who makes the panels of each frame of a cartoon move smoothly from one to the other, or at least one of your applications for the job involved doing that.

KIRBY: Yes, it did. And in those days, to make a figure take one step took 16 pictures, and my job was to draw one of the many in-between steps, and that's why I was called an in-betweenner.

KNIGHT: Well, one of the most remarkable cartoons to come out of the *Betty Boop* series, at least to my mind is—well, there were several of them, that seemed to almost combine live motion and animation. And I'm thinking of one in particular, one that involved the music of Cab Calloway, and I forget whether it was *Saint James Infirmary* or the *Hidey Ho* song, but it was a cartoon that involved the singer's motion across the stage in a backwards way that was exactly the moonwalk step that is now so famous in the feet of Michael Jackson. And so would this be the kind of thing that you were involved in doing?

KIRBY: Well, you're describing an entire story involvement and I was never subject to any storytelling sessions. My job was a particularly poor one and a poorly paid one and I just did as I was told, and therefore I considered it on a level with a factory job.

KNIGHT: Well, for so distinguished a career, the start cannot be as humble as you said, but where did you go from there?

REESE: There was something important about that that he should comment on. Jack, I know that you have said, though, in the past that your work doing that gave you an appreciation of the figure in motion, the grace of the human body moving. Am I correct, Jack?

KIRBY: Well, it added to what I already felt strongly about. I love people, I love nature. I love the things that nature produces. And therefore I believe in it strongly and I try to mirror all that in my work. I never contrive phony design or phony anatomy. I draw people as I see them. I'm not involved in making artistic masterpieces. My object is to mirror people and I've always done that. Believe me, there have been occasions when I've had to face severe criticism of



my figure anatomy. And I've faced those down with the knowledge that my object in drawing was not to get the anatomy perfect, but to mirror the people themselves. And I believe I accomplished that.

KNIGHT: There is something striking about the anatomies that I certainly remember in your various works, and that is a very strong sense of perspective along the very frame of the body. You'll see a magnificent chest in the foreground trailing off into almost pointed feet at a greater distance. And I think that sense of perspective and body form is something characteristic of your work.

KIRBY: No, it's characteristic of me. And it's how I perceive things.

REESE: Do you have a big chest with little bitty feet?

KIRBY: No, but it's how I personally perceive the world itself.

REESE: Well, you in effect had to reinvent the human figure, possibly because of the speed with which you had to work in the early days, and we have a few more questions for you about some of your favorite people from the early days. Now, after you did your work as

an editorial cartoonist and probably practically running the place for the Lincoln Features Syndicate, you connected with Jerry Iger and did *Wilton of the West* for him. How did you come to connect with Jerry? I understand in the Iger shop you got to know Bob Kane and Lou Fine, and I'm sure fans of the Golden Age would like to know some of your reminiscences about that.

KIRBY: Yes, I did. I got to know Will Eisner as well as Jerry Iger, and I believe they were partners at the time, and the others were working with me as fellow artists.

REESE: How did it feel at the time? What do you remember about working with those people and the feel of this comics industry aborning?

KIRBY: Remember, I was a very young man at the time. I was in my twenties. The people working with me were fellows of the same age, and some of the people I worked for weren't much older than myself. Comics were just evolving. Remember, it takes time for anything to evolve into a form where it's accepted internationally.

REESE: Yes. Now, I remember you telling me one time—I said that I used to live on Voorhees Avenue in Brooklyn, and at 1901 Voorhees Avenue—for ten years, I think until he died in 1934, Winsor McKay (left), the creator of *Little Nemo In Slumberland* and *Gertie the Dinosaur*, one of the first animated cartoons, lived there—and you told me that you knew Mr. McKay and Winsor McKay, Jr. and I thought you might have some reminiscence of that.



KIRBY: Well, that was quite a long time ago, but I remember it—not too clearly—but I knew Winsor McKay, Jr. certainly and I knew of his father who I admired greatly.

REESE: Did you visit them at home or did you know them from work?

KIRBY: I was too humble a person to get to that stage. You must remember the tenor of the times. They were more rigid and stricter then, than they are today, of course.

KNIGHT: You mean, in social customs, or how do you mean that?

KIRBY: Well, social customs. Even professionally. The editor was an almighty figure and the artist was a humble figure and it was not quite a caste system, but it was a system that was evolving.

KNIGHT: That's specifically what I'm interested in and what is so remarkable about your career in terms of the state of the comics art

now, and the way that it was then. It would appear to me that at that time, creative personnel were subservient to the corporate entity; that is to say, not all artists and writers have been able to receive rewards commensurate with their work. We know of the famous case of the creators of Superman, for instance, and with DC Comics. Now, of course, at that company and Marvel and others, there is more equity for the artist in terms of royalties or



residual incomes from their work. But it would seem that you were in a very pivotal period in the history, particularly with Stan Lee and the Marvel days in changing that industry.

REESE: And Joe Simon, I believe, had a lot to do with that because as I understand it, he became sort of the business liaison between yourself and the publishers, so perhaps you can clarify all that for us now.

KIRBY: Joe Simon was a little older and a lot taller than I was, and Joe Simon made an impression on that rigid system and I became Joe Simon's partner because, well, Joe Simon was a marvelous *entrée* into the field and all of us were not only friends, but we were learning from each other, and Joe was certainly someone whose type was new to me. He was not only a good friend, but he opened up the world to me, and I began to see different types of people, different types of systems. And I began to know new types of friends. Joe was just a wonderful symbol to me of a class that I'd never seen.

REESE: Now, some of your early work, I believe you did *Blue Bolt*, right? And the *Blue Beetle* newspaper strip. And ultimately you've come to Timely to the Goodman family.

KIRBY: Yes.

REESE: And you worked on *Marvel Science Stories* at first, their pulp magazine. What brought you to Timely; how did you become involved, what are some of your early memories of your work? I know you did the cover of *Marvel Mystery* #12 (left), a picture of the Angel in I think October 1940, which I believe was your first comic book work for them; then you did the *Red Raven*, of course, for August 1940 (next page, bottom), the Vision in *Marvel Mystery* #13 for November 1940 (next page, top), and then ultimately *Captain America*. Your comments, please, your memories, Jack?



KIRBY: Well, my memories are of being with—remember, I was still in a partnership with Joe, and



Joe and the Goodmans were very good friends. And therefore in those days it just seemed to be part of the system where you follow the people who know the people, and of course today the lines are happily looser and you can achieve much more under today's system than you could then. And so you did the best you could. You found ways of working yourself into the field, and Joe Simon was a wonderful partner in that respect because he had a wonderful business sense, and he knew a lot more about business than I did.

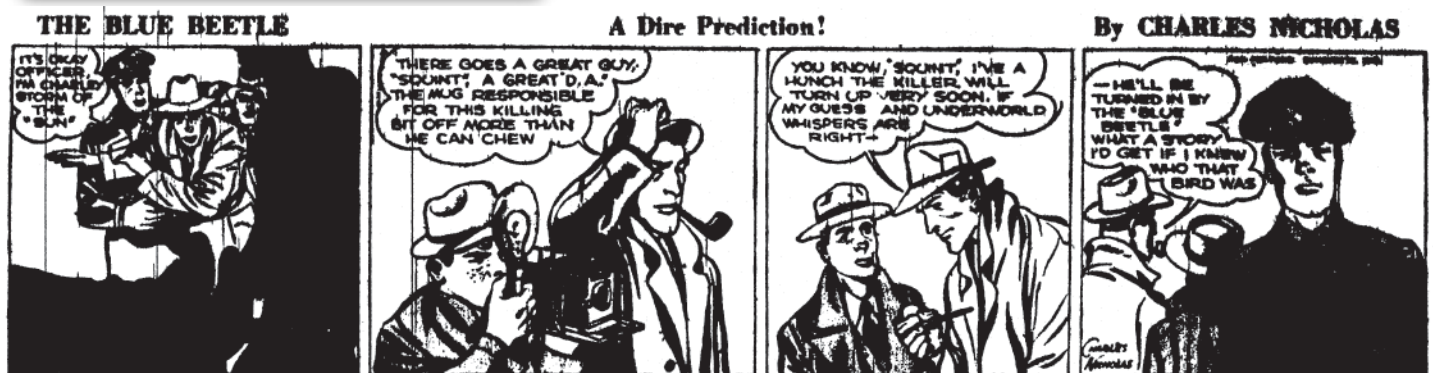
KNIGHT: If it's not indiscreet, I'd like to ask if you can recollect any particular turning point or periods of transition from the artist as humble and under-rewarded worker, to the point where you became appropriately something of an executive in the field.

KIRBY: Well, that was a matter of learning it not only professionally, but socially. Remember the field was like that. And you had to become socially acceptable as well as professionally acceptable.



(previous page, top) Will Eisner has dinner with Jack and Roz at a mid-1970s San Diego Con. Photo by Alan Light.

(previous page, bottom) Jack and Joe Simon in their home studio in the late 1940s.



REESE: What does that mean, socially acceptable?

KIRBY: Well, it wasn't a matter of being a good or a mediocre artist. It was a matter of social standing. It was a matter of being accepted by a family, and the families were the ones that were running the comic field then. The Goodman family was running Timely. And the Liebowitz family was running DC, as well as the other—there was another family involved. [Editor's Note: The Fawcett family.]

KNIGHT: What kind of terms does an artist or a writer receive now that was not possible before?

KIRBY: Well, you can make your own deal now. Whatever you have in mind, you can certainly get. If you're the type of man they want, there's a different type of orientation now which I think is so helpful to us. And we can understand each other a lot better.

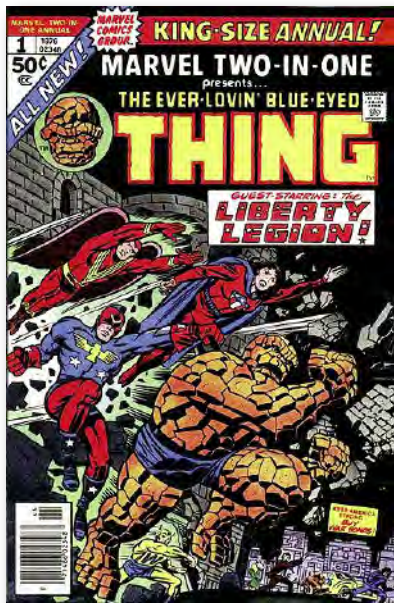
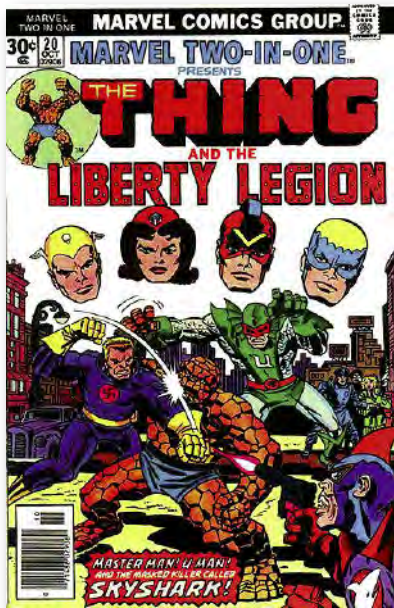
REESE: Jack, we're playing Ping Pong with your brain here. Robert is straining at the reins to ask you those wonderful questions, the social questions of the business, and I've been grinding away at the old books to ask you all the things that other people might want to know about the old stuff, or else could not even think to ask because they don't have access to them right now—although I'm happy to announce that Marvel [is] now starting to do deluxe reprints in hardback format on 70 lb. coated stock. Your *Fantastic Fours* from #1-10 are due out in November. *X-Men* #1-10 and *Amazing Fantasy* #15 and *Spider-Man* #1-10, and they are talking about bringing out some of your things from the Golden Age, and I'm hoping that everybody will be treated correctly all around. You and I understand exactly what I mean by that. I'm gonna ask you a few questions about the Golden Age stuff, your formative years. We're gonna work up then into the explosion of the '60s. Is that okay with you?

KIRBY: Certainly.

REESE: Now, chronologically perhaps the first whole book you handled at Timely was *Red Raven*



(above) January 13, 1940 Blue Beetle newspaper strip by Jack.



which I believe was not one of your favorites, but still had some interesting scientific concepts in it. For people who don't know about the Red Raven, he was a human being adopted by a race of birdlike beings who lived on an antigravitational island somewhere in the sky. Now, antigravity is science-fiction. I think there was an antigravitational island in the old *Flash Gordon* stuff. And then of course also in *Red Raven*, you had the spaceman, Comet Pierce, who went through space on a solar engine. Now, we already have solar engines, we're still working on antigravity, although I should imagine that Dr. Mitch Iocaku who is on this station ought to have it ready for us in a few weeks. Could you please tell us though what led you to those concepts, Jack?

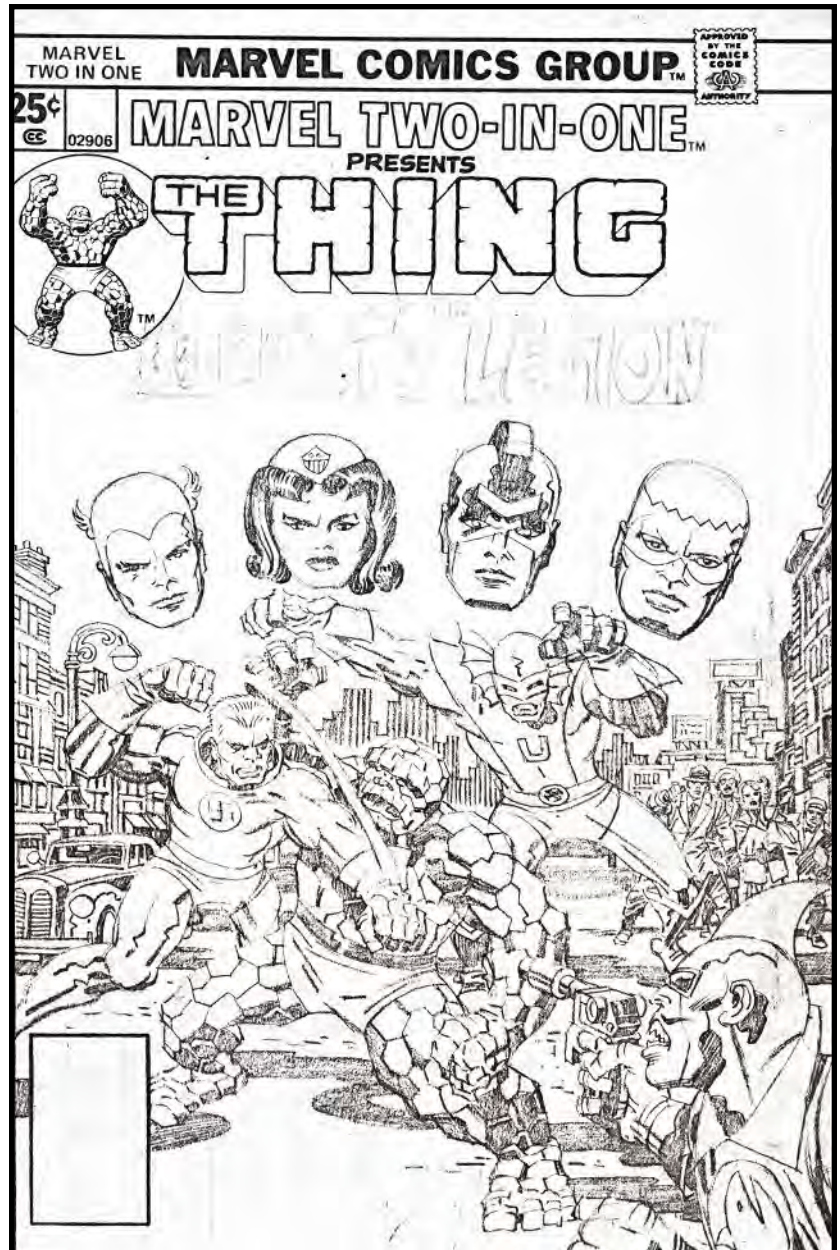
KIRBY: Well, remember science-fiction was very new in those days. It had a limited audience but to a young mind, it was very, very attractive. I think I oriented myself also to looking ahead and I read a lot of science-fiction and began to evolve concepts of my own, and I adopted these concepts in comics. And you'll find that the early comics were universally based on some kind of science-fiction concept. A science-fiction concept in those days was extremely attractive and salesworthy, and of course these days, they're certainly acceptable. But in those days, they were daring.

REESE: Especially daring on Suffolk Street where I understand if you would have gotten caught with it, you'd have gotten a clobbering, but they'd have straightened out your jacket when they left you at the door for your mother to find.

KIRBY: Exactly. It was a rough but a very polite crowd.

REESE: One of the more remarkable contributions to science-fiction that you made or attempted to make was

with *Starman Zero* (see next spread) which you proposed as a newspaper strip in 1947. And the outfit that you proposed for the space traveler in this is virtually identical to the uniforms that are worn by NASA personnel at this time, including crossbars on the helmet which you describe as actually being gun sights with calibration marks on the glass helmet. Well, as you know, Jack, now there are helmets with motion sensors and infrared detectors that look at where the eye is focusing and that are used for





(this spread) In 1976, Kirby got to briefly revisit several Golden Age Timely Comics characters, on these covers for Marvel Two-In-One #20, Marvel Two-In-One Annual #1, and Marvel Premiere #29, all featuring the Liberty Legion. No doubt this was at the request of our pal Roy Thomas, who was the Dean of Golden Age hero resurrections at Marvel.

(above) Kirby's splash page for Astonishing #56 (December 1956).

targeting systems. Something like that was described in the film *Blue Thunder*. And so for that kind of scientific prediction through the form of science-fiction back in 1947, 40 years ago, that indicates a remarkable insight. So where did you major in engineering?

KIRBY: I never majored in engineering.

KNIGHT: How did you get your ideas, in other words?

KIRBY: I've always done what had to be done. In time when they did manufacture space suits, these kind of things had to be done and they went ahead and finished them in a very practical sense, and they're still evolving today.

REESE: A follow-up question on that, Jack. We're getting out of sequence but it's a lot of fun. In *Astonishing* #56 which you did at Atlas in December 1956, you did a wonderful little *Twilight Zone*-type story called "Afraid to Dream" (above). And in it you have a monster whose colors were of the spectrum where the human eye could not pick them up, therefore invisible, and whose eyes only were visible. This character seems remarkably like Blue



Eyes, one of the characters you had proposed for *Starman Zero*. Was this your way of using this idea that had previously been set aside?

KIRBY: Well, no. It's an idea that always floats around in your mind. It's something that you play with and it's something that you can play with in many ways, and it's a way of testing your own mind. It's a way of testing your own creativity. One idea isn't certainly the ultimate idea. I'm not fool enough to think that I can come up with the ultimate idea. And so I'll take one idea and use it in many different ways knowing full well that the idea itself still has a wide range of use.

REESE: Well, even though we're out of sequence, the remarkable thing about the human mind is its ability to process information in parallel, so while we're on the subject of science-fiction, I can't pass the chance to ask you what your visions of the field are today in terms of what could be possible tomorrow.

KIRBY: I always tried to look 30 to 50 years ahead, I always have. And I can tell you that today I'm content to just not think about that kind of thing. And leave it to younger and fresher minds and in doing comics, I've grown up I think as a human being and I'm content to stay at the level where I am today.

KNIGHT: This is *Earth Watch* on WBAI in New York. My name is Robert Knight. I'm joined in the studio by Warren Reese and by telephone with Jack Kirby.

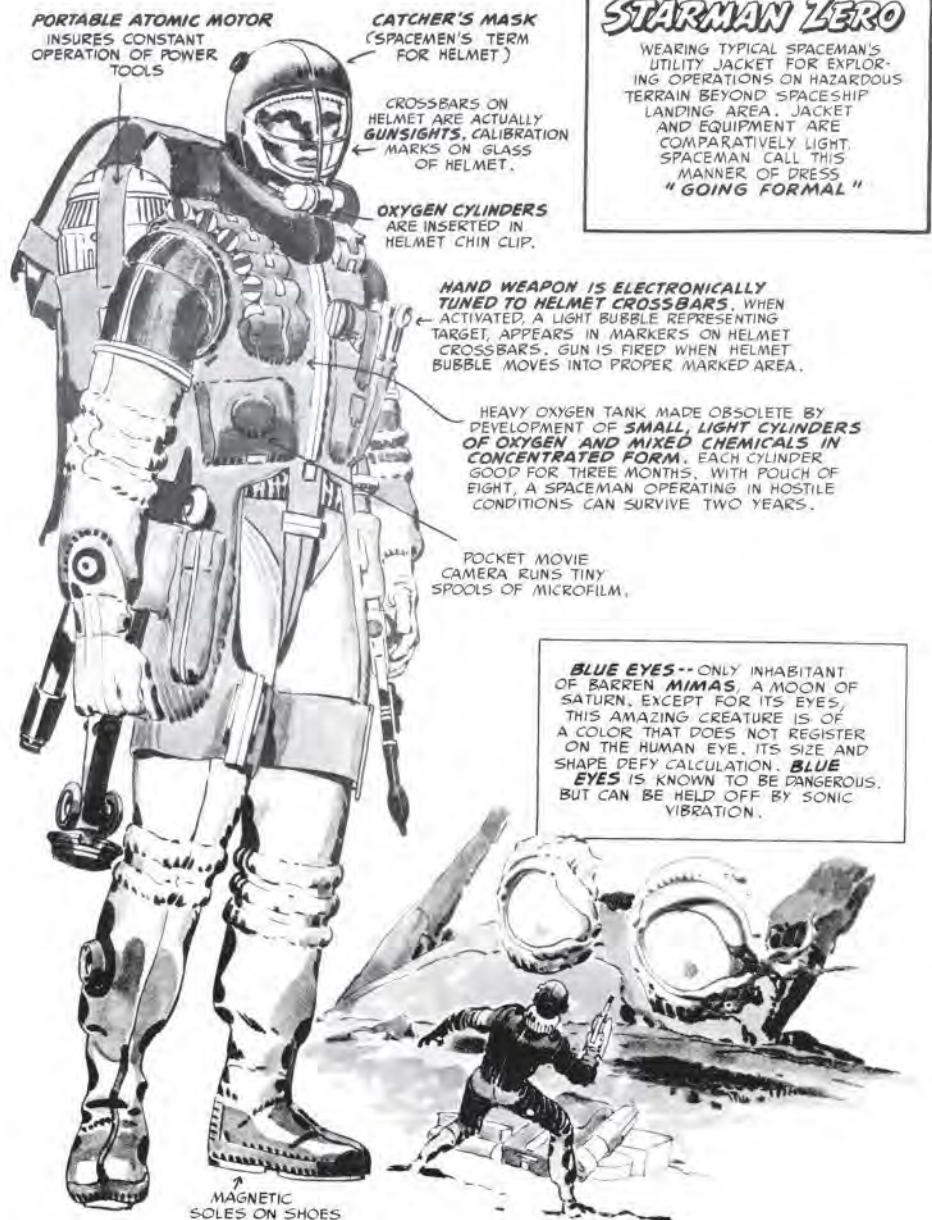
REESE: Okay, Jack, I'm going to get out of sequence a bit and follow up on what Robert was saying. Jack, you told me a wonderful story about how you do what you do, and it tied into an experience you had in the war. Do you recall the story I mean?

KIRBY: Oh, the white tape?

REESE: I don't know about the white tape. Without springing the whole thing away, I'll try to refresh your memory a bit. I had asked you how do you do what you do, and you in your normally modest way, not wishing to impose your standards or techniques on anyone else, you replied to me, it's done by privilege. Then you told me a story of something that happened to you in the war where a man had gotten killed and what that got you to thinking about.

KIRBY: Yes, and it got me to think how valuable human beings are and at that moment I discovered my own humanity. In that moment, I discovered everybody else's. And when the man was hit and he asked me what happened, I can only answer him—it was a man who was slipping away, and I said, "You happened," because to me, humanity is extremely important. And I couldn't say anything else, as a human being, I tried to tell this man what I really felt. And that's what I felt. I felt that he had happened and that was the most important event in the world, for him.

REESE: And following up on that, though, you told me, you said that it got you to thinking what really happened. You said to me that they feed us a bunch of facts, a bunch of bull. In books and school, what do all these facts mean? And you said it got you to thinking what really happened, and your words to me were, "Did the Lord send angels in night shirts with feathered wings all over the universe to spread His message," and you didn't think that that's exactly the way it happened. You said, "Did Joshua knock down the walls with 60 trumpets? What really happened?" And it seemed to me that you had concluded that by people like this dying, it bought the rest of us—including you, the master—the time to sit at a drawing board in a leisurely way and speculate on





the nature of the universe and humanity as to what really happened and what is really happening. Did I draw the right conclusion there, Jack?

KIRBY: You did, and I can tell you that that was part

of it, and I'm still trying to figure out what happened. I know I never will. I don't know if anybody else will. But I think the very question itself makes our lives interesting. And I think that none of us really have the final conclusion. It's just a personal opinion. And I think living with questions is a lot more interesting than living with answers. So I think we all live with questions and it makes the world a lot more interesting for us.

REESE: Okay, let's zip along a little bit with the Golden Age. You did Captain Daring in *Daring Mystery* #7 (below) which was a story about a guy under the earth, and the character seemed very similar, both the character and his girlfriend, to Comet Pierce and Red Raven. Similarly, "Mercury and the 20th Century" which you did in *Red Raven* was very similar in appearance and powers to "Hurricane" (above) which was the back-up feature in *Captain America*. Can you comment, please, on the similarity; how do we fit these two sets of characters into the grand scheme of the comics universe, and was really one essentially a continuation of the other?

KIRBY: Like I say, comics is a personal view and certainly, remember my comics were done at different periods and I can only think in an individual way. And what comes out of me at certain times is completely individual. What you're reading is Jack Kirby. What you're looking at is Jack Kirby. And it can be no one else. My style is personal, my style of writing is personal, and I believe in that. I believe what comes out of me is an individual thing, and that's why I believe in the individual. I know that whatever you write, I will recognize. I will recognize it because you wrote it.

REESE: Well, I mean to say, though, since *Red Raven* only went for one issue and then you segued more or less into *Captain America*, was that your way of more or less continuing the character? I just wanted to know about the name change really from Mercury to Hurricane.

KIRBY: Mercury and Hurricane are essentially a phrase that signifies some kind of hurried motion. And if we think of hurried motion, we're either gonna think of mercury or storm or hurricane or tornado, a big wind or an element of that kind. And it all

begins with motion. I believe in motion. I believe that essentially motion is life and it's my way of portraying it.

REESE: You know that we're gonna talk about Captain America for at least a couple of minutes, don't you?

KIRBY: If you want to, I'm at your service.

REESE: Thank you, Jack. Now, the origin of Captain America, you've discussed many times as he was the man for the times. But the way you handled how he became Cap was most interesting. The way Steve Rogers got this apparently potent endocrine chemical preparation that speeded up his metabolism and developed every cell in his body—what inspired you to that? Robert here is a great expert in science and I'm sure he would be interested in discussing with you the scientific background for that. How did you do that, Jack?

KIRBY: Well, remember chemistry was a subject of mystery certainly to a fellow like myself. I hadn't majored in chemistry although I took it in school. I just skirted the subject. And like anything that was a mystery to me, it was fertile ground for storytelling, therefore in a chemical way I was able to originate or I helped to originate—



(previous page and above) Jack's proposal for Starman Zero, an early attempt at a newspaper strip concept.

remember Joe Simon was in on this with me, and we both originated Captain America. We talked it over and we decided to do it in a chemical manner. Because chemistry at that time was about as mysterious as electricity still is. And remember there was very little thought given to electronics, so it was a scientific age that was just beginning.

REESE: And when you revised his origin, by the way, you managed to stick in some electronics, the thing about the Vita Rays. I would gather, Robert, you know a little bit about Einsteinian physics, energy to matter conversions, to give Steve Rogers some mass while that chemical was speeding up his metabolism.

KNIGHT: Well, that's theoretically plausible.

KIRBY: Also remember that I was doing a lot of reading and a lot of research. There was a story in *Captain America* which had an atom bomb and that story was done in '41.

REESE: Which one was that, Jack? I don't recall it.

KIRBY: Well, I forget the individual story myself. I forget the name of the story. But I remember doing it because I saw an article in the paper where a fellow named Nikola Tesla [recording is garbled here] and it became an atom bomb to me.

KNIGHT: That's thoroughly remarkable because the first sustained nuclear chain reaction did not occur until 1942 at Fermi Lab in Chicago, and this is at a time that the Manhattan Project



was underway, so was any governmental interest evidenced in regard to the publication of that story?

KIRBY: I don't remember quite well, but I think I got a letter in relation to that and I—oh, I really don't remember, but I think we got a lot of mail, Joe and I, and I think there was a letter in regard to this thing and that was all there was to it, really. It was a fanciful jump that made a great story.

REESE: There were the threatening letters you told me about, Jack.

KIRBY: I got a lot of threatening letters. I got letters from the Nazis.

REESE: What could you have possibly done to upset the Nazis?

KIRBY: Well, I put Hitler on a comic book cover.

REESE: Darn right, with Cap socking him in the jaw, right on the cover of #1 and about to do the same on the cover of #2.

KIRBY: Oh, yes, and Hitler made a wonderful villain. And of course my only object was sales and there was a big response on that. Hitler was a subject in all the newspapers, as you can well imagine. And doing everything that was of news essence and would appeal to the public, why, I believe I was the first to use Hitler on a cover.

KNIGHT: There were two characters at the time who took a role in the war effort: Captain America, of course, and the other being Superman, both representing truth, justice and the American way. There seemed to me to be some very basic differences in terms of mood or attitude between the two. Would you agree with that, and if so, what are they?

KIRBY: Well, Superman has always been a very dignified conventional character, I believe, as far as a super-hero goes. But you'll find that



You can't show much more action than Jack did on this page from *Captain America Comics* #7 (Oct. 1941).

Captain America was rambunctious, he was willing to fight anybody in sight, and reflected a different area of society. If you ask your own father and if he came from a large city, he would understand Captain America very well. Captain America reflected the type of people I knew and saw.

KNIGHT: He was not without problems.

KIRBY: He was always with problems because people always are and Captain America resolved them. He resolved my problems. If I was in a fight with 25 men, I had to resolve my own situation. What would I do in a fight with 25 men? And I had to get away with it too. I knew that in real life I would be smeared but on that comic page, I had to beat those 25 men and I choreographed that page so it would resolve itself in the right manner.

KNIGHT: Before we resume the thread of chronological continuity, I'd like to reflect on this with a previous statement that you made; that is to say, that your art is Jack Kirby. If it's successful, it's because it's Jack Kirby and so on. And at the same time, some people would say there is an influence that the publications have. Others might say a resonance with some spirit or aspiration in the children and adults that are reading them. And I'm wondering to what degree you consciously tempered or brought out things in your writing and art to establish some kind of moral base, or to point out things that you thought were ethically important?

KIRBY: Well, remember, the period was a black-and-white period. The years in which I was a young man, a hero was a hero and a villain was an evil man. And therefore I had to resolve it in a black-and-white manner. And I did. It's not sophisticated in the kind of sense that we see things today. It was all black-and-white. Everything was either evil or it was good, and therefore the stories had that kind of a basic power and it came across to the reader.

REESE: Of course, though even then, Jack—again not meaning to contradict you—you had Bill Everett doing the Sub-Mariner, who couldn't quite make up his mind if he was a hero or a villain, and when the Human Torch first started off in *Marvel Mystery Comics*, the world's first android was very much considered outside the law until perhaps *Marvel Mystery* #7 where his undercover cop friend, Johnson, helped him become a member of the police force and ultimately led to that titanic crossover with the Sub-Mariner. But I'd like to get back to Cap and to black-and-white and good and evil, and how better to exemplify that than to talk about the quintessential antagonist for Cap, the Red Skull. Now of course the Red Skull first appeared without an origin. You gave him an origin later in *Tales of Suspense* #66 in 1965, although someone out there with a Marvel index will probably find out that I'm off an issue. Talk please about the Red Skull *vis a vis* Captain America, if you will, Jack, and why you first started him off without an origin, and then of course eventually over the years developed the concept that there had been in fact the kind of decoy Red Skull, that George Max on the first Red Skull was not the real guy. And of course your wonderful story about the giant drill with the Red Skull on it that came up in the middle of Ebbs Field and wrecked it. I know you were a Dodgers fan.



The Red Skull returns in Captain America Comics #7 (Oct. 1941).

KIRBY: Yes, I was. I wasn't a rabid baseball fan but I went to the games often with friends. And I loved the Dodgers because, well, they'll always be a colorful team for me. That's a personal thing, of course. As for the Red Skull, I was growing up. It was a period when I was growing up and I finally asked myself, "Why am I making this Red Skull so evil? Why is he such a bad guy?" And I felt there was a story behind the Red Skull, and I began to think of him as a person. And remember in my early years, he was merely just a villain.

REESE: He had no origin at first. You gave him characterization, a deeper characterization in the '60s.

KIRBY: Well, I gave him deeper characterization because I was growing up and questioning myself, and remember, I'm a child of my own times. I was questioning my own times.

KNIGHT: Just as a footnote, one of the grails, you might say, in Captain America and the Red Skull during the '60s was an object called the Cosmic Cube, and I'm sure you must be aware, hopefully with some pride, that now in the field of artificial intelligence and parallel computer processing and new approaches to computing, that one of the new computing devices that is based on massive



parallel structure is called the Cosmic Cube.

KIRBY: Well, it flatters me for you to make the connection, but however, I'm sure it's a technical term today whereas yesterday, where storytelling is concerned, it was a wonderful keystone for many, many good stories. So I used the Cosmic Cube as I would use any other gimmick on which to base five or six stories or maybe more. The Cosmic Cube to me was certainly a part of the mystery which we're still trying to solve. What is there out in space, and then the many other questions that come with it. Are we the only form of life? If there is life out there, what kind of life will we find? And the Cosmic Cube is that little clue maybe left behind in the human mind. Somewhere in the human mind, that question is important. I was doing that sort of thing so it

became important to me and therefore I created the Cosmic Cube probably—it was material from the same fountainhead from which I was asking questions.

KNIGHT: Speaking of cosmic parallel pipeheads, this is *Earth Watch* on WBAI in New York. My name is Robert Knight, here with Warren Reese celebrating the 70th birthday of Jack Kirby, live on the air. Also with us in the studio is the Dean of the Golden Age of radio here, Max Schmeid.

MAX SCHMEID: Hi, Jack. I've been sitting in on this conversation and one or two questions have occurred to me. We're discussing now the war years of the '40s, and you've been saying

that you write very often to explore your own feelings and thoughts about things. But what market did you feel you were writing for? Today the general thought is that comic books are for children. Was that the thought at the time? Did you feel you were writing for a children's audience?

KIRBY: Oh, that was not true at all. I was writing for everybody. I was exploring everybody. I wanted to know about everybody. And I'm still doing that today. As I said before, people were always important to me. I wanted to know more about them. And in creating those stories, I was exploring people and I was exploring the questions that people ask. I was exploring my own self in reality. And I'm still doing that today.

REESE: We've got some follow-ups on that in a minute specifically about your years doing the science-fiction stories about the aliens. But I just had a couple more quickies about your work on Cap. When you did the covers of *Captain America* #7 and *Young Allies* #1, I have line art from house ads that shows that they were redone. The changes that were made on the cover of *Young Allies* made sense (right).

The Allies characters were made larger and Joe Stalin was omitted from the cover, presumably because the non-aggression pact with Hitler fell through and he became one of the Allies. But on the cover of *Captain America* #7 (above), which prominently featured the Red Skull on the inside,



(above) Covers sometimes changed between their appearances in house ads, and when they were actually published.

the figure of the Red Skull cutting a spiked ball down over Betty Ross was changed on the cover to look like an ordinary Nazi. That's always been a mystery to me and I was wondering if you could clarify anything about that.

KIRBY: Well, I can't recall that particular issue well today. I'd have to take more time than you give me to define it, however I can tell you that whatever I drew there made sense to me at the time and they reflected the times. I can't recall the particular story, however, if I drew Betsy Ross doing that, it was an essential part of that story and something to keep the reader interested, and it never meant anything more than that.

REESE: Let's just flip up there, I notice the early *Caps* from 1941 and '42 smacked of your influences of film. The characters and the stories seemed to be involved often with movie-making or using projection techniques, but I also noted that some of the costuming—for example, in one story that you did with Ivan the Terrible—was very authentically Russian. Were you influenced by any of Sergei Eisenstein's films like *Alexander Nefsky*—and just the overall use of film-type characters in *Captain America*? "The Phantom Hound of Cardiff Moor" which was like *Hound of the Baskervilles*. "The Hunchback of Hollywood"; all these things.

KIRBY: Well, I can tell you that you said it all for me. I always was and I always will be a moviegoer, essentially what I've always done was a kind of a still movie. And it was the reason I dropped editorial cartoons to do comic strips, because comic strips gave me more room to do a movie. When the comic strips became limited, I did comic books because they gave me more room to do a movie, and I suppose I'm the type that will probably work on an endless movie which I'll never finish, I suppose. But essentially that's what I've always tried to do, from my very early years. I've been an inveterate moviegoer and still am and I love the medium. So what I draw and what I'm still doing is part of that particular orientation.

REESE: Also in that time, in *Captain America* #7 (below), you had a villain who was called the Toad in the story, wore a bat-like costume, but I caught something on the contents page: he was called a Bat there. Was anybody worrying about troubles with the Batman people at the time?



Kirby's cinematic influences were clearly showing in this *Captain America* #7 page.

KIRBY: Everybody was always worrying about something, I can tell you. And I never tried to get too close to anybody's costume.

However, I tried to do the kind of character that was being done at the time. Remember, at that time everybody was thinking alike. Super-heroes resembled each other in one way or another. However, we did our best to make them as different as possible.

REESE: Up to the foundations of the '60s, around 1959 you started doing a lot of these wonderful stories about monsters which I found coincided with the release of a lot of the classics on Channel 9 here in New York: *King Kong*, *Son of Kong*, *Godzilla*. And then some of my favorite things were about these aliens, for example, *The Electronic Monster*, *The Blip*, who was really a benevolent alien enraged by human savagery. Please comment on your use of the monster—and of course the monster is either the benevolent being or the misunderstood monster, which is the foundation of the Hulk and the Thing and characters with

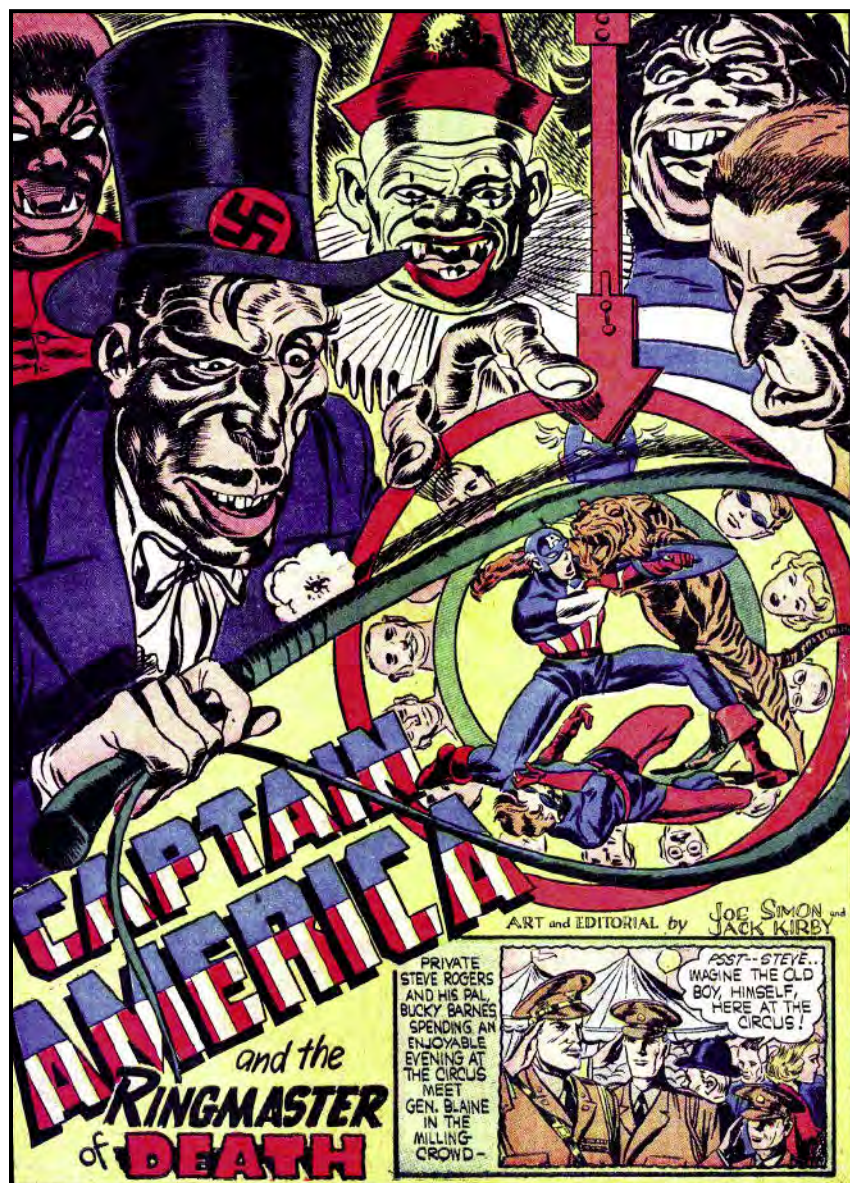


which the public is all the more familiar today.

KIRBY: Well, I don't think that monsters are ever mysterious. Monsters in human or inhuman form are living things with problems which vex them sorely in some way, and therefore they're inevitably involved in some sort of conflict in which anybody can get hurt. I don't think monsters zero in on any one in particular, and I think that's why they are generally pitied more than feared, and I felt the same way about them. I felt that monsters in some way have problems.

REESE: Yes. Let's get right into the Marvel days now and the Fantastic Four. The powers of the Fantastic Four with which everyone is already familiar, seemed to be reflections of the personalities of each of them. Would this be some manifestation of how the mind that held them together during a cosmic accident that should have disintegrated them, subconsciously guided the instability of their cells, their molecules, to produce this monster that was the gruff personality, this totally flexible man who had the totally flexible mind. This hot-headed teenager who literally becomes, you know, a hot-head, and in the pre-Women's Lib days, the defensive female who had the invisibility to hide, and then later the invisible barrier. Were these manifestations of the personalities, Jack?

KIRBY: Well, I think they were manifestations of my own, and they were manifestations of the times. Remember, we were absorbed with the possible and catastrophic results of radiation. Remember, we didn't know how radiation would affect anybody and being involved in the sale of comics, I used it in that manner, to sell comic books. And I used it in as entertaining a way as possible. Psychologically, whatever characters emerged were possibly the way I personally would imagine them.



From *Timely* to *Marvel*, the Ringmaster of Death became the Ringmaster of Crime, spanning the decades from his debut in the Golden Age in *Captain America*, to his return in *Thor* in the 1960s.

REESE:

Yeah, for example, Dr. Doom would seem to show how evil he was, and indeed even nobility could come out of the mistreatment of a human being, or the Hulk who was the misunderstood monster. Maybe you could talk with us just for a couple of minutes about the genesis of the Hulk, of Dr. Doom, of a few of your—you know, gee, everything by you seems like a major creation to me, but you know what I mean.

KIRBY: There are Dr. Doooms and Hulks in all of us. And if you read any dramatic news story, you'll find there were human beings involved. And you know as well as anybody else that there have been some pretty weird news stories in our times, and yet human beings are involved in them. And when you dissect the stories themselves, you'll find that they're not really dramatic at all, that the most dramatic part about them was that inside a human being, there is some sort of problems that we're constantly trying to solve. And I felt that my villains as well as my heroes were human beings and therefore could have very bad problems. I had a villain called Dr. Doom and Dr. Doom had a severe problem. He was a perfectionist, and perfectionists never solve their problems. It's a belief of my own, that none of us can be perfect, and if you're a perfectionist, you've got them in a conflict which can never be solved.

KNIGHT: This is *Earth Watch* on WBAL. I'm Robert Knight here in the studio with Warren Reese and with Jack Kirby, live on the phone celebrating his 70th birthday. And now comes the question about one of my favorite Marvel comics, Spider-Man, who was not exactly neurotic but had enough problems to have justifiably been so. How in the world did Spider-Man come into being?

KIRBY: Well, Spider-Man was also a creature of radiation. And another version of that type of situation creating a hero instead of a villain. And so Spider-Man became a hero and he dealt with his own conflict in a very heroic manner and he still does today. I think Spider-Man is a lesson for all of us, that no matter what our

problem is, it's our problem and if we make a heroic effort, we possibly may not solve it, but we can live with it. And Spider-Man lives with his problem.

REESE: Quick follow-up. Jack, you were involved I know creatively at the genesis of Spider-Man—

KIRBY: Yes.

REESE: —and then legend has it that you of course making everything look so much bigger and better and more wonderful than life, Stan wanted him to look like the guy in the street and therefore Steve Ditko did the interiors, but I know they used some of your covers. Maybe you could clarify for us, although I know how modest you are, try to solve for us without hurting anybody, some of the mystery of your involvement at that time in the genesis of Spider-Man and *Amazing Fantasy* #15, and then of course it departed and went another way. But you were there at the beginning. Please tell us about it, Jack.

KIRBY: I can tell you that I was deeply involved with creating Spider-Man. And I can't go any further than that, really. Because there've been so many variations and different things done with Spider-Man. But I can tell you at the beginning I was deeply involved with him.

KNIGHT: Well, let's turn then to the environment which may be equally as important, the environment out of which Spider-Man was created. And of course you were involved in the historic partnership with Stan Lee at Marvel, and so what was the working environment like there? How was it different from the other companies? What was the Merry Marvel Marching Society like?

KIRBY: Well, I didn't consider it merry. In those days it was a professional type thing. You turned in your ideas and you got your wages and you took them home. It was a very simple affair. It's nothing that could be

dramatized or glorified or glamorized in any way. It was a very, very simple affair. I created the situation and I panelized him, I did him panel by panel and I did everything but put the words in the balloons. But all of it was mine except the words in the balloons.

REESE: But Jack, what about these legendary story conferences of you and Stan or Stan and whomever acting the stories out in the office, jumping up on the desks and so forth, making things considerably more lively than when it was just an office consisting of Stan and fabulous Flo Steinberg, having people stick their faces in the door from Magazine Management, going, "Hurry up, little elves, Santa will be coming soon."

KIRBY: I'd have to disagree with that. It wasn't like that at all. It may have been like that after I shut the door and went home.

KNIGHT: Well, listen, we're gonna open a door, a very special surprise to Jack and let me mention this is *Earth Watch* on WBAI in New York. I'm Robert Knight here with Warren Reese and also with Max Schmeid in the studio, and we're speaking with Jack Kirby live. And now we can announce the very special surprise guest that we



Jack's Ringmaster page from his Valentine's Day sketchbook for wife Roz, and (above) two storyboard concepts for a never-produced *Roxie's Raiders* animated series.



have for tonight's program, your colleague in arms, Stan Lee. Good morning, Stan, are you—

STAN LEE: Hi, how you doing? I just, I want to wish Jack a happy birthday. This is a helluva coincidence. I'm in New York and I was tuning in the radio and there I hear him, talking about Marvel and I figured well, I might as well call and not let this occasion go by without saying many happy returns, Jack.

KIRBY: Well, Stanley, I want to thank you for calling and I hope you're in good health and I hope you stay in good health.

LEE: I'm doing my best, and the same to you. You know, you were talking earlier about your drawing and people sometimes criticized your figures and so forth. I always felt that the most important thing about your drawings—I remember when I was a kid and I first saw Captain America, it wasn't the correctness of the anatomy, but it was the emotion that you put in. To me, nobody could convey emotion and drama the way you could. I didn't care if the drawing was all out of whack because that wasn't important. You got your point across and nobody could ever draw a hero like you could. And I just want to say without getting too saccharin, that one of the marks I think of a really true great artist is he has his own style. And you certainly had and still have your own style and it's a style that nobody has even been able to come close to. And I think that's something you can be very

proud of, and I'm proud of you for it.

KIRBY: I have to thank you for helping me to keep that style, Stanley, and helping me to evolve all that and I'm certain that whatever we did together, we got sales for Marvel and I—

LEE: I think it was more than that, Jack. We certainly got the sales but whatever we did together and no matter who did what—and I guess that's something that'll be argued forever—but I think that the product that was produced was really even more than a sum of its parts. I think there was some slight magic that came into effect when we worked together, and I am very happy that we've had that experience.

KIRBY: Well, I was never sorry for it, Stanley. It was a great experience for me and certainly if the product was good, that was my satisfaction, and I've felt like that and I think it's the feeling of every good professional. And one of the reasons I respect you is the fact that you're certainly a good professional and you're certainly fond of a good product, and I feel that's the mark of all of us.

LEE: You notice I never interrupt you when you're saying something nice about me.

REESE: Let me say something nice about Stan Lee, the editorial piston behind the motor of Marvel Comics, and of course Stan Lee has been active in so many other areas. Stan, what are some of the things that you are proudest of and what are you involved in now?

LEE: Well, actually, I guess I'm proud of just about—I'm the kind of guy I'm proud of everything that has succeeded and I have totally forgotten anything that might have failed. Right now I'm—New World Pictures has bought Marvel Comics and they're really a great outfit. Obviously they do motion pictures. In fact, they changed their name recently to New World Entertainment. They do television series, video cassettes, and I've gotten involved in all of those aspects of the business as well as their animation studio, so I'm only really peripherally involved in the comics and I've never been happier because I guess I like being busy and I've never been busier.

REESE: And out of the fairness doctrine, what Jack are you currently doing?

KIRBY: I'm probably involved in the same sort of thing.

REESE: Oh, my God, that means that the two of you who indelibly



(top) Stan Lee's earliest work was writing filler text pages for Timely's comics, often adorned with Kirby art.

(above) Creepy two-page spread by Kirby, for Captain America #8 (Nov. 1941).

changed the history of comics when you were both in that field, have a shot at changing the course of animation perhaps.

KIRBY: Well, I feel that productive people are always doing something productive, and speaking for myself I've never stopped.

REESE: Well, let me now desaccharinize the conversation and let's get down to both of your assessments of the state of comics today. I mean, enough can never be said about what you have done in the history of comics, but I'd like for some specific comments, naming of names in regard to the changes that have taken place in comics such as the new approach to Batman, for instance. The, the current Spider-Man series. The introduction of ambiguity, conflict and contradiction in issues and ethics today. Do you have any views on that?

LEE: Who do you want first?

REESE: You, since you spoke first.

LEE: Okay. Well, actually, I think that we had plenty of conflict and when we were starting our early strips, certainly there was conflict in the *Fantastic Four* and *Spider-Man* and all of them. And I think Marvel sort of pioneered playing up the characterization more and playing up the personal problems of the heroes, making the heroes more believable because they were more realistic and more human.

However, today what has happened—and it's a natural evolution—today they've gone many steps beyond what we started doing in those days. I think the stories primarily are much more complex, they're more adult, they tackle subjects that we couldn't dream of tackling in the early days. When Marvel started, our stories were very much like the motion pictures of those days. Today the comics, especially Marvel comics, are very much like the motion pictures of today. Well, the

motion pictures of today are so much different than they were then, and the same evolution has really taken place in comic books.

KIRBY: Well, I think Stanley is correct on that and of course, the standards have changed, and the standards have changed in all the fields. And I'll agree with what Stanley says of all the facets of entertainment because he understands it as well as I do. Whatever is evolving, I couldn't put my finger on it but it's certainly different from the black-and-white type of thing that we did in what you refer to as the Golden Age.

REESE: Are there things that you look at with interest these days?

LEE: Oh, sure. Now there's a DC series called the *Watchmen* which I think was absolutely superb. There's the work that John Byrne has been doing, the work that Frank Miller has been doing. There are so many new artists coming up that are very sophisticated and they're very dramatic and they're very cinematic. A lot of them write and draw, they have their own styles. And my big regret really is I don't have time to read the books the way I used to.

KIRBY: Yeah, but the younger people have absorbed a lot more than we did, Stan. I think that's what it's all about today. Their understanding of life and they're a lot more understanding of themselves and what they produce is on a very realistic scale. And I don't

think there is anything visually around us that the younger people haven't noticed. That's why I respect the younger people.

LEE: You know, it's much more a visual era that we live in now than it was when we were starting because with television today—I don't know if anybody has brought this up, but comics are like the last bastion, the last defense against creeping illiteracy. If not for comics, I don't know how many young people there would be who just



(above) Jack's Spider-Man page from the Valentine's sketchbook he drew for wife Roz in the late 1970s.



Kirby's late 1960s Marvelmania buttons, and (below) his Dr. Doom ad art to promote them.

wouldn't ever read because they're just hooked on television, which is understandable, but luckily they do get hooked on comics and they do learn to equate reading with pleasure. And after awhile when they get the reading habit, they go on to reading other books as kids are want to do. But I think that's what most people don't think of, but I think that's a very important function the comics are serving today.

KNIGHT: Stan Lee and Jack Kirby here on *Earth Watch*. My name is Robert Knight. Also with me is Warren Reese who has some words for you. But I can't resist just some very quick word associations, or I guess I should say title associations. First, *Dark Knight*.

KIRBY: *Dark Knight*, I understand, is Batman.

LEE: Well, that's bringing Batman into the 20th Century, I guess, or an attempt to do so. And it was revolutionary and it was very successful.

KIRBY: It's still Batman and it's—it's Batman of today.

LEE: I don't think I ever told this to Jack; years ago I always used to wish that he and I could do Batman, Superman and Wonder Woman. I always thought that we could really inject new life into those characters.

KIRBY: Today they would be highly individualistic and very entertaining.

LEE: Yeah, I think so.

KNIGHT: Current Spider-Man.

KIRBY: The current Spider-Man would be very current. It would be understandable to the people today. It would have the same essence as any other character figure produced in these times. It would have to be timely. You can't produce super-heroes in the old fashion. You've got to produce it so it could be understood in the surroundings that we have about us today.

KNIGHT: *The 'Nam*.

LEE: Great book, great idea. I never would have thought that it would be okay that anybody would say, "Let's do a comic book about it." I think Marvel deserves a lot of credit for going ahead with it. I think it's absolutely brilliant.

KNIGHT: I am a producer of a series here called *Contragate* which is an investigative report into the Iran Contra affair which—

LEE: Produce on radio or television?

KNIGHT: It's on radio, every day, 8:00 a.m. on WBAI in New York and soon to be heard nationally. Now that prompts the next association in which, in a title in which the plot involves CIA involvement in facilitating the importation of drugs for money, for arms for the Contras explicitly. That occurs in Mike Grell's current *Green Arrow* series. Any reactions to that?

LEE: Well, I, I guess Grell is like everybody else. He stays up with the news. Unfortunately, I haven't seen the series. But you know, today,

[Editor's Note: Here is the crux of the Lee/Kirby "Who did what?" dispute, clearly spelled out, thanks to Jack and Stan conversing. While both men, at least initially, were involved in the plotting (later, it was mostly Jack doing plotting on many occasions), Jack saw his own margin notes as "writing the story", since he was directing the action and attitudes of the characters. Stan saw his dialogue as "writing the story", since he added the characterization to the images on the page, fleshing out the characters and making them come to life during the reading process.]

Both men are right! You could argue that it's still a story without the other man's input (ie. Jack's drawing and rough notes alone could be viewed as the equivalent of a silent movie—he commented in this interview about how his comics have always been silent films—while Stan's finished dialogue and captions could certainly be turned into a standalone novel, sans art). But the combination is what made it so special, and so much more than it would've been with only one man's input. Stan's comment, "Did you ever read one of the stories after it was finished?" is telling, as was Jack's about, "...it was the action I was interested in." Both men saw their input as invaluable, and the other's as, if not secondary, certainly something that could've been done effectively by someone else. If you look at each man's work with others—and by themselves—it's clear they both were wrong: when Lee and Kirby worked together, there was nothing else like it.]



just as Jack and I did years ago, you try to keep your stories contemporary and if something is happening that you're involved in or you think the public is involved in, it's very hard to keep a smattering of that out of what you're writing.

REESE: First of all to both of you gents, I have regards from fabulous Flo Steinberg who is too shy to be in the studio today. She lives about ten blocks from here, but sends happy birthday wishes to you, Jack, and love to both of you.

LEE: Ah, that's terrific, and the same to her. Fabulous Flo thought it was merry when we were working there.

REESE: Yes, she did. Now, both of you before were talking a bit about the responsibility of creators as they create. There is much controversy going on these days over company-imposed ratings systems which do not say that people cannot have explicit sex and violence, but simply have to have a warning on the cover. And these people seem to be very alarmed as though nobody in history every produced a good story without having that type of material in there, and I submit that they need only look back to what you wonderful gentlemen did together, to what Bill Everett did on the Sub-Mariner, indeed what some other people of contemporary times are doing. I would like your comments on that. I would also like to put to you gentlemen that what made your work so tremendous—when it comes right down to it, it doesn't matter who exactly did what, although it would be interesting to know whether or not Galactus' exit speech in FF #50 was an example of Jack's dialogue or Stan's, but you—

LEE: Oh, I'll say this: Every word of dialogue in those scripts was mine. Every story.

REESE: And I don't want to get into controversy about that. What I want to stress to you and to anyone who would be hearing this is that you two gents together, when you said the whole equals more than the sum of its parts, it is very true. I think that that was the success behind the Beatles, behind the Byrds, behind many of the rock groups. There seems to be—

KIRBY: I can tell you that I wrote a few lines myself above every panel that I—

REESE: Yes, I've seen those.

LEE: They weren't printed in the books.

REESE: All right, look, both of you, hey, kids, both of you guys—

LEE: Jack isn't wrong by his own rights because Jack, answer me truthfully—

KIRBY: I wasn't allowed to write—.

LEE: —did you ever read one of the stories after it was finished? I don't think you did. I don't think you ever read one of my stories. I think you were always busy drawing the next one. You never read the book when it was finished.

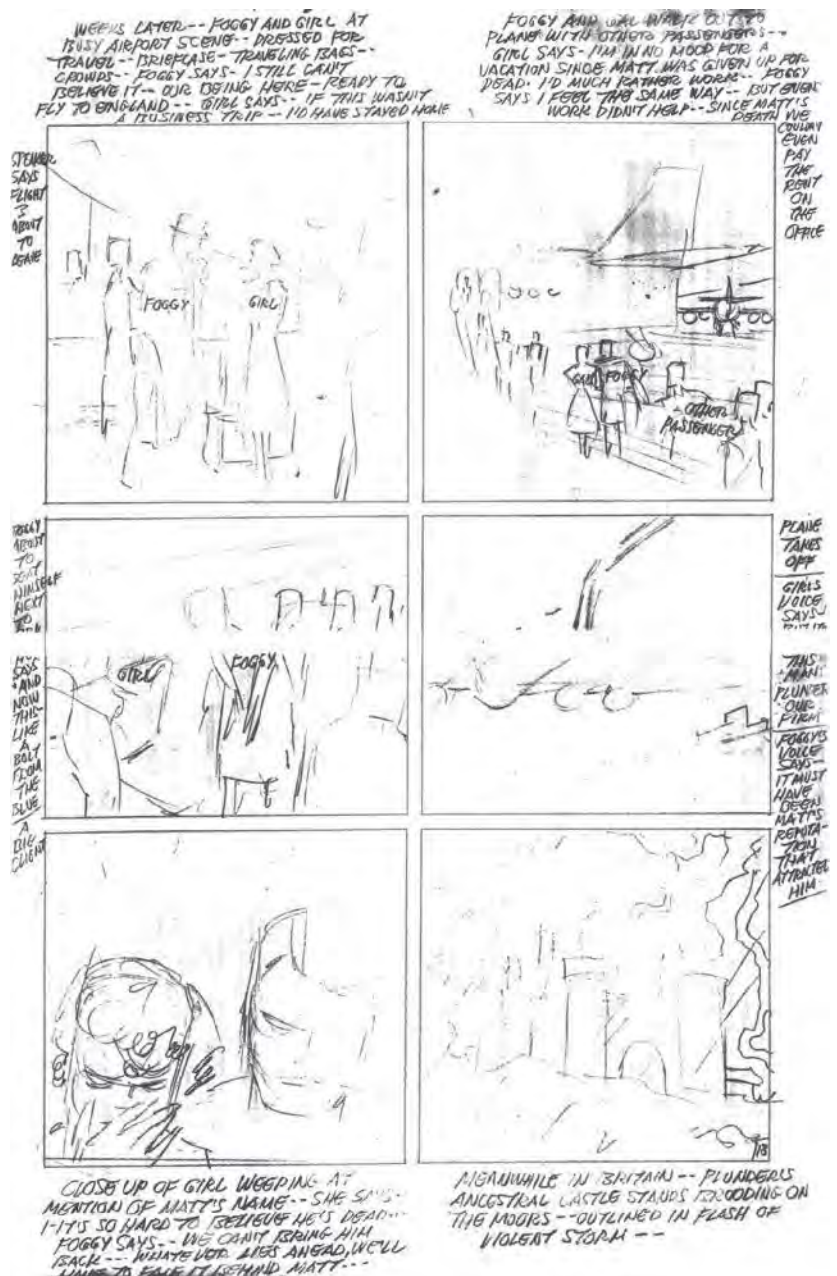
KIRBY: Dialogue, Stanley.

LEE: Huh?

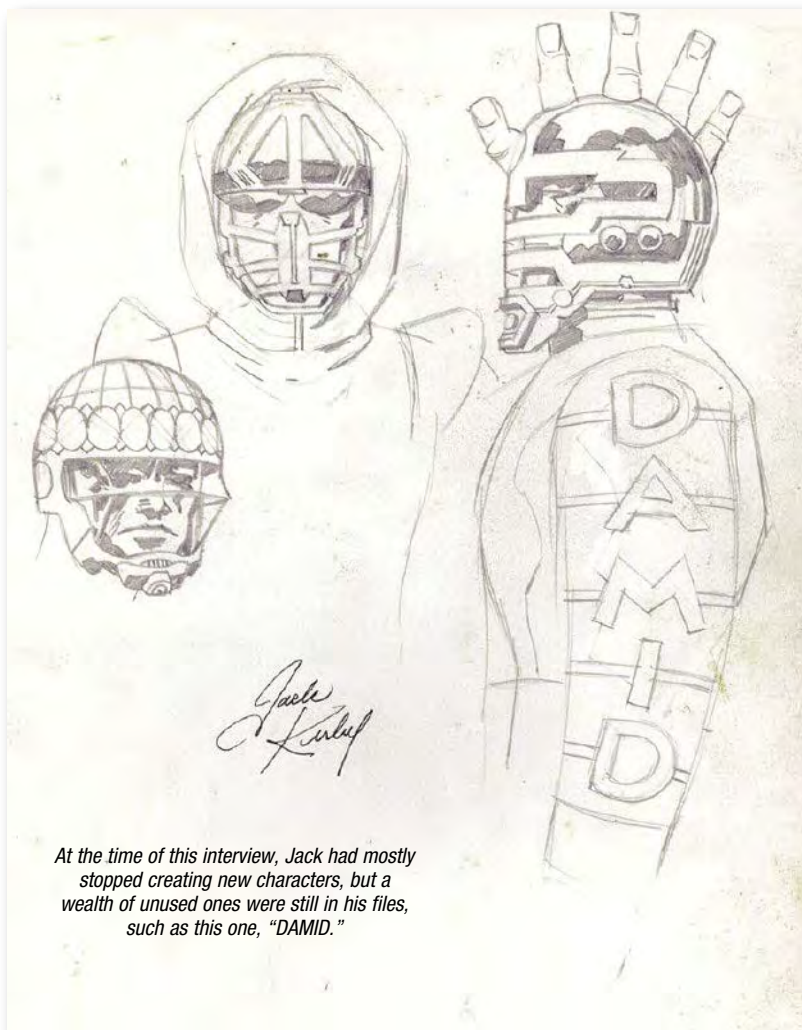
KNIGHT: Let me get in there with—.

KIRBY: I wrote my own dialogue. And that, I think that's the way people are. It was insignificant... So whatever was written in them was—well, you know, it was the action I was interested in.

LEE: I know, and I really think—and look, Jack, nobody has more respect for you than I do, and you know that. But I don't think you ever felt that the dialogue was that important. And I think you felt, "Well, it doesn't matter, anybody can put the dialogue in, it's what



Unused Kirby layouts for John Romita, for Daredevil. This falls somewhere between page 8 of DD #13, and page 11 of DD #14. Stan wrapped up Kirby's sub-plot about Matt Murdock being dead in just one panel (shown here), perhaps due to Romita no longer needing Jack's layouts.



At the time of this interview, Jack had mostly stopped creating new characters, but a wealth of unused ones were still in his files, such as this one, "DAMID."

I'm drawing that matters." And maybe you're right; I don't agree with it, but maybe you're right.

KIRBY: No, I'm only trying to say that I think that the human being is very important. If one man is writing and drawing and doing a strip, it should come from an individual. I believe that you should have the opportunity to do the entire thing yourself.

REESE: Gentlemen, what we're seeing here—

KIRBY: Create your own story.

REESE: —is part of the inner dynamics, the bit of conflict from which obviously you complemented one another, held one another in check and a great product emerged. I submit not only on behalf of you but to creators of today that the success of Marvel and the success of Bill Everett's Sub-Mariner and the success of almost anything that was really great had to do with the attention to science, to characterization, to detail, to verisimilitude, to keeping a greater attention to the characters than to the egos of the people creating them and, you know, signing autographs at conventions. And that that pretense, trying to make the thing seem as real as possible, having characters grow, having characters die, having Reed and Sue get married and have a child—whom by the way should be adult by now and dating one of the X-Women—is not only showing the attention to the detail of the characters, but as an insurance that readers will not outgrow the comics and will stay with them, because it is not an immutable fact of life that you outgrow comics at 13.

LEE: You know, when you mention an ego problem, the funny thing is, I'm afraid those problems are only cropping up now. I think when

Jack and I did the strips, there was no ego problem; we were just doing the best we could at the time.

KNIGHT: Well, ego is the fuel of creativity, and I'm very proud to have been able to have both Jack Kirby and Stan Lee live on *Earth Watch* on WBAI in New York. My name is Robert Knight joined by Warren Reese and Max Schmeid and as we close this program, I would like each of you to make a concluding statement. First you, Stan, and then you, Jack, because it's your birthday.

LEE: Okay. Well, since it is Jack's birthday, I want to make—I wish I had had time to prepare something. I didn't. But I just want to say that Jack has, I think, made a tremendous mark on American culture if not on world culture, and I think he should be incredibly proud and pleased with himself and I want to wish him all the best, him and his wife Roz and his family, and I hope that ten years from now I'll be in some town somewhere listening to a tribute to his 80th birthday, and I hope I'll have an opportunity to call at that time and wish him well then too. Jack, I love you.

KIRBY: Well, the same here, Stan. Thank you very much, Stan. But Warren, are you there?

REESE: Yes, I am, Jack.

KIRBY: Now, listen, you can understand now how things really were, and of course I want to thank you for inviting me on your show. Thank everybody for their courtesy and it was very pleasant to talk to you.

REESE: Well, I, I must inject this one point of disagreement with you, Jack Kirby. And that is, it is we who have you to thank, you and Stan.

SCHMEID: Amen for that. Happy birthday, Jack, and thank you Stan.

KIRBY: Thank you, guys, you're really great and if I said anymore it would be—oh, listen, you guys are wonderful.

KNIGHT: All right. Thank you both. Stan Lee and Jack Kirby on *Earth Watch*. ★

[Barry Pearl, who transcribed this interview, has released *The Essential Marvel Age Reference Book, 1961-1977*. This 1250-page PDF covers every single comic and every story of the Marvel Age. Along with over 1000 images from the actual comics there are: title, date, number, summary, related links and full credits (editor, author, artists, plotters, letterers, etc.) to all the stories and covers of the Marvel Age, plus comments from the creators themselves. There's a chronological 130-page history of the Timely/Atlas/Marvel Era (1900-1976) which features the publication dates for every comic starting with Marvel Comics #1. It also features a separate list of the guest appearances of every Marvel hero and villain in their published chronological order, plus a full list of creators' credits, audio video presentations, and much more. The digital book is \$29.99 and is available at <http://forbushman.blogspot.com/>



AN EYE-
POPPING

EVOLUTION!



INCIDENTAL ICONOGRAPHY

*An ongoing analysis of Kirby's visual shorthand,
and how he inadvertently used it to develop his characters,
by Sean Kleefeld*



Not a lot is said about Jack Kirby's early comic strip work that he did for H.T. Elmo and the Lincoln Features Syndicate. Jack himself didn't talk about it much (understandable in light of his long list of more impressive creations later in his career) and it simply wasn't that large or accomplished of an outfit for many other people to discuss it either. But let's take a look at one of the strips Jack created while he was there: *Socko the Seadog*.

Elmo's general approach was to duplicate something that was popular, but syndicate it at a much lower cost than the original. That the quality that made the original popular often wasn't there was immaterial; it was a cheap alternative for smaller newspapers with smaller budgets. It must have been a no-brainer for Elmo, after hiring an artist who just came from working on the insanely popular *Popeye* cartoons (a 1938 poll ranked Popeye more popular than Mickey Mouse), to have Jack develop a *Popeye* knock-off strip.

In the initial strips, Socko looks and acts almost exactly like Popeye. He wears the exact same dark sailor uniform and, with the exception of not having overly-developed forearms, has the same build. The only appreciable difference between the two is in the face; Socko wears a very full beard.

(As an aside, the *Socko* strips were sold as a complete package to these smaller papers. Whenever a new paper signed on, they would be sent everything, starting with the very first strip. Thus, different papers carrying *Socko* might publish the same stories months apart. I found one running the strip as late as 1941, two years after Jack had left Lincoln! Fortunately, Jack numbered all of the strips, so their order is easy to determine.)

Interestingly, in Socko's first appearances, his bulbous nose is drawn very similarly to Popeye's. But within a few strips, Jack redraws it in a manner more akin to Olive Oyl's, much longer and thinner. Presumably, Elmo was concerned that it bore too much of a resemblance to E.C. Segar's character, and might lead to legal action. Given how early in the strip's run this changed, I doubt anyone representing Segar and/or Fleischer Studios had actually seen the strip, much less threatened legal action.

However, as Jack continued with the strip, he deviated more and more from the original "inspiration." Socko's body as a whole grew taller and leaner, coming closer to typical human proportions, though he kept his somewhat uncomfortably over-sized hands throughout the strip's run. Jack also had Socko ditch the Navy blues he (and Popeye) started with, and gave him a striped shirt with a slightly undersized peacoat that allowed his long shirt sleeves to stick out a bit. These changes were evidently enough that Jack returned to drawing Socko with the bulbous nose reminiscent of Popeye without

any further changes or, apparently, arguments from Elmo.

This taller version of Socko was more conducive to Jack's drawing style anyway. With the relatively stubby legs and arms, actions scenes seemed stiff and awkward. A more lithe Socko allowed Jack a greater fluidity of motion and, while most of the strip's jokes were verbal, Jack was able to add some more punch to them with exaggerated actions and expressions.



Also of note is that Jack was just entering his twenties when he worked on these strips. He was far from the master comics creator that we often recognize him as. This is particularly noticeable in the changes to Socko's beard. In the initial strips, it's bushy and drawn with a very scratchy, uneven quickness (above). It changes style and length from panel to panel. Just a bunch of slashes around where Socko's chin might be. As time goes on, though, Jack stylizes it a bit more. It's shortened and trimmed, and the lines become more deliberate and regular (as shown at left). I suspect this comes more from Jack still learning his craft, and streamlining how he works against daily deadlines, as opposed to a design decision like the nose was. Ultimately, it gives Socko a bit more distinctiveness, and makes Jack look more like a professional artist.

This is essentially Jack's first professional work as a comic artist. For whatever he may have learned working at Fleischer Studios before, his Lincoln strips are where he really seems to learn a lot about actually making comics. His work gets more and more polished as the strip goes on and, while he doesn't get to play much with the layout or formal structure of the medium, we can see how he began his approach to designing his own characters and streamlining them for the stories he was trying to tell. ★



by John Morrow

(below) C.C. Beck's *Silver Spider*.



(below) John Romita's work on the short-lived *Captain America* revival of the 1950s.



Concluding our look at key moments in Jack's life and career from *TJKC* #60 (which covered Marvel in the 1960s), #62 (which covered 1970-1975), #63 (covering Kirby's 1975-1994 era), and #64 (covering 1917-1949), we present this final timeline of key moments that affected Kirby's life in the 1950s. Of invaluable help were Richard Kolkman's work on the *Jack Kirby Checklist*, Ray Wyman, Tom Kraft, Glen Gold, and Rand Hoppe, as well as Mark Evanier's book *KIRBY: King of Comics*.

This isn't a complete list of every important date in Kirby's 1950s career history, but should hit most of the main ones. Please send us additions and corrections, and at some point, we'll compile one single, fully-corrected time.

My rule of thumb: Cover dates were generally two-three months later than the date the book appeared on the stands, and six months ahead of when Kirby was working on the stories, so I've assembled the timeline according to those adjusted dates—not the cover dates—to set it as close as possible to real-time.

LATE 1940s - EARLY 1950s

• 1948: Psychologist Dr. Fredric Wertham publishes two articles (in *Collier's* and the *American Journal of Psychotherapy*) that start a public outcry against comics, most notably EC Comics.

• 1949: Kirby family moves to a house in Mineola, Long Island, New York, which would be the family's home for the next 20 years. Jack worked from his basement studio nicknamed "The Dungeon."

• December 1949: *Captain America Comics* #75 is published, the final issue of its original run, although #74 was the last to feature the Simon & Kirby character.

1950

• August: *Boys' Ranch* #1 is published by Harvey Comics. It would run through #6 in 1951.

1951

• September: Martin Goodman begins using the Atlas News Company logo on his (formerly) Timely comics.

1952

• June: *Strange World of Your Dreams* #1 is published.
• November: Daughter Barbara Kirby is born.

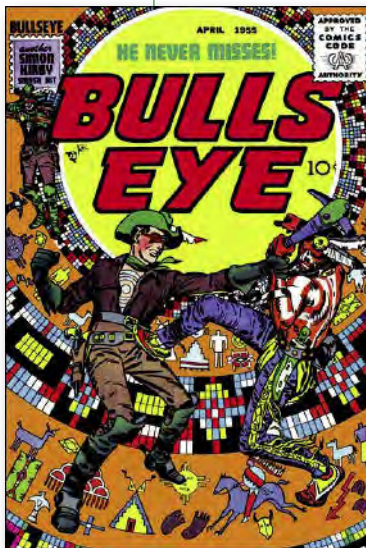
1953

• 1953: C. C. Beck, wanting to get back into comics, asks Joe Simon for work, and the unused *Silver Spider* (left) is the result. This would later be the springboard for *The Fly*, and presumably for Jack's original *Spider-Man* attempt.
• Late 1953: Simon and Kirby open Mainline Comics, subletting office space from Harvey Publications. They produce four titles: *Bullseye*, *Foxhole*, *In Love*, and *Police Trap*.
• October: Atlas Comics' *Young Men* #24 is published, briefly reviving *Captain America*. This infuriated Simon and Kirby, due to their past dispute with Martin Goodman over profits on the character, so the duo set out to create their own new patriotic hero, *Fighting American*.
• October: *Captain 3-D* #1 is published by Harvey Comics.

1954

• 1954: Wertham's book *Seduction of the Innocent* is published, blaming comics for the rise in Juvenile Delinquency in America.
• February: *Fighting American* #1 debuts. It would change course from straight-laced superheroics to satire with issue #2 in April.
• March: *Bullseye* #1 is published by Mainline, with Kirby layouts.
• April 21, 22, and June 4: A United States Senate Subcommittee holds hearings on Juvenile Delinquency, and the effects of comics books on children. Copies of Mainline's *Bullseye* and *Foxhole* are used as exhibits in the televised hearings against comics.

• May: *Captain America's* short-lived revival ends with issue #78 of his resurrected title.
• September: The Comics Code is established. EC Comics ends its horror and suspense titles, and the final issue of *Black Magic* is published by Crestwood.
• September: Simon and Kirby audit Crestwood's books, and discover approximately \$130,000 in unpaid royalties on S&K work. They are forced to settle for a reported \$10,000 rather than have Crestwood go out of business, leaving them nothing.
• December: *Win A Prize* #1 is published by Charlton Comics. The fact that S&K didn't self-publish is a clear sign that Mainline was near its end by this point, and they sell the rest of their unpublished material to Charlton. Kirby



takes the team's final project, *Challengers of the Unknown*, with him (to eventually be sold to DC Comics), while Joe Simon goes into the advertising field.

1955

- January-May: The final issues of *Bullseye*, *In Love*, *Foxhole* and *Police Trap* are published by Charlton Comics.
- 1955: Following the lean times after the demise of Mainline, Kirby would work on titles for Harvey Comics like *Western Tales*, romance titles for Prize, and humor work for Charlton.



He also drew random covers, and prepped several ideas for newspaper strips, in an attempt to leave the dying comics field. None of these ever got off the ground.

- February: Final issue of *Fighting American* (#7) is published.
- May: EC's *Mad* switches to a magazine format with issue #24, thereby avoiding the Comics Code.



of the *Space Force*, and Kirby would recruit Wallace Wood to ink the strip.

- January: *Race for the Moon* #1 is published by Harvey Comics.
- April 15: Schiff draws up a formal agreement specifying royalty percentages for each person involved in *Sky Masters*, and by July, Schiff requests a higher percentage, which Kirby balks at. Schiff subsequently fires Kirby from *Challengers of the Unknown*.
- May: Kirby draws samples for the unrealized *Surf Hunter* strip, which Wally Wood inks.
- June 7: Mainstay Atlas (Marvel) Comics artist Joe Maneely dies, leaving an opening for Kirby, a similarly speedy artist, to return.
- September 8: *Sky Masters of the Space Force* debuts in US newspapers. It would run through February 25, 1961.
- December 11: Kirby learns Schiff is suing him for breach of contract, and Kirby counter-sues Schiff.

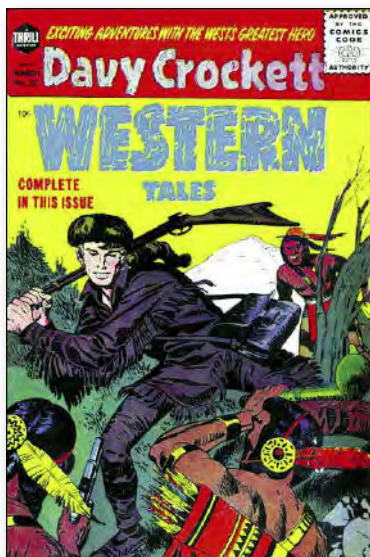
- December-January 1959: Kirby's first work for *Strange Tales* (#67) and *Tales of Suspense* (#2) is published.

1956

- September: Kirby's five-page "Mine Field" story is published in *Battleground* #14, marking his return to Marvel Comics (then Atlas). He followed with work on *The Black Rider*, *Yellow Claw*, and others.
- December: *Showcase* #6 is published at DC Comics, featuring the *Challengers of the Unknown*. Kirby would also produce DC work for *House of Mystery*, *House of Secrets*, and the Green Arrow strip in *Adventure Comics*.

1957

- April-May: A combination of an economic downturn and the loss of his distributor causes Martin Goodman to



cancel all but 16 of Atlas' titles, and to stop assigning new jobs for several months until existing inventory was used up. This event came to be known as The Atlas Implosion, and the loss of work greatly affected Kirby.

- July: *Alarming Tales* #1 is published by Harvey Comics.

1958

- Early 1958: An agent from the George Matthew Adams Service asks DC Comics editor Jack Schiff for a science-fiction comic for his syndicate. Schiff would bring in Kirby and Dick and Dave Wood to create *Sky Masters*



- April-June: Simon & Kirby briefly reunite on *The Double Life of Private Strong* and *The Adventures of the Fly* for Archie Comics.
- Late 1950s: Kirby shows John Severin an idea that would later become *Sgt. Fury and his Howling Commandos* ("sort of an adult Boy Commandos").
- October 16: *Sky Masters* court trial is held.
- October: Kirby's last work for *Young Romance* is published.
- December 3: The New York Supreme Court rules in favor of Jack Schiff in the *Sky Masters* lawsuit, and on December 21, Kirby is ordered to pay restitution to Schiff.

1960

- June: *Sick Magazine* #1 is published, edited by Joe Simon.

- September: Daughter Lisa Kirby is born.

1961

- Early 1961: Kirby produces work for *Classics Illustrated*.
- August 8, 1961: *Fantastic Four* #1 is published.

1962

- June (August cover date): *Amazing Fantasy* #15 published, featuring a Kirby cover, on the first appearance of Spider-Man. ★



KIRBY... KING OF BEASTS!

by Marc Nadel

(right) Marc Nadel's interpretation of Kirby, King of Beasts!

(below) Groot may be all the rage lately, but he wasn't much to look at when he first appeared in *Tales to Astonish* #13 (Nov. 1960).



and edgy monsters, carnivores, reptiles, and even his insects, managed to remain

cuddly! In

other words, in another era, Kirby's animals had exactly the qualities needed to become beloved children's book characters.

It was natural, I suppose, that Jack's creatures emerged from his mind and hand with purposeful anatomical exaggerations in the service of narrative and visual excitement, as did his superhumans. They were imbued with that essential aspect of Kirby's art: unadulterated, unfettered power, which, as it happens, is at the heart of nature's wild and brutal world. Ask Darwin. The mighty survive. Strength and size do matter. And Jack Kirby's original animal designs, with their resultant unique looks, were built to last.

Let's break it down chronologically. Kirby always drew beasts, whether imagined monsters or real world mammals. His creatures roamed throughout his early Golden Age stints with Joe Simon at Timely (e.g. Tuk the Cave Boy's woolly mammoth and other mega-mammals) and at DC (e.g. Sandman's reptilian steed from *Adventure* #94). His most omnipresent animal characters were the horses that charged at the reader in S&K Western series such as *Boys' Ranch* and *Bullseye*. There were also many examples of alien life forms in his DC science-fiction stories, and in *The Challengers of the Unknown*.

But Kirby's most charismatic critters were really born (or hatched, spawned, or built in a lab) in his giant monster stories with Stan Lee for Atlas. The alien dragon Fin Fang Foom was, for decades, the most famous example of this genre, appearing in later stories as an adversary of heroes such as Iron Man and The Hulk. He has recently been supplanted (emphasis on "plant") by the latter-day cinematic stardom of Groot. While they looked nothing like each other, they were both unmistakably Kirby creations. But why? What separates them from their Steve Ditko- or Don Heck-drawn brethren?

Both Fin Fang Foom and the original Groot benefited from Jack's penchant for anthropomorphizing their torsos to make them relatable, and then allowing his imagination to run wild with the rest of their physiques. Triple F was the lucky recipient of one of Jack's most unforgettable designs: A giraffe neck, alligator skin, and a magnificent mug that was pure Kirby—a gangster's eyes, a prizefighter's nose, and a vacuum cleaner mouth, all somehow retrofitted onto a dragon's face, with its required fins and fangs. As for his foom, it was nowhere to be seen, although I suspect that it was



only was the sinewy Saber-tooth originally portrayed in those three notable issues by Jack, he also starred in stories by two other all-time comic art masters: Gil Kane and John Buscema. (Kane, in fact, did a magnificent biographical series of Zabu that should be reprinted as a one-shot comic.)

Now we turn to the *Fantastic Four* era when the logo proclaiming it to be The World's Greatest Comic Magazine was cold, hard, fact. The highlight of that run was The Inhumans/Silver Surfer/Galactus saga. During that immensely inventive period, Kirby's bestiary was expanded to include two of its most memorable and beautifully designed characters.



features are reminiscent of a protoceratops, with the protective facial fringe transformed into a cat's-eye mask. Of course, he can breathe

fire from his muzzle. But Kirby makes Dragon Man's design unique by adding and exaggerating a key element of the pachycephalosaur, a dinosaur whose skull was a large, rock-hard dome. Dragon Man's extends far above and behind his armored facial shield. Who but Kirby could make those disparate elements work as a cohesive visual? One look at Dragon Man as a youngster, and the image was indelibly etched on my memory.

But Jack and Stan were far from done. In the very next issue, Medusa's sister Crystal and her pet Lockjaw, the gigantic fourth-dimensional bulldog, were introduced. (His name was taken from an early Simon & Kirby humor strip about an Albert-like alligator.) The first appearance of the elemental girl and her teleporting pup was preceded and followed by more action with Dragon Man. The first time that I read that story, my imagination fast-forwarded to their inevitable battle. I would say that I'm still waiting, but only Kirby could have given those scenes the impact that they deserve.

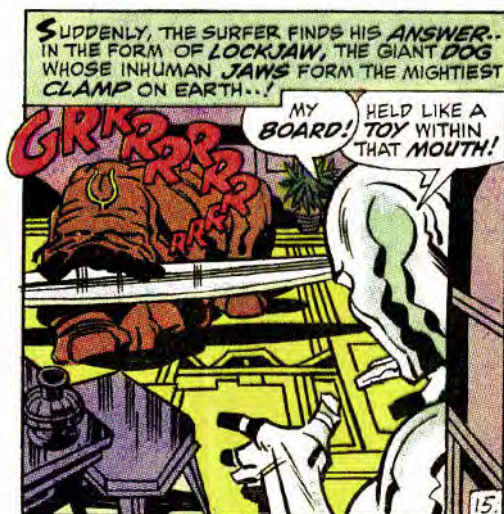
While the pairing of the ultimate strong, silent type Black Bolt and his femme fatale of flexible follicles Medusa, insured the popularity of The Inhumans, the more mysterious members of the team made them unforgettable: The super-stomping satyr Gorgon, karate king Karnak, and especially the Creature From the Jack Lagoon, Triton.

Jack and Stan were expanding the definition of what could be incorporated into a super-hero tale, and it was Lockjaw who brought the quality of fable to the genre, just as "Tales of Asgard" did with myth. (It has been well documented that over at DC, Julius Schwartz did the same with science-fiction.) Kirby's design of the massive molossoid was brilliant, making him the worthy literary descendant of colossal canines from Greek mythology, the brothers Grimm, and Doyle. It took more than just blowing him up to the size of a Kodiak (or a Pontiac) to achieve the desired effect. It was the muscularity of the torso and limbs that made his bulk so impressive. Jack kept the head proportionately the same as in real bulldogs, so as not to make him too cartoon-like (real bulldogs are plenty cartoon-like on

(this spread) Two more beastly pages from Roz Kirby's Valentine's Day sketchbook.



their own). He had a lyre-shaped antenna on his forehead matching that of Black Bolt, which enabled him to slide through time and space. Kirby, keeping true to his character's name, geometrically abstracted his solid black muzzle, thereby emphasizing the size of his powerful jaw. His gargantuan physicality was the perfect counterpoint to his nature, as demonstrated by his lapdog devotion to the beautiful Crystal. That relationship defined Lockjaw as a wholly original cross between King Kong and a King Charles Spaniel, and we were eventually treated to puppy-like behavior in scenes where he tussled with two Marvel powerhouses. Happily, both sequences were drawn by Kirby, which convinces me further that this version of Lockjaw's personality was mainly his. The first scene was in *FF* #46, when Lockjaw held the Thing at bay with a huge steel girder. Years later, in *Silver Surfer* #18, the sterling soliloquist met, and, naturally, battled The Inhumans. In one of my favorite sequences, Lockjaw did the impossible. He effortlessly picked up the cosmic board as if it were a bone. The



Surfer, wielder of the Power Cosmic (as he keeps telling us) tried to retrieve it, but couldn't pull it from those jaws. In order not to hurt the contrarian canine's canines, the metallic messiah finally blasted the board to make him let go. Luckily, Lockjaw was just playing tug of war, because he could have teleported and buried the board anywhere in the solar system, where it might never have been unearthed, or un-Saturned. That is, unless Lockjaw got really hungry.

This issue also had never-before-seen anthropomorphized Inhumans: The centaur Stallion, a Lion Man (predating *Kamandi*'s cast), and Timberius, an Ent-like creation. Later in the book, two unnamed avian characters, one songbird-like, and one more hawkish,



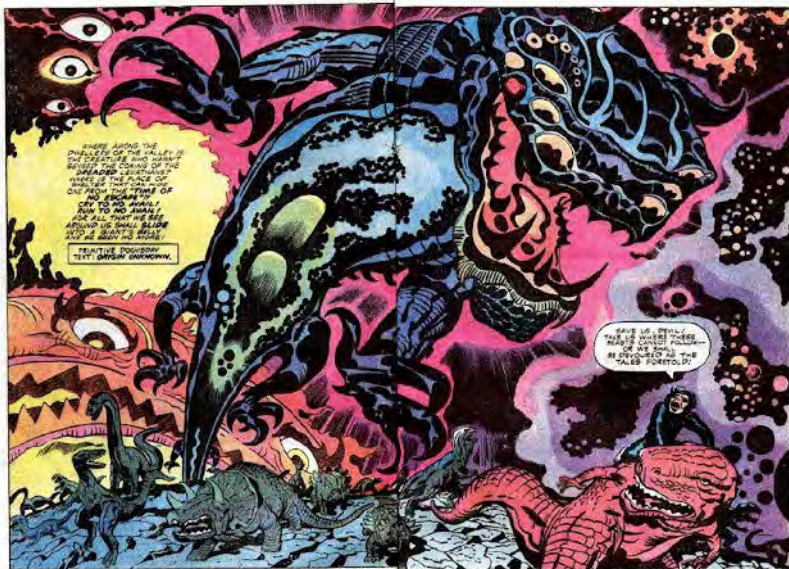
attacked the Surfer, as well. The Inhumans and Silver Surfer storylines were the comics that redefined the medium. Jack and Stan packed in more action, exciting new characters, and no-limits plotlines than ever before.

Time marched on, and Jack Kirby marched on over to DC. His Fourth World epic expanded the mythic quality of that universe, and it inspired storylines that are still rolling out today. The revitalized Newsboy Legion had a monstrous mascot appropriately named Angry Charlie, and the new Sandman had his own nightmarish nemeses. But it was in the world of *Kamandi* that Jack dreamed up new animal characters. Part *Planet of the Apes*, part *Tarzan*, but all Kirby,

Kamandi's anthropomorphized supporting cast was as distinctive in personality as it was visually. Prince Tuftan, tiger pirates, thuggish apes, menacing man-bats, and brigadier bulldogs were more or less Moreau-lads with animal heads. Harkening back to Atlas monsters and early *Challengers* stories, there were colossal crabs and oversized octopi. But one completely original character in this opus was given a memorable Kirby name, and unique Kirby anatomy: the giant grasshopper, Kliklak. It is his streamlined design (combining an immense insect head, a torpedo-like torso and somewhat humanoid, muscular legs) that makes him so memorable. In a sequence involving the serpentine, Scrooge-like storeowner Sacker, Kliklak was first

introduced as a dangerous captive called "Devil". But when Kamandi enters the scene, the storyline becomes a cinematic pastiche, beginning with the equine classics *Black Beauty* and *National Velvet*: boy meets untamable steed, boy gains the animal's trust, and they enter the big race. Then it morphs into *Ben-Hur* and *Spartacus*, with a deadly rigged race that devolves into gladiatorial combat. Sadly, the final movie homage is to *Old Yeller*. Jack created an outrageous, almost alien character, but there is real emotional impact when Kamandi shoots the wounded beast to end his suffering.

One other DC sequence that should be noted is in the one-shot *Atlas*. Despite the title character's mythological origins in ancient Greece, Kirby created an earlier, unspecified era as the setting. Otherworldly architecture and costuming abound, of course, but Kirby placed the time frame well before the parameters of any known civilization. A prehistoric brontops (a rhino with a slingshot horn) attacks the mighty Atlas in a splash page which pulsates with the impact.



PRINCESS PYTHON
FROM
THOR # 145

Jack Kirby



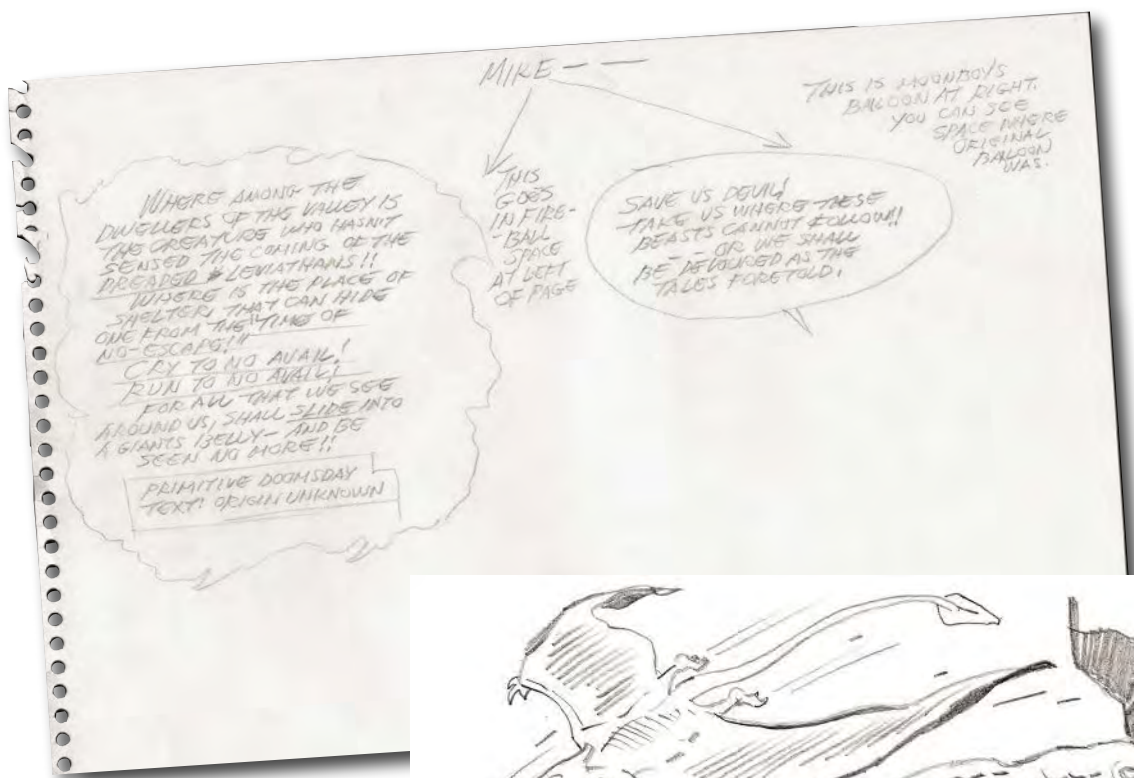
Kirby makes the reader feel the massive thud when the two powerhouses meet by drawing the brontops as a stampeding, thickly muscled, and seemingly supernatural force. The following panel shows Atlas winning the test of strength, while simultaneously displaying his compassion by refusing to harm the young beast. In a mere two panels, Kirby defines his hero's character, and gives us a glimpse at an almost unknown, extinct species.

When Jack returned to Marvel, he followed up on the concept of a time-scrambled primordial world. Another major creature creation sprang forth from Kirby's imagination fully formed, and what a full form: *Devil Dinosaur*. In the tradition of Verne, Doyle, Burroughs, and, most closely, following in the size 20, Triple F footsteps of V.T. Hamlin's *Alley Oop*, Jack



presented us with a prehistoric version of the Savage Land. But in an ironically modern narrative approach, the hirsute humanoid was reduced to interpreter, while the red Rex took center stage as Kirby's most massive powerhouse ever. I've always felt that it was Jack's style that made it possible for the reader to believe that Devil Dinosaur thought of Moonboy as a sidekick rather than a side dish. In yet another

(above and next page) More sketchbook pencil magic from Kirby, King of Beasts!



(left) Jack's handwritten instructions to Mike Royer, for how to letter the two-page spread from Devil Dinosaur #4 (July 1978). The published spread is shown on the previous page.

conceptual design twist, Jack created a scarlet Tyrannosaurus with the teeth of a shark. I don't know if Kirby gave much thought to this, or if it was just an instinctive artistic decision to combine the two apex predators of their times. But it immediately provided Devil Dinosaur (and other saurians that appeared in his title) with a distinct look. Devil's color, while an obvious connection to the character's satanic sobriquet, guaranteed that the dominant predator would be the dominant visual image throughout the series. Even the texture of his skin, somewhere between early Ben Grimm and a crocodile, added to his sense of toughness. But it is the energy provided by the matchless imagination and divine pencil of his creator that makes this devil so memorable.

Of course, the same can be said for all of Jack Kirby's animals... and for his aliens, robots, monsters, heroes, and villains. It is why he is the once and future King, and why we remain such loyal, and grateful, subjects. ★

Marc Nadel is an award-winning children's book illustrator and caricaturist whose work can be seen at www.marcnadel.com. His first graphic novel, *The Adventures of Tuco-Tuco*, will be published in 2015.



Know of some Kirby-inspired work that should be covered here? Send to:

Adam McGovern
PO Box 257
Mt. Tabor, NJ 07878

As A Genre

A regular feature examining Kirby-inspired work, by Adam McGovern



(right) Ryan Dunlavey's *kracklin'* show poster.

(next page, top) Dapper Stan brainstorms while Kirby does the planet-lifting (Steven Rattazzi and Nat Cassidy, from left).

Photo: Hunter Canning

(next page, bottom) Kid Kirby back-in-time to the drawing board, *Fleischer Studios, 1937* (Rattazzi).

Photo: Crystal Skillman

(below) *Cosmic Cubicle: Skillman and Van Lente* (left to right) create on a stage of sorts, the Drama Book Shop's 2014 window-based *Write Out Front* event in NYC.

Photo: Micheline Auger

Drama King

Jack Kirby created stories that can be told into eternity—since he saw beyond reality, beyond the future any of us lives in. The tales he heard his imagination telling are still continuing, on worldwide movie-screens this year, from the microcosm of *Ant-Man* to the grand galactic canvas of *Avengers 2*. But the story he lived himself can be told from new perspectives for every generation he means something to, and it was told in 2014 not in a multiplex but on an intimate stage.

Crystal Skillman & Fred Van Lente's play *King Kirby* debuted at Brooklyn's indie theater, The Brick, last summer, and brought Kirby, his contemporaries and their wartime and mid-century context to life in a way to match the worlds Kirby himself fashioned from nothingness to greatness.

Skillman's name is well-known to followers of leading-edge drama, a frenetic and empathic playwright who understands the inner lives of outcasts in the geek world and many other social fringes. Van Lente is a familiar name to most people reading this magazine, a rediscoverer of the same wonder that Kirby tapped to create his own characters and stories, from fascinating re-creations of them like Van Lente's *X Men Noir* to revitalizations of other preexisting properties as varied as Magnus, Robot Fighter and even "characters" like Plato and Ayn Rand (in Van Lente's award-

winning edu-comic *Action Philosophers* with artist/co-creator Ryan Dunlavey), as well as creator-owned originals like the current multi-generational (and incarnational) romance/thriller *Resurrectionists*.

Van Lente researched Kirby's life and Skillman channeled Kirby's and his foes' and loved ones' character in the married couple's first

full collaboration, to sold-out houses, added performances and acclaim in *The New York Times* and elsewhere. It's a tale you've seen parts and aspects of told many times in this publication, and from many points of view; it's a story that can only go one way for Kirby, and Stan, and Roz and the others, but can be understood more by us as we go through history. In *King Kirby*, Skillman & Van Lente tell it all

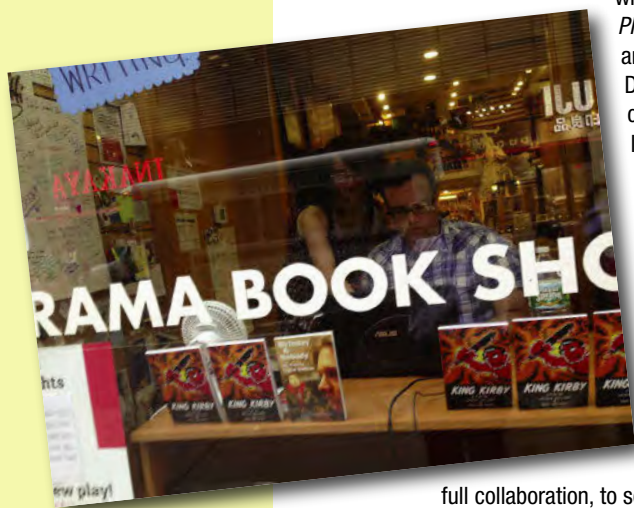


over again and, for the real people who lived it and those they're heroes to, get the story very right.

The Jack Kirby Collector spoke with the playwrights at a Korean restaurant and outside Madison Square Garden in the heart of Kirby's multi-ethnic, entertainment-mecca Manhattan on January 14, 2015.

THE JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR: In some ways, the past can change, with shifting perspectives and new knowledge coming to light. *King Kirby* painted a vivid portrait of what was at stake for Kirby the man—his determination to be a provider, and to be reasonable, drawn from his deprived tenement childhood and the murderous WWII experience he had trouble making sense of, even when his family may have wanted him to fight the corporations and his sense of self may sometimes have been too stubborn. The play also put the Kirby family lawsuit in context for many people who may have heard that Marvel/Disney was going to court but not been familiar with what was behind it—right before the settlement happened. Is *King Kirby* an evolving document, based on what we come to understand of Kirby and what happens with his legacy?

FRED VAN LENTE: I don't think the settlement really changes the action or the point of the play that much. The settlement doesn't do Kirby much good since he didn't know about it and wasn't able to participate in his lifetime. That's not to say that what Marvel/Disney did wasn't a good thing, it definitely was, and is something they should be commended for. But I think the play can stay the way it is—the play is about him,



after all; it's not about his legacy, or about the cosmic significance of what happened to him; it's just about this guy and what he did... which is not to say the play won't change [in other ways] moving forward...

CRYSTAL SKILLMAN: We're thinking of working on the play, we have some notes; we're talking to a few theaters and if we have a different run where it's not part of a festival, we have more time. [*King Kirby* debuted as one of many parts of the Brick's fast-paced Comic Book Theater Festival Issue 2.] A lot was packed into the storytelling in the beginning, and it was amazing how it flew, and in a way captured Kirby's frenetic way of drawing and storytelling, so we don't want to lose that. But we also want to spend a little more time in discovery moments with him. It's more about how people will listen to it, understand [his life]. Perception is important; the dramatic question of the play is, What is creation. Collaboration is very important to creation; [who contributed what] is a tense question between collaborators. Here what makes it so compelling is that Kirby's artwork is what we remember more than the actual words. And I love words, I'm all about the words, I'm a dramatist, but I did go to visual art school and I understand the power of an image, and it's very true, it is worth a thousand words. So when you think "Fantastic Four" you think of Jack's artwork, and that is storytelling, and that's what the conversation is—drawing is storytelling, and what does that mean? That question still remains and is very exciting; even more exciting with the [settlement], which sheds a whole new light on it.

TJKC: Was that visually that's central to comics a challenge in framing the story, or did the visual aspect of most theater itself make it natural?

VAN LENTE: There was a version of the play that was a lot more meta; I originally wrote the play in 2002 when it incorporated these sort-of pseudo New Gods characters and was more "comic-booky," but Crystal helped as co-writer in stripping it down to its essence, since, again, it really is about this one guy. Our director, John Hurley, had a lot of great ideas; we had some projected images; our lead, Steven Rattazzi [the voice of Doctor Orpheus on *Venture Bros.*] went to animation school so he can actually draw very well, and drew onstage at the drawing table as Kirby. For a proposed new production [location to be announced!] the director has a great idea involving using the drawing board onstage as a projector, and projecting images upward onto the ceiling, which I thought was a super-clever idea.

SKILLMAN: When people read the script it's evoking a lot of thought as to what directors want to do with it, and we're excited to see other interpretations with other companies and other countries. But the script is strong with it resting on the human emotion. It's about your imagination bringing it to life onstage. There are these moments where, you know, Jack's drawing and all of a sudden feels like he's fighting, and his earlier moments on the

Lower East Side come back to him while he's creating Captain America, and we'll probably see many different versions of that same image, and that will be pretty exciting for us.

TJKC: This reminds me of how imagination fills in the details of the final scene, where he's envisioning a Cosmic Carson story, and we are not seeing what he's drawing, but he's setting forth the whole story, which goes beyond "painting a picture in our mind," it really fills



in the portrait of Kirby in that it shows him talking about this hero as if to him, the hero is a real guy, as if he's someone Kirby knows. And what Kirby's saying is about what the hero's personality traits are, not what his "powers" are, which is a strength of this play; we see Kirby's characteristics—including the pictures in his own mind, like the dream-scene where Stan is even much more of a celebrity-hound than he was, through Jack's not always reliable eyes.

SKILLMAN: For me, the conversation of comics in this play is less of a fantasia and a little more life-based. People who knew nothing of comics, coming to the play, just really took to the character and spirit of Jack Kirby. He's just this dynamic, exciting character. And people listening to the podcast [see below!] say, okay, [Rattazzi] doesn't "sound" like Kirby—but he *is* Jack Kirby, he has an essence, a spirit. That's what we want to capture. Steven isn't imitating Jack, he's evoking his spirit, and feelings. Seeing him struggle, and seeing why he struggles, in a very grounded way, is exciting.

TJKC: You spoke before about the cadence of the play's storytelling matching the slam-bang rhythms of a Kirby story...

SKILLMAN: Fred helps with that; I trust him as a sounding-board to really understand how much the audience needs to read or hear at what moment. Exposition can be too much or too little. Fred's storytelling is very clear but never hits you over the head; there's always a lot of discovery and maybe that's why we enjoy writing together so much, we both like writing to make the scene about discovery for the reader or the audience—we don't want the reader or the audience to say, "Great, this scene has started, I know how it's going to end!" — then we are pretty unhappy with ourselves.

TJKC: There are special sensitivities involved in fiction that features real people who are still with us or in many people's recent memory. What is your approach to that, and what can you even afford to be concerned about for this creative, historical document?

VAN LENTE: Jack's son Neal wrote us a very nice e-mail when our *New York Times* review came out; this play is open for the family to read whenever they want to, we welcome that.

SKILLMAN: From that I feel like it was very clear that the story being told was important [to them], and I can't even imagine the joy from the settlement and what that means, it's just really important for the legacy and for the family. Also, how the Stan-and-Kirby relationship is treated in the play, I think it's really...you *like* the character of Stan, even when he's very matter-of-fact about the mistakes Kirby made that he felt led him to where he is; it's a very balanced play where also you see someone who so badly wants to be a part of this and has a skill, and what that means to him. And because you can see both sides, even though the play is through Kirby's eyes, Stan as a character is very dynamic and not villainized in any way. People who don't read the play assume that, but people who have seen the play understand that's not true. And that there's very much a mentorship-like thing I think Stan was looking for from Kirby, and whenever he talks about Kirby he gets that look in his eye; I assume that that's still there because





he really admired Kirby, so I hope the play captures that as well, because I think that's very true and very beautiful, and it's very true to art.

TJKC: Roz is an invincible presence in the play—we see

her taking on some of Kirby's inking in the 1950s and believing in him and trying to strengthen him—and you've talked about being excited to discover more about her in the story of these lives you were telling.

SKILLMAN: I was surprised to learn of her contribution; she didn't actually say "I'm an inker," it wasn't like that, she was more like "it was my birthday and all the inkers threw a party because we were all there inking," and I was like, "What does this mean!" and I was looking back and thinking, this makes sense, she was a part of all this. And I thought, how exciting. She was such a dynamic character, the more I read about her. I hope to go more into her and Kirby's relationship because I just think it's lovely. It was very inspirational how supportive and amazing she was. She also seemed to just love artwork; she was very knowledgeable about the other artists and their work. I was stunned by how in-depth she was involved with the business, and going to the cons, and her dedication to the family. They were quite a tight-knit group, so to get that e-mail from Neal was a big deal, because I feel like it's just a lovely thing where, sometimes comic book creators might be more about the art, and [for Kirby] it was about the art for the worlds he was creating, with the people he loved.

TJKC: To what extent did the actors research their characters, and to what degree did they use their imagination to build these personalities?

VAN LENTE: Steven, from his work on *The Venture Bros.* and others, knows quite a lot about vocal acting, and I think he definitely made a conscious decision that he wanted to create Kirby as a character in the play, which is what he is; when you put him in the play, you're not bringing him back from the dead, *[laughs]* this is a character in a fictional piece.

SKILLMAN: He was excited about the play. We knew each other from a play-reading we did a while ago, he was in a reading of *The Vigil* [Skillman's fascinating drama about medieval torture and modern-day terrorism], and I kept thinking of him in this role, I was kind-of obsessed, praying and lighting candles, *[laughs]* and then he was captivated by Jack Kirby as a person and then he loved the play. That's when Fred and I got super-excited, because when Steven said "This is amazing," we knew we were on to something. Now Fred, who had often asked, "Why are ya going to rehearsal all the time?" *[laughs]* for my other plays, grew to love the rehearsal process, and I think a big part of it was, he was their access to research. Fred would bring in *Kirby Collectors*, he would bring in panels, all sorts of artwork that would help inspire the actors, and they absolutely devoured that, it was very important to them.

VAN LENTE: My buddy Paul Tobin tweeted out a video of Jack talking about some of his wartime experience, and I know Steven listened to that and paid quite a bit of attention to it. The stuff's out there, the challenge is always not drowning in it.



SKILLMAN: You have to research just enough to let your imagination then soar and capture what the play is saying.

TJKC: Early on you had expressed concern about whether the WWII parts of the play overwhelmed it, which I didn't think at all; people tell about Kirby's constant war-stories and how he would startle out of his sleep with WWII nightmares for the rest of his life, so it took up more of his life than it does of the play—so, a good balance, and showing something that defined him.

SKILLMAN: Especially that, to really understand Captain America is to understand that time. That's a huge wealth of history to understand. We had a war with a lot of shades to it, but there was very much Evil and trying to stop the Evil, and if anything, we were too late to that battle. We don't have that anymore; the world is a lot harder to discern and understand, so to know that Captain America came from this time, when Good vs. Evil was actually a conversation...what is that when we evoke that now? We can evoke it in a way that maybe isn't accurate. But when you've gone to war you have a completely different experience, and I just really love those stories. This amazing story of the hotel, I couldn't get enough of listening to it; to me, it was really about his spirit of endurance. [The play portrays a private struggle for territory as Kirby and a German private fight for the right to rest in a bombed-out deserted hotel; already more saddening and surreal than any dramatization.] There's no particular agenda or mission, it's simply about survival. Even Kirby in that story makes light of it but as he does so you just get a sense of, I know what it's like, to see this other side, and let's escape into something else, let's use it and make it something better. That's what he always wanted to do, and that's what I relate to, because life is so hard, and if only the artist can make it something transcendent. ★

[King Kirby will hopefully be marching into a theater near you soon and through the years; for now, the comic retail & culture powerhouse Midtown Comics has an audio podcast of the entire play at this address to give an idea and spark more dreaming: <http://blog.midtown-comics.com/midtown-comics-podcast-king-kirby-audio-play/8544/>]

(top) Martin Goodman ponders whether Hitler can sue a comic company as Simon & Kirby think not (Joseph Mathers, Rattazzi and Timothy McCown Reynolds, from left).

Photo: Crystal Skillman

(center) This man's artform: Private Kirby gets a lecture in heroics from Patton himself (McCown Reynolds and Rattazzi, from left). Photo: Hunter Canning

(bottom) The real-life romance of Roz and Jack (Amy Lee Pearsall and Rattazzi, from left). Photo: Hunter Canning

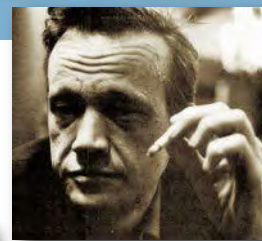


THE MYSTERIES OF THE DEEP

by John Morrow

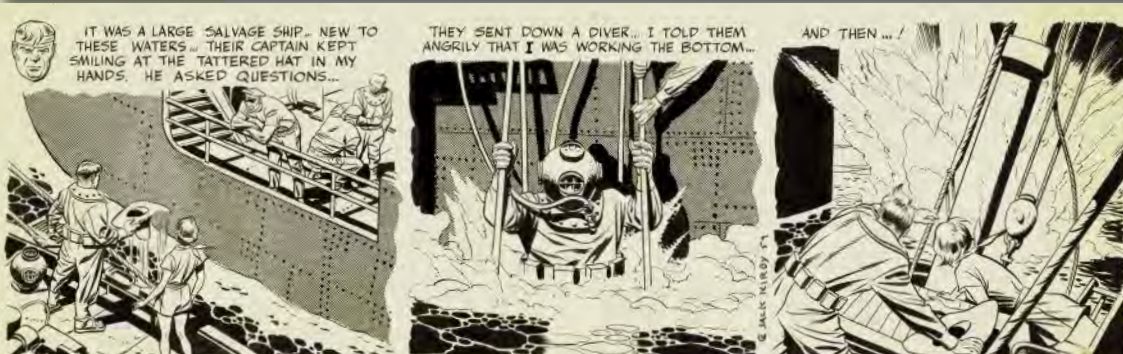
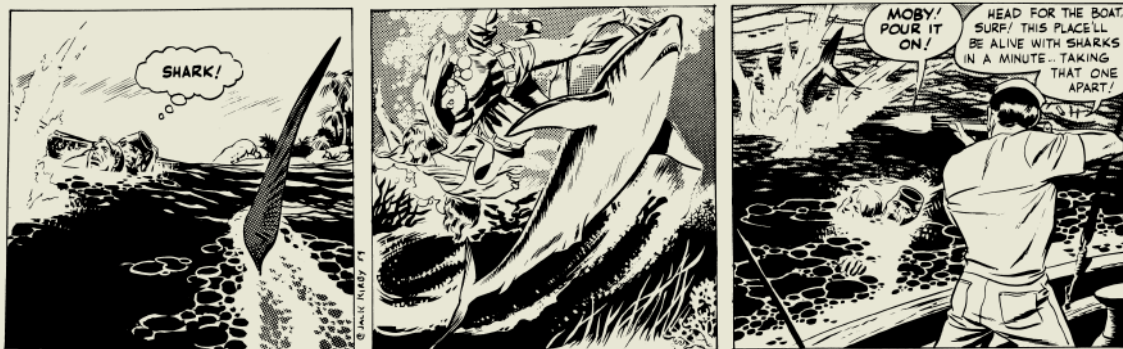
(below) Jack had Wally Wood ink the first two weeks' strips, so syndicates could see a finished product.

Few teams in the history of comics have produced work as beautiful as Jack Kirby and Wallace Wood. On the surface, they would seem to be a mis-match: Kirby with his bold, blocky anatomy and in-your-face action, and Wood (right), with his delicate linework and detailed and dramatic lighting effects. But put them together, and you have what might be considered exactly half of each artist—they play off each other's strengths perfectly.



Most fans think of their *Sky Masters* work together, but few know about *Surf Hunter*, Kirby's never-sold proposal for a newspaper comic strip, playing off the success of 1958's *Sea Hunt* TV series, starring Lloyd Bridges. In the 1958-59 era Jack put this presentation together, comics were dying, following the start of the Comics Code, and the Senate Subcommittee hearings that painted all comics in a bad light. Kirby was looking for a way out, and a syndicated newspaper strip was the dream of most comics artists of the time. So Jack produced a couple of weeks of dailies and a Sunday page as samples to try to interest a syndicate in the idea.

(I must admit that I purloined some of Jack's *Surf Hunter* samples for my final project back in Design School, and in the Sales Kit for a fictitious newspaper syndicate I invented, *Surf Hunter* was one of the strips my imaginary syndicate was offering. That Sales Kit got me an interview with the Art Director at a large advertising agency, who saw the samples I dropped off, and called me. Turns out he was a big Jack Kirby fan, but had never heard of *Surf Hunter* and wanted to know more about it. He eventually gave me some freelance work, so thanks for that, Jack!)



2-1

TM & © Jack Kirby Estates.

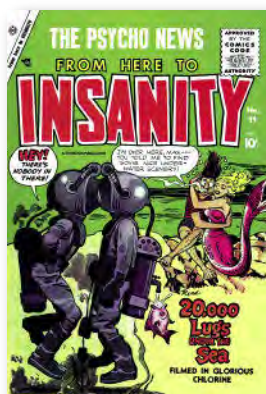
2-3

On these pages, you'll see all the *Surf Hunter* samples I've found, in the order they seem to read best. Syndicates wanted two to three weeks of Monday-Saturday continuity to evaluate new strips, so assuming the handwritten numbers (ie. 2-1, 3-1, etc.) on some of these accurately correspond to weeks and days, the first strip shown is Saturday of Week One, and several strips are still missing. On Friday of Week Two, Moby spits out his coffee, but at least one strip is missing before we get into Week Three's series of uninked strips on the next page.

I've also found one lone existing fragment of a *Surf Hunter* strip—a single Wood-inked panel, but where are the other panels that went with it? I suspect they were repurposed for *Challengers of the Unknown* #7 (April 1959), also inked by Wood. The *Challengers* page below has some odd balloon placement, overlapping the borders—and note how the panel borders don't form a perfect grid. Also, compare Rocky in Panel 2 with the last panel of the second *Surf Hunter* strip—almost a dead ringer, so maybe there are other missing *Surf Hunter* panels that made it into *Challengers*, possibly as far back as *Challengers* #5's Wood-inked underwater sequence.

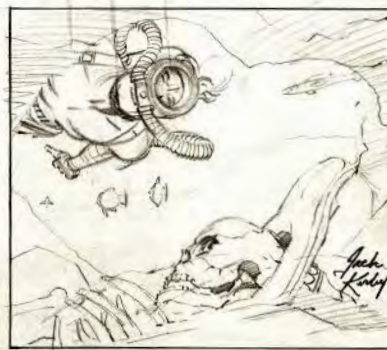
As an experiment above, I've omitted all the *Challengers* dialogue, and added Panels 4 and 6 to the leftover *Surf Hunter* panel I found. This seems to bridge the gap between the inked samples, and the uninked pencil strips on the next page. But if you know of any other *Surf Hunter* strips, send them in, so we can definitively solve this mystery of the deep.

(Just for fun, I'm also presenting Jack's comedy story in *From Here To Insanity* #11 (Aug. 1955), spoofing the film *20,000 Leagues Under The Sea*. For comparison, Wood did his own take on *20,000 Leagues* in *Panic* #11 (Oct. 1955), and his last panel is shown below.) ★





3-1



3-2



3-3



3-4



From Here To INSANITY

HEY! THERE'S NOBODY IN THERE!

OF COURSE NOT, STUPID! I'M OUT TO LUNCH!

Presenting--
WALT CHISELY'S
20,000
Lugs
UNDER THE
Sea

BY JULIUS VERMIN

GURGLE

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO, THE S.S. MALARKEY, FIVE DAYS OUT OF CONEY ISLAND--WITH A CARGO OF MOUSTACHE WAX...WAS HIT AMIDSHIPS BY A SUBMARINE! NOW, THIS WAS FANTASTIC... BECAUSE... THERE WEREN'T ANY SUBMARINES AROUND THEN! THEY COULDN'T EVEN BLAME IT ON WOMEN DRIVERS!

ONLY THREE MEN SURVIVED THIS NON-EXISTENT ACCIDENT--DIRK KUTLETS, A HARDY, SMIRKING YOUNG TROUBLE-MAKER, PROFESSOR PAUL DUCATS, AND HIS UGLY ASSISTANT, PETER GORY!

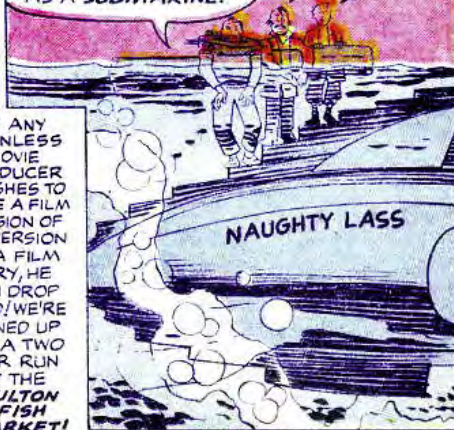
WHAT HIT US, DOC? A SEA-MONSTER? A FLOCK OF HEAVY MERMAIDS... A BANSHEE--A GREMLIN?

I SAW WHAT HIT US, YOU DOLT! IT WAS A SUBMARINE!!



IF ANY BRAINLESS MOVIE PRODUCER WISHES TO MAKE A FILM VERSION OF THIS VERSION OF A FILM STORY, HE CAN DROP DEAD! WE'RE SIGNED UP FOR A TWO YEAR RUN AT THE FULTON FISH MARKET!

A SUBMARINE? HAR! HAR!! THAT'S RICH!!! THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS A SUBMARINE!



From Here To INSANITY



MEN! IN DIVING SUITS!



HAR! HAR! THERE'S NO SUCH THINGS AS MEN IN DIVING SUITS!



500 VOLTS FROM MY ELECTRIC RIFLE WILL MAKE HIM BEHAVE!

HAR! HAR!! THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS AN ELECTRIC RIFLE!



SOON AFTER, INSIDE THE NON-EXISTENT SUBMARINE "NAUGHTY LASS"...

I SENT YOU NIT-WITS OUT FOR FISH... BUT THIS IS RIDICULOUS!

BUT-- BUT-- BUT--

HAR! HAR! DO YOU THINK I'M OVER-ACTING?



BLAWST 'CHEW ALL!! I'M CAPTAIN ON THIS SHIP!--I GIVE THE ORDERS HERE...I CAN HAVE YOU FLOGGED, KEEL HAULED AND LASHED TO A BLEACHER SEAT IN EBBET'S FIELD!

THAT WOULD BE BRUTAL! SPARE US, KIND SIR! YOU HAVE SUCH A KIND FACE--WHO ARE YOU, ANYWAY... YOUR KINDNESS?

I'M CAPTAIN SCREAMO! THE CALL ME THAT CUZ I YELL LIKE CRAZY AT EVERYBODY!

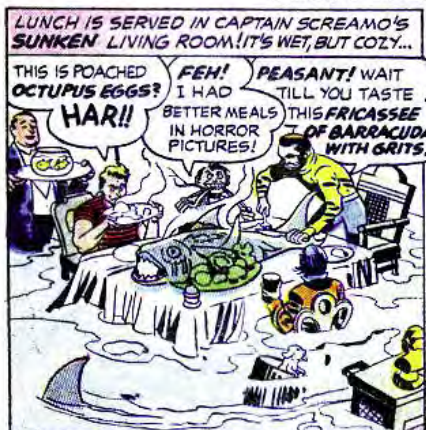
BY JOVE!--IT'S TWELVE NOON BY MY WRIST WATCH! IT'S TIME FOR LUNCH!

HAR! HAR!! THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS A--

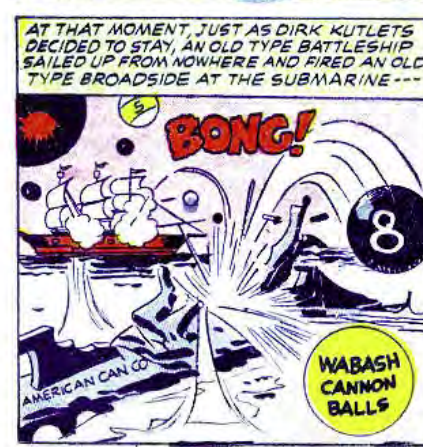
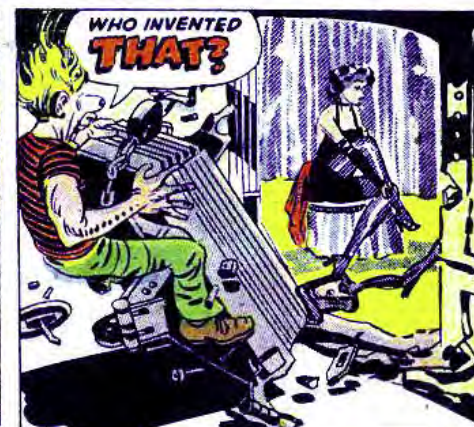
I KNOW-- LUNCH!



From Here To INSANITY



From Here To INSANITY



From Here To INSANITY



THOSE CRAZY OLD WOODEN SHIP SAILORS! THEY'RE ALWAYS FIRING ON ME! THEY HATE ME! BUT THIS TIME THEY WENT TOO FAR-- THIS TIME THEY GOT ME!



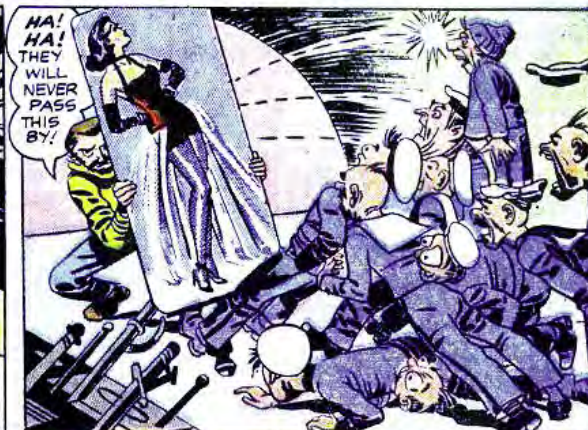
BUT I'M **NOT** GOING TO THAT FAR AWAY PLACE JUST MADE FOR SWEET SOULS LIKE ME... BEFORE I TURN THIS SHIP INTO AN **ATOM BOMB** AND RAM IT RIGHT INTO THOSE OUT-MODED, OLD FASHIONED, OBSOLETE **LOUTS!**



THEY'LL DIE LIKE SWINE! WE'LL DIE LIKE **HEROES!!** ARE YOU WITH ME, MEN?



MY LOYAL, TRUSTWORTHY CREW WON'T RUN OUT ON ME! THIS'LL STOP 'EM-- MY **ACE IN THE HOLE!**



HA! HA! THEY WILL NEVER PASS THIS BY!



THE ONLY ONES WHO AREN'T HYPNOTIZED ARE PROFESSOR PAUL DUCATS WHO HATES GIRLS AND LIKES BOOKS, AND PETER GORY, WHO LIKES GIRLS-- BUT ONLY IF THEY'RE VAMPIRES!

DID YOU SEE THAT? THEY'LL ALL DIE LOOKING AT A PRETTY GIRL! WHAT A HORRIBLE WAY TO GO!

HORRIBLE! HORRIBLE! SAY! YOU KNOW THAT ALL THROUGH THIS STORY, I, PETER GORY, DIDN'T DO ONE HORRIBLE DEED?



WHAT'LL BORIS KARLOT SAY? WHAT'LL BELA LA GOOSNICK SAY? AND FOR PITY'S SAKE, HOW DID I GET INTO THIS SISSY STORY-- THERE WASN'T EVEN ONE TORTURE CHAMBER IN IT--

DON'T BE AN IDIOT! AND SPEAKING OF IDIOTS-- WHATEVER HAPPENED TO DIRK KUTLETS?

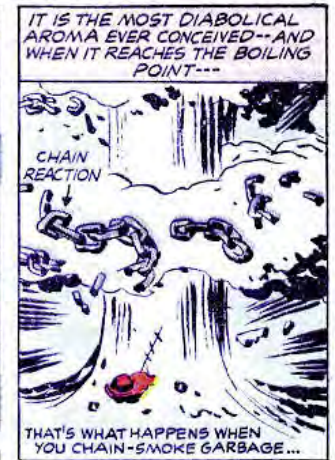
From Here To INSANITY



AND, DOWN BELOW, CAPTAIN SCREAMO NOT ONLY HATES PEOPLE, HE HATES **LIVING...** THAT'S WHY HE'S DIGGING AROUND IN HIS ATOMIC PILES!



NOW IT JUST TAKES THE SMELL OF A CHEAP **RADIO ACTIVE GIGAR BUTT** TO COMBINE WITH THE SMELL OF THIS RADIO ACTIVE GARBAGE---



IT IS THE MOST DIABOLICAL AROMA EVER CONCEIVED-- AND WHEN IT REACHES THE **BOILING POINT---**

CHAIN REACTION

THAT'S WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU CHAIN-SMOKE GARBAGE...



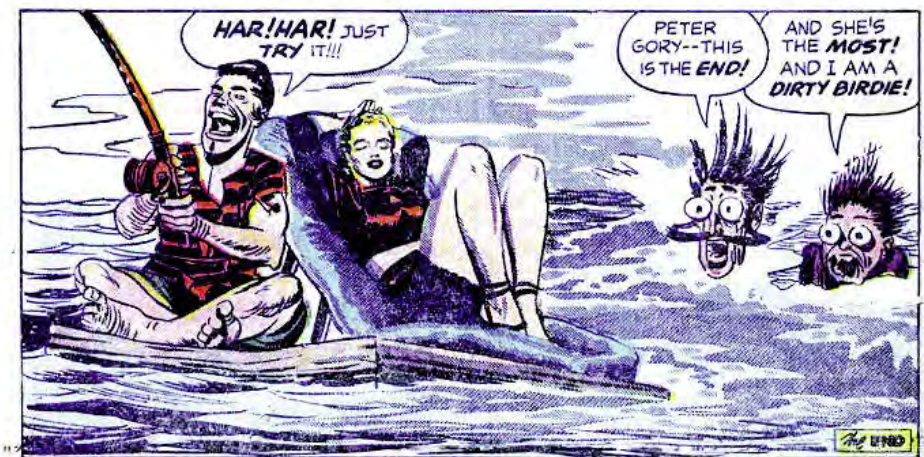
PROFESSOR DUCATS! CAPTAIN SCREAMO BLEW EVERYTHIN UP! W-WE'RE THE ONLY ONES LEFT ALIVE! THIS IS HORRIBLE... HORRIBLE!!

STOP ENJOING YOURSELF, PETER GORY! THINK OF POOR DIRK KUTLETS... HE WAS STILL ON THAT CRAZY, BLOWN-UP SUBMARINE!



OH, POOR DIRK KUTLETS... HE WAS JUST A BOY-- A **STUPID** BOY-- BUT HIS HEART WAS IN THE RIGHT PLACE! I KNOW... I HAD TO OPERATE ON HIM ONCE!

BAWWWW!!! HE DIED SO YOUNG-- TOO YOUNG!-- WHY COULDN'T IT HAVE BEEN ME?-- IF I COULD TRADE PLACES WITH HIM NOW--



HAR! HAR! JUST TRY IT!!!

PETER GORY-- THIS IS THE END!

AND SHE'S THE **MOST!** AND I AM A **DIRTY BIRDIE!**



(Long letters and little space, so to fit it all in, no art in the letter column this time, except for this piece we just had to show, which isn't even by Jack:)



My daughter Lilly was watching ARTHUR on PBS, and Jack Kirby got quite a shout-out (Season 13: "The Secret Origin of Supernova"). After learning about Jack from the comic store guy, Arthur decides to be "Jack Kirby" and create his own hero.

(Kirby stuff starts at the 8:00 mark at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jQG7sUPSCGM>)

Rob Smentek, Haddon Heights, NJ

Thank you so much for finally—finally—printing one of the written 'plots' that Stan Lee gave Jack in the mid '60s. (TJKC #63, page 58) We were always told some existed and that they were very brief—it is great to see one at last!

I think the timing of this document is narrower than what you stated in your caption. It seems to me that it is aimed entirely at storylines that began in issues set to appear in Marvel's December 1966 checklist: FF #57, THOR #134 and Cap (SUSPENSE) #84. (That Thor is dated 'November' is meaningless. THOR, like AVENGERS, X-MEN, DAREDEVIL, etc., was dated one month behind its counterparts until Nov. 1971, when the discrepancy was corrected. There is no Oct. '71 issue of AVENGERS, THOR etc.—they jumped from Sept. to Nov. that year.) I don't see how the Cap paragraph can be applied to SUSPENSE #82 and #83—Lee describes the beginning of SUSPENSE #84 and addresses that story only.

Clearly (as expected) this document shows Lee being an editor with Kirby, not a 'writer' as such. What we see here are simply elements that Lee feels ought to be included, some ideas that may or may not be helpful, and some very basic story direction. Of actual story plot, there is none whatsoever. I get the feeling, reading these notes, that there had already been some communication about the thrust of each story before these notes were written. There's precious little

more ideas and comments added. If the actual story plot details had been discussed beforehand, it seems strange to me that what is written here is so vague. I think it shows the nuts and bolts story plotting is being left entirely to Kirby.

For whatever reason, Lee here is giving more suggestions about Thor and Cap than the FF. I wonder if this was always the case, or whether it's just the way it was for this month? Possibly, Lee wrote down the elements that he felt Kirby would be prone to ignore. In THOR, the Quicksilver and Scarlet Witch cameo is something that Lee, in his role as Editor and recent AVENGERS scribe, would more likely have thought of, not Kirby. Hence, he writes of it here. That Kirby increasingly overlooked Don Blake is something Lee maybe felt shouldn't happen as much, so he reminded Kirby here (though we see Kirby ignored the request). The Galactus suggestion is the one that hints most strongly that we will never be able to more clearly divide 'who thought of what' in the plotting department, because I would have thought Big G's cameo would be Kirby all the way. Maybe it was his idea to begin with, which he suggested to Lee, but the fact Lee writes it here means it is just as likely to have been his idea. As to the actual story plot, what story elements are hinted at by Lee (such as the way Jane Foster is dealt with, and his suggested appearance by Don Blake) diverge wildly from what actually took form on Kirby's drawing board.

Lee seems to have more idea of what he wants in the Cap feature, down to the Avengers' early role, the possible motivation of the Adaptoid, and even a non-final ending. It's still not a story plot, but it's closer than with the other two features.

Of the FF, it seems Lee was only concerned with one sub-plot—that of Johnny being apart from the FF—so that is the only one he mentioned. The Inhumans aren't mentioned, neither are the Wizard and the Sandman, all of whom figured in a major way in the first issue of this story. Since such extra elements are listed heavily in Lee's notes for THOR and "Cap," can we conclude that the inclusion of these latter elements in the actual comic are all Kirby's doing? Even the very brief plot idea present is very different from what Kirby drew, so it feels to me like Lee was very content to let Kirby run very freely with it all.

So the question comes—what would Jack's issues of these books have looked like if he didn't have this note by Lee? Did he check it at all?

that reads like, "Hey! Why don't we do this...?" Rather, it reads like a reminder of basic ideas already thrown around, with a few

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Would Galactus, Wanda and Pietro have been in THOR #134? Would the Tana Nile resolution, as noted by Lee, have been included, and if so, would it have been in the romantic way Lee suggested? Would it have mattered? What would his Cap story in SUSPENSE #84 have been like without these notes from Lee? Does this note show that Lee and Kirby colluded more on some strips, like "Cap," than others, like the FF? Or does the lack of FF notes just show the state of it that month?

As expected, this piece doesn't settle anything beyond what we already knew about the Lee/Kirby work practice, simply because Lee gives quite a deal of direction for one strip ("Cap"), some ideas for another (THOR) and next to nothing for another (FF).

That Lee intended to be directly involved in each strip's direction to some degree is clear. Whether he was actually guiding it or simply trying to course-correct a determined Kirby, we can't tell. And whether he got what he asked for is another matter—both John Romita and Roy Thomas have indicated he sometimes didn't. That his involvement was less than it was years earlier seems pretty clear—this page is far removed from the FF #8 synopsis that exists. And it surely shows he had more involvement at this time than he did a few years later. The fact that in a couple of years time we have a THOR story completely drawn by Kirby and rejected by Lee (the Galactus/Thermal Man pages) points to an odd working arrangement. Does it show that Kirby winged it on his own without any editorial input at all from Lee? But then, if Lee gave him that freedom, how then is it fair to reject an almost entire issue? Maybe it points to a difficult time where Lee was initially happy to give Kirby free reign, but then regretting the idea. Or does it indicate that Kirby increasingly charged ahead without regard for Lee's editorial directives, getting harder and harder to work with, and then paying a heavy price? Maybe it was that rejected THOR issue that motivated Kirby to ask Lee for more story input (as we've heard he did in his last year or so at Marvel). But then, the fact that FF #102/108 was also 'rejected' in the form it was presented shows that if Lee did indeed give more towards each issue, either it was as loose as this 1966 note, or Kirby, despite what he asked for, wasn't listening and went his own way anyway.

But in 1966, it looks to me like Lee was a very canny editor, knowing when to let his partner go for it, and when to step in and kibitz. However it was, at this stage, it sure worked!

Shane Foley, AUSTRALIA

Some belated comments on TJKC #64:

Enjoyed the cover, in color, after seeing it in black-and-white, as a poster, I think, since the mid-'70s. Cool how you slightly ghosted the Red Skull back to give it greater depth. Never noticed, until now, that Jack goofed with a star on his forehead rather than the traditional "A".

Thought about Jack and Joe Simon over Christmas, during the furor over Sony's decision, initially, to pull the movie razzing North Korea for fear of reprisals. This in contrast to their cover to **CAPTAIN AMERICA** #1 where he, without apology, belts Hitler in the face.

Liked the many wartime photos you had of Jack and the two interviews with him this issue. I always prefer Jack in his own words rather than anyone guessing his meaning or intent.

Especially appreciate seeing Jack's pencils of some Cap work from about the time he regained his own title (1968). That's a mixed area, for me, in that I wasn't thrilled with much of the inking there at the time. It was hard, after seeing the work look superb under Frank Giacoia and Joe Sinnott, to have a darker approach utilized. I'm sure Syd Shores did fine work in the '40s and, though affiliated with Cap after Simon and Kirby departed, I didn't care for his embellishment of Jack's '60s material. Granted, a matter of preference. It's just nice to see what the work looked like, intact, before the ink was so heavily applied.

Enjoyed your Kirby timeline as well. Same with Kirby Obscura; nice size shots of the covers.

I realize you're no longer a huge tabloid, but some of the art reductions are so severe, it's hard to make out the type or detail. That's fine for, say, **STRANGE TALES** #135, which I've seen any number of times. But it's not so great for Jack's V-mail or the newly discovered French Western. Hard, without a magnifier, to tell what's going on.

Loved the pencil version of Steve and Captain America, with the various villains (Doom, Red Skull, Batroc and a Hydra operative) along with two gangsters and a Colonel Klink lookalike at the bottom. Hadn't seen that in decades, so great fun.

For any re-designs or reconfigured patriots, I still think the original Captain America looks the best. But always had a great fondness for OMAC, who made an appearance here as a super-soldier, but in a far different environment from Fighting American, the Shield, Guardian, or any of the rest.

I'd love to eventually see some coverage—and covers—from Jack's War and Western books for Atlas/Marvel. Those are ones with no great familiarity for me.

Even liked your article on the Gerber/Kirby DESTROYER DUCK. Not my favorite of their respective books, but an interesting feature nonetheless, to see how well they worked together.

Finally, though it notes the Bicentennial, that final pencil drawing of Cap and the kids actually appeared about a year earlier in Jim Steranko's **MEDIASCENE** #15 (1975) in an article covering Jack's then-current return to Marvel.

Joe Frank, Scottsdale, AZ

In the 2013 Kirby Tribute Panel (TJKC #62), Mark Evanier has Paul Levine talk about Jack getting a credit on the first **SPIDER-MAN** movie. The credit should have included Joe Simon who created the **SILVER SPIDER** concept that Jack showed Stan. The

Spider-Man concept that Jack developed had a costume that resembled Captain America, a spider gun to shoot webs, and involved a kid using a magic ring to turn into Spider-Man. The concept that became Marvel's top title owes more to Steve Ditko and Stan than Jack. The original Silver Spider concept was turned into **THE FLY** at Archie. If that original concept was all that great, **The Fly** would not have flopped every single time the character was used.

A lot of people get overly wrapped up in who created what when it doesn't matter. The question of creation is less one of the origin than what is done with the creation. When Siegel and Shuster created Superman, it was a revolutionary idea. Every superhero since Superman is a little less revolutionary and a little less original. Thousands of superheroes have been created since Superman and only the tiniest percentage have had any longevity or success, and most of the successful ones were created more than fifty years ago. Marvel's early success was not based on the superheroes, but on the characters being treated differently. If the core concept of a character was all that important, **The Fly** should be one of the most successful characters of all time instead of Spider-Man. It's not. Marvel became more successful than DC in the 1960s because the characters were written better—not because they had better super powers. Readers cared about Peter Parker's problems far more than Clark Kent's main concern about ace reporter Lois Lane figuring out the resemblance between Clark and Superman. It wasn't a matter of spider powers being better than Kryptonian powers.

Any time comic fans argue over Stan or Jack, they miss the point. It was both men who made Marvel great—along with Steve Ditko and other creators. There was a synergy amongst all the creators that resulted in a product that was greater than the individual talents involved. Unfortunately, while fans fight emotionally over Stan and Jack, they tend to forget about Steve Ditko's contributions.

Besides co-creating Spider-Man and solely creating Dr. Strange, Steve designed the Marvel upper left logo, the modern Iron Man costume, linked Hulk's transformations to Banner's stress, and many other things. Steve was weaving a two-year cosmic saga, spanning multiple fantastic dimensions, with Eternity a year before Galactus appeared in **FANTASTIC FOUR**. Steve's personal involvement in focusing Spider-Man on Peter Parker's problems and story realism, often against Stan's direction, paved the way for how Stan would treat the other heroes he was writing. It had to be a bit of a shock for Stan when Spider-Man eventually out-sold Marvel's flagship title, the one with the masthead proclaiming it "The World's Greatest Comic Magazine!"—**FANTASTIC FOUR**.

Jack Kirby is the most incredibly creative and innovative person to ever work in the comics medium. In trying to ensure that Jack's considerable contributions are recognized, let's not forget that others had a hand in the history of the medium.

Richard Gagnon, via e-mail

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Here's a tentative list of upcoming themes, but we treat these themes very loosely, and anything you write may fit somewhere. So get writing, and send us copies of your art!
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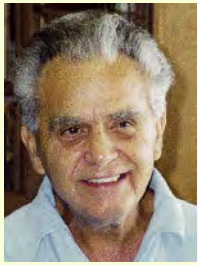
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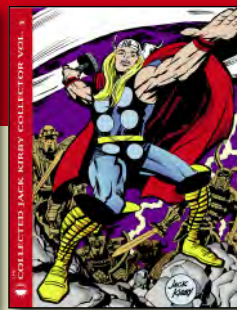
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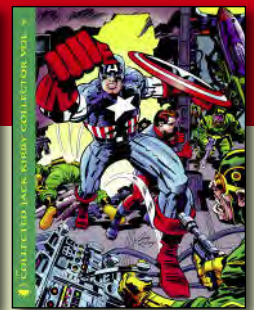
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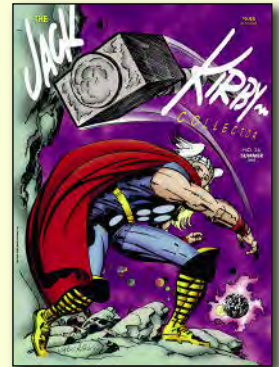
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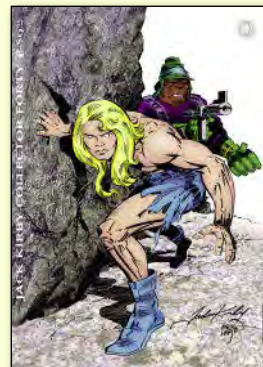
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1970s MARVEL WORK! Coverage of '70s work from **Captain America** to **Eternals** to **Machine Man**, **DICK GIORDANO** & **MARK SHULTZ** interviews, **MARK EVANIER**, 2004 Kirby Tribute Panel (**STEVE RUDE**, **DAVE GIBBONS**, **WALTER SIMONSON**, and **PAUL RYAN**), pencil art gallery, unused 1962 **HULK #6 KIRBY PENCILS**, and more! Kirby covers inked by **GIORDANO** and **SCHULTZ!**

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KIRBY COLLECTOR #42

1970s DC WORK! Coverage of Jimmy Olsen, FF movie set visit, overview of all Newsboy Legion stories, **KEVIN NOWLAN** and **MURPHY ANDERSON** on inking Jack, never-seen interview with Kirby, **MARK EVANIER** on Kirby's covers, Bongo Comics' Kirby ties, complete '40s gangster story, pencil art gallery, and more! Kirby covers inked by **NOWLAN** and **ANDERSON!**

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KIRBY COLLECTOR #43

KIRBY AWARD WINNERS! **STEVE SHERMAN** and others sharing memories and never-seen art from **JACK & ROZ**, a never-published 1966 interview with **KIRBY**, **MARK EVANIER** on **VINCE COLLETTA**, pencils-to-Sinnott inks comparison of **TALES OF SUSPENSE #93**, and more! Covers by **KIRBY** (Jack's original '70s **SILVER STAR CONCEPT ART**) and **KIRBY/SINNOTT!**

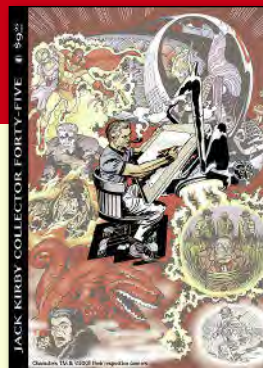
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KIRBY COLLECTOR #44

KIRBY'S MYTHOLOGICAL CHARACTERS! Coverage of **DEMON**, **THOR**, & **GALACTUS**, interview with **KIRBY**, **MARK EVANIER**, pencil art galleries of the Demon and other mythological characters, two never-reprinted **BLACK MAGIC** stories, interview with Kirby Award winner **DAVID SCHWARTZ** and F4 screenwriter **MIKE FRANCE**, and more! Kirby cover inked by **MATT WAGNER!**

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KIRBY COLLECTOR #45

Jack's vision of **PAST AND FUTURE**, with a never-seen **KIRBY** interview, a new interview with son **NEAL KIRBY**, **MARK EVANIER'S** column, two pencil galleries, two complete '50s stories, Jack's first script, Kirby Tribute Panel (with **EVANIER**, **KATZ**, **SHAW!**, and **SHERMAN**), plus an unpublished **CAPTAIN 3-D** cover, inked by **BILL BLACK** and converted into 3-D by **RAY ZONE!**

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(Digital Edition) \$3.95



KIRBY COLLECTOR #46

Focus on **NEW GODS**, **FOREVER PEOPLE**, and **DARKEID!** Includes a rare interview with **KIRBY**, **MARK EVANIER'S** column, **FOURTH WORLD** pencil art galleries (including Kirby's redesigns for **SUPER POWERS**), two 1950s stories, a new Kirby **Darkeid** front cover inked by **MIKE ROYER**, a Kirby **Forever People** back cover inked by **JOHN BYRNE**, and more!

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KIRBY COLLECTOR #47

KIRBY'S SUPER TEAMS, from kid gangs and the Challengers, to **Fantastic Four**, **X-Men**, and **Super Powers**, with unseen 1960s Marvel art, a rare **KIRBY** interview, **MARK EVANIER'S** column, two pencil art galleries, complete 1950s story, author **JONATHAN LETHEM** on his Kirby influence, interview with **JOHN ROMITA, JR.** on his **Eternals** work, and more!

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KIRBY COLLECTOR #48

KIRBYTECH ISSUE, spotlighting Jack's high-tech concepts, from **Iron Man's** armor and **Machine Man**, to the **Negative Zone** and beyond! Includes a rare **KIRBY** interview, **MARK EVANIER'S** column, two pencil art galleries, complete 1950s story, **TOM SCIOLI** interview, Kirby Tribute Panel (with **ADAMS**, **PÉREZ**, and **ROMITA**), and covers inked by **TERRY AUSTIN** and **TOM SCIOLI!**

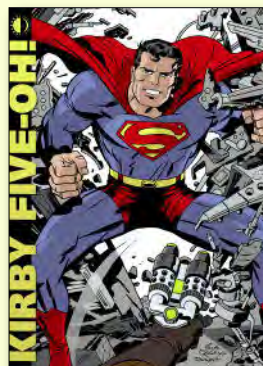
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KIRBY COLLECTOR #49

WARRIORS, spotlighting Thor (with a look at hidden messages in **BILL EVERETT'S** Thor inks), **Sgt. Fury**, **Challengers of the Unknown**, **Losers**, and others! Includes a rare **KIRBY** interview, interviews with **JERRY ORDWAY** and **GRANT MORRISON**, **MARK EVANIER'S** column, pencil art gallery, a complete 1950s story, wraparound Thor cover inked by **JERRY ORDWAY**, and more!

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KIRBY COLLECTOR #50

KIRBY FIVE-OH! covers the best of Kirby's 50-year career in comics: **BEST KIRBY STORIES**, **COVERS**, **CHARACTER DESIGNS**, **UNUSED ART**, and profiles of/commentary by the **50 PEOPLE MOST INFLUENCED BY KIRBY'S WORK!** Plus a **50-PAGE PENCIL ART GALLERY** and a **COLOR SECTION!** Kirby cover inked by **DARWYN COOKE**, and introduction by **MARK EVANIER**.

(168-page tabloid trade paperback) \$19.95
(Digital Edition) \$7.95
ISBN: 9781893905894



KIRBY COLLECTOR #51

Bombastic **EVERYTHING GOES** issue, with a wealth of great submissions that couldn't be pigeonholed into a "theme" issue! Includes a rare **KIRBY** interview, new interviews with **JIM LEE** and **ADAM HUGHES**, **MARK EVANIER'S** column, huge pencil art galleries, a complete **Golden Age Kirby** story, two **COLOR UNPUBLISHED KIRBY COVERS**, and more!

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KIRBY COLLECTOR #52

Spotlights Kirby's most obscure work: an **UNUSED THOR STORY**, **BRUCE LEE** comic, animation work, stage play, unaltered pages from **KAMANDI**, **DEMON**, **DESTROYER DUCK**, and more, including a feature examining the last page of his final issue of various series **BEFORE EDITORIAL TAMPERING** (with lots of surprises!) Color Kirby cover inked by **DON HECK!**

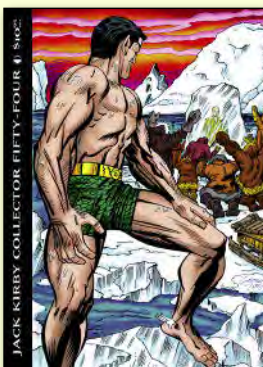
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KIRBY COLLECTOR #53

THE MAGIC OF STAN & JACK! New interview with **STAN LEE**, walking tour of New York where Lee & Kirby lived and worked, re-evaluation of the "Lost" **FF #108** story (including a new page that just surfaced), "What If Jack Hadn't Left Marvel In 1970?," plus **MARK EVANIER'S** regular column, a Kirby pencil art gallery, a complete **Golden Age Kirby** story, and more, behind a color Kirby cover inked by **GEORGE PÉREZ!**

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KIRBY COLLECTOR #54

STAN & JACK PART TWO! More on the co-creators of the Marvel Universe, final interview (and cover inks) by **GEORGE TUSKA**, differences between **KIRBY** and **DITKO'S** approaches, **WILL MURRAY** on the origin of the **FF**, the mystery of Marvel cover dates, **MARK EVANIER'S** regular column, a Kirby pencil art gallery, a complete **Golden Age Kirby** story, and more, behind a color Kirby cover inked by **JOE SINNOTT!**

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KIRBY COLLECTOR #55

"Kirby Goes To Hollywood!" **SERGIO ARAGONES** and **MELL LAZARUS** recall Kirby's **BOB NEWHART TV** show cameo, comparing the recent **STAR WARS** films to **New Gods**, **RUBY & SPEARS** interviewed, Jack's encounters with **FRANK ZAPPA**, **PAUL MCCARTNEY**, and **JOHN LENNON**, **MARK EVANIER'S** regular column, a Kirby pencil art gallery, a **Golden Age Kirby** story, and more! Kirby cover inked by **PAUL SMITH!**

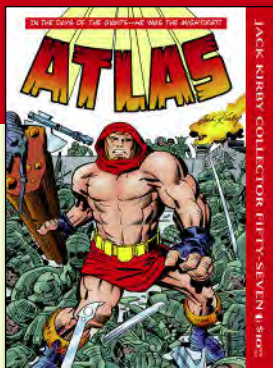
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KIRBY COLLECTOR #56

"Unfinished Sagas"—series, stories, and arcs Kirby never finished. **TRUE DIVORCE CASES**, **RAAM THE MAN MOUNTAIN**, **KOBRA**, **DINGBATS**, a complete story from **SOUL LOVE**, complete **Boy Explorers** story, two Kirby Tribute Panels, **MARK EVANIER** and other regular columnists, pencil art galleries, and more, with Kirby's "Galaxy Green" cover inked by **ROYER**, and the unseen cover for **SOUL LOVE #1!**

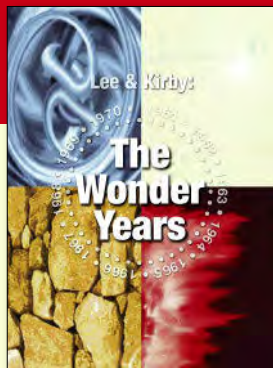
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KIRBY COLLECTOR #57

"Legendary Kirby"—how Jack put his spin on classic folklore! **TONY ISABELLA** on **SATAN'S SIX** (with Kirby's unseen layouts), Biblical inspirations of **DEVIL DINOSAUR**, **THOR** through the eyes of mythologist **JOSEPH CAMPBELL**, a complete Golden Age Kirby story, rare Kirby interview, **MARK EVANIER** and other regular columnists, pencil art from **ETERNALS**, **DEMON**, **NEW GODS**, **THOR**, and Jack's **ATLAS** cover!

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KIRBY COLLECTOR #58

LEE & KIRBY: THE WONDER YEARS! Traces their history at Marvel, and what led them to conceive the Fantastic Four in 1961. Also documents the evolution of the FF throughout the 1960s, with plenty of Kirby art, plus previously unknown details about Lee and Kirby's working relationship, and their eventual parting of ways in 1970.

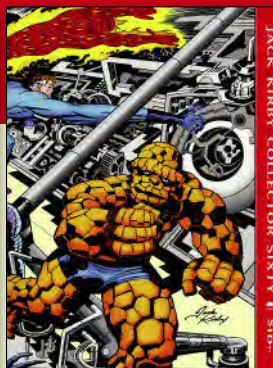
(160-page trade paperback) \$19.95
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ISBN: 9781605490380
Diamond Order Code: SEP111248



KIRBY COLLECTOR #59

"Kirby Vault!" Rareties from the "King" of comics: Personal correspondence, private photos, collages, rare Marvelmania art, bootleg album covers, sketches, transcript of a 1969 VISIT TO THE KIRBY HOME (where Jack answers the questions YOU'D ask in '69), **MARK EVANIER**, pencil art from the **FOURTH WORLD**, **CAPTAIN AMERICA**, **MACHINE MAN**, **SILVER SURFER** GRAPHIC NOVEL, and more!

(104 pages with COLOR) \$10.95
(Digital Edition) \$4.95



KIRBY COLLECTOR #60

FANTASTIC FOUR FOLLOW-UP to #58's **THE WONDER YEARS!** Never-seen FF wraparound cover, interview between FF inkers **JOE SINNOTT** and **DICK AYERS**, rare **LEE & KIRBY** interview, comparison of a Jack and Stan FF story conference to Stan's final script and Jack's penciled pages, **MARK EVANIER** and other columnists, gallery of **KIRBY FF ART**, pencils from **BLACK PANTHER**, **SILVER SURFER**, and more!

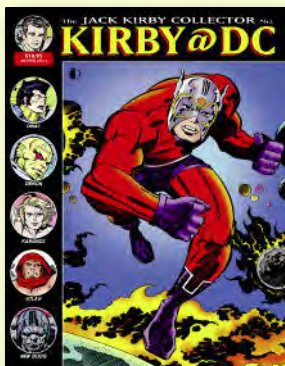
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KIRBY COLLECTOR #61

JACK KIRBY: WRITER! Examines quirks of Kirby's wordsmithing, from the **FOURTH WORLD** to **ROMANCE** and beyond! Lengthy Kirby interview, **MARK EVANIER** and other columnists, **LARRY LIEBER**'s scripting for Jack at 1960s Marvel Comics, **RAY ZONE** on 3-D work with Kirby, comparing **STEVE GERBER**'s Destroyer Duck scripts to Jack's pencils, Kirby's best promo blurbs, Kirby pencil art gallery, & more!

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KIRBY COLLECTOR #62

KIRBY AT DC! Kirby interview, **MARK EVANIER** and other regular columnists, updated "X-Numbers" list of Kirby's DC assignments (revealing some surprises), **JERRY BOYD**'s insights on Kirby's DC work, a look at **KEY 1970s EVENTS IN JACK'S LIFE AND CAREER**, Challenges vs. the FF, pencil art galleries for **FOREVER PEOPLE**, **OMAC**, and **THE DEMON**, Kirby cover inked by **MIKE ROYER**, and more!

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KIRBY COLLECTOR #63

MARVEL UNIVERSE! Featuring **MARK ALEXANDER**'s pivotal Lee/Kirby essay "A Universe A'Bornin'," **MARK EVANIER** interviews **ROY THOMAS**, **STAN GOLDBERG** and **JOE SINNOTT**, a look at key late-1970s, '80s, and '90s events in Kirby's life and career, **STAN LEE** script pages, unseen Kirby pencils and unused art from **THOR**, **NICK FURY AGENT OF SHIELD**, and **FANTASTIC FOUR**, and more!

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KIRBY COLLECTOR #64

SUPER-SOLDIERS! We declassify Captain America, Fighting American, Sgt. Fury, The Losers, Pvt. Strong, Boy Commandos, and a tribute to Simon & Kirby! **PLUS:** A Kirby interview about Captain America, **MARK EVANIER** and other columnists, key 1940s-'50s events in Kirby's career, unseen pencils and unused art from **OMAC**, **SILVER STAR**, **CAPTAIN AMERICA** (in the 1960s AND '70s), the **LOSERS**, & more! **KIRBY** cover!

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KIRBY COLLECTOR #65

ANYTHING GOES (AGAIN!) A potpourri issue, with anything and everything from Jack's 50-year career, including a head-to-head comparison of the genius of **KIRBY** and **ALEX TOTH!** Plus a lengthy **KIRBY** interview, **MARK EVANIER** and our other regular columnists, unseen and unused Kirby art from **JIMMY OLSEN**, **KAMANDI**, **MARVELMANIA**, his **COMIC STRIP & ANIMATION WORK**, and more!

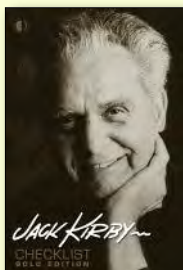
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KIRBY COLLECTOR #66

DOUBLE-TAKES ISSUE! Features oddities, coincidences, and reworkings by both Jack and Stan Lee: the **Galactus** Origin you didn't see, **Ditko's** vs. Kirby's **Spider-Man**, how Lee and Kirby viewed "writing" differently, plus a rare **KIRBY** interview, **MARK EVANIER** and our other regular columnists, unseen and unused pencil art from **FANTASTIC FOUR**, 2001, **CAPTAIN VICTORY**, **BRUCE LEE**, & more!

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JACK KIRBY CHECKLIST: GOLD

Lists **EVERY KIRBY COMIC, BOOK, UNPUBLISHED WORK** and more!

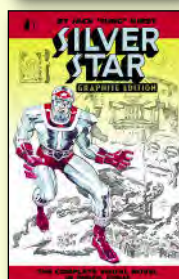
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CAPTAIN VICTORY: GRAPHITE EDITION

KIRBY's original **CAPTAIN VICTORY** GRAPHIC NOVEL presented as created in 1975 (before being modified for the 1980s Pacific Comics series), reproduced from his uninked pencil art! Includes Jack's unused **CAPTAIN VICTORY** SCREENPLAY, unseen art, an historical overview to put it in perspective!

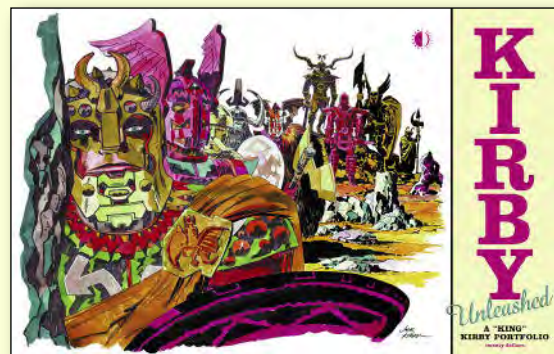
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SILVER STAR: GRAPHITE EDITION

First conceptualized in the 1970s as a movie screenplay, **SILVER STAR** was adapted by **JACK KIRBY** as a six-issue mini-series for Pacific Comics in the 1980s, as his final, great comics series. The entire six-issue run is collected here, reproduced from his uninked **PENCIL ART**, showing Kirby's work in its undiluted, raw form! Also included is Kirby's **ILLUSTRATED SILVER STAR MOVIE SCREENPLAY**, never-seen **SKETCHES**, **PIN-UPS**, and an historical overview to put it all in perspective!

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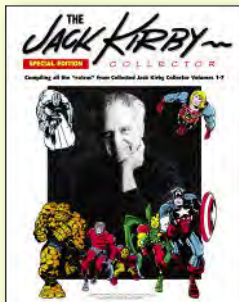


KIRBY UNLEASHED (REMASTERED)

The fabled 1971 **KIRBY UNLEASHED PORTFOLIO**, completely remastered! Spotlights some of KIRBY's finest art from all eras of his career, including 1930s pencil work, unused strips, illustrated World War II letters, 1950s pages, unpublished 1960s Marvel pencil pages and sketches, and Fourth World pencil art (done expressly for this portfolio in 1970)! We've gone back to the original art to ensure the best reproduction possible, and **MARK EVANIER** and **STEVE SHERMAN** have updated the Kirby biography from the original printing, and added a new Foreword explaining how this portfolio came to be! **PLUS:** We've recolored the original color plates, and added **EIGHT NEW BLACK-&WHITE PAGES**, plus **EIGHT NEW COLOR PAGES**, including Jack's four 1972 **GODS** posters, and four extra Kirby color pieces, all at tabloid size!

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KIRBY COLLECTOR SPECIAL EDITION



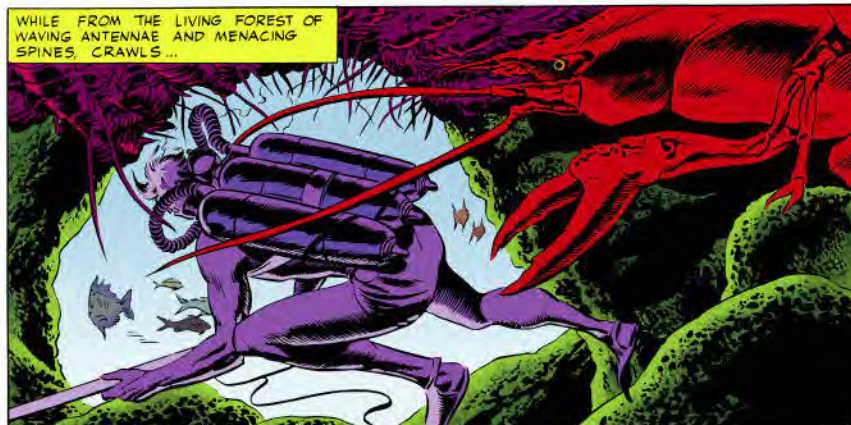
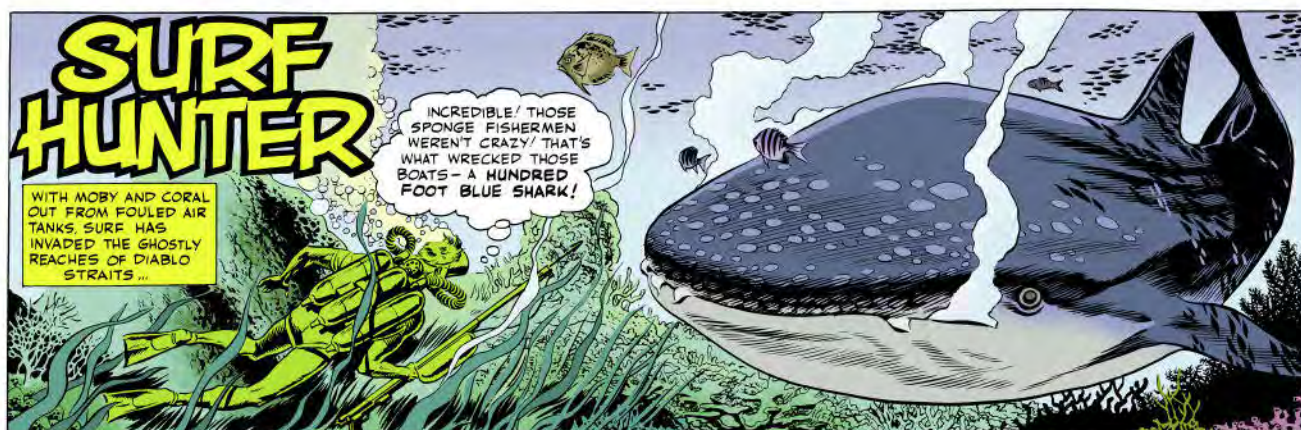
Compiles the "extra" new material from **COLLECTED JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR VOLUMES 1-7**, in one huge Digital Edition! Includes a fan's private tour of the Kirbys' home and more than 200 pieces of Kirby art not published outside of those volumes!

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PARTING SHOT

Elsewhere in this issue, we presented all the Surf Hunter dailies we've uncovered. Now, here's the lone Sunday page Jack produced, with inks by Wally Wood. Sundays typically had different continuity than the dailies, so don't try to fit this into the dailies' narrative. Just sit back and enjoy they exquisite artwork, with new colors by Tom Ziuko.

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NEW ISSUES:

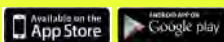


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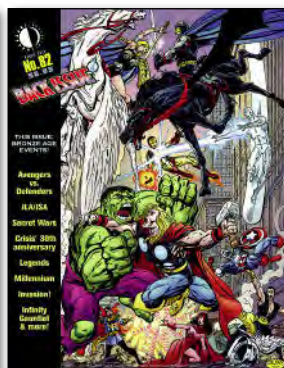
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BACK ISSUE #81

"DC Bronze Age Giants and Reprints!" An in-depth exploration of DC's 100-PAGE SUPER SPECTACULARS, plus: a history of comics giants, DC indexes galore, and a salute to "human encyclopedia" E. NELSON BRIDWELL. Featuring the work of PAT BRODERICK, RICH BUCKLER, FRANK FRAZETTA, JOE KUBERT, BOB ROZAKIS, BERNIE WRIGHTSON, and more. Super Spec tribute cover featuring classic art by NICK CARDY.

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BACK ISSUE #82

"Bronze Age Events!" With extensive coverage of the Avengers/Defenders War, JLA/JSA crossovers, Secret Wars, Crisis' 30th anniversary, Legends, Millennium, Invasion, Infinity Gauntlet, and more! Featuring the work of SAL BUSCEMA, DICK DILLIN, TODD McFARLANE, GEORGE PEREZ, JOE STATON, LEN WEIN, MARV WOLFMAN, MIKE ZECK, and more. Plus an Avengers vs. Defenders cover by JOHN BYRNE.

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BACK ISSUE #83

"International Heroes!" Alpha Flight, the New X-Men, Global Guardians, Captain Canuck, and Justice League International, plus Spider-Man in the UK and more. Also: exclusive interview with cover artists STEVE FASTNER and RICH LARSON. Featuring the work of JOHN BYRNE, CHRIS CLAREMONT, DAVE COCKRUM, RICHARD COMELY, KEITH GIFFEN, KEVIN MAGUIRE, and more! Alpha Flight vs. X-Men cover by FASTNER/LARSON.

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BACK ISSUE #84

"Supergirl in the Bronze Age!" Her 1970s and 1980s adventures, including her death in Crisis on Infinite Earths and her many rebirths. Plus: an ALAN BRENNERT interview, behind the scenes of the Supergirl movie starring HELEN SLATER, Who is Superwoman?, and a look at the DC Superheroes Water Ski Show. With PAUL KUPPERBERG, ELLIOT MAGGIN, MARV WOLFMAN, plus a jam cover recreation of ADVENTURE COMICS #397!

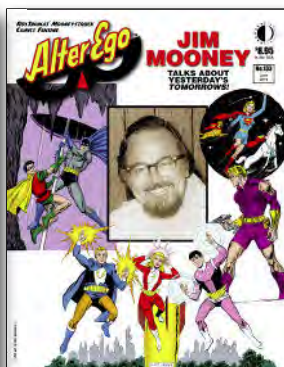
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BRICKJOURNAL #35

History in LEGO Bricks! LEGO pro RYAN McNAUGHT on his LEGO Pompeii and other projects, military builder DAN SISKIND on his BrickMania creations, and LASSE VESTERGARD about his historical building. JARED K. BURKS on minifigure customizing, step-by-step "You Can Build It" instructions by CHRISTOPHER DECK, BrickNerd DIY Fan Art, MINDSTORMS robotics lessons by DAMIEN KEE, and more!

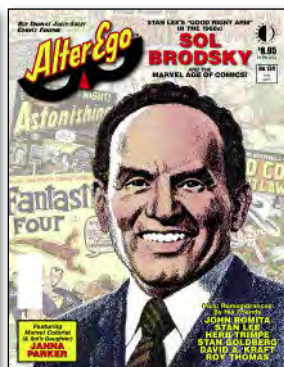
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ALTER EGO #133

Gentleman JIM MOONEY gets a feature-length spotlight, in an in-depth interview conducted by DR. JEFF McLAUGHLIN—never before published! Featuring plenty of rare and unseen MOONEY ART from Batman & Robin, Supergirl, Spider-Man, Legion of Super-Heroes, Tommy Tomorrow, and others! Plus FCA, Mr. Monster's Comic Crypt, BILL SCHELLY, and more!

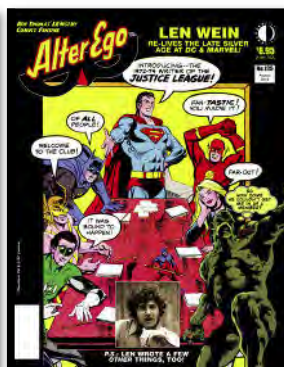
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ALTER EGO #134

Celebrates SOL BRODSKY—Fantastic Four #3-4inker, logo designer, and early Marvel production manager! With tributes by daughter and Marvel colorist JANNA PARKER, STAN LEE, HERB TRIMPE, STAN GOLDBERG, DAVID ANTHONY KRAFT, TONY ISABELLA, ROY THOMAS, and others! Plus FCA, MICHAEL T. GILBERT, BILL SCHELLY, and more! Cover portrait by JOHN ROMITA!

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ALTER EGO #135

LEN WEIN (writer/co-creator of Swamp Thing, Human Target, and Wolverine) talks about his early days in comics at DC and Marvel! Art by WRIGHTSON, INFANTINO, TRIMPE, DILLON, CARDY, APARO, THORNE, MOONEY, and others! Plus FCA (Fawcett Collectors of America), MR. MONSTER's Comic Crypt, the Comics Code, and DAN BARRY! Cover by DICK GIORDANO with BERNIE WRIGHTSON!

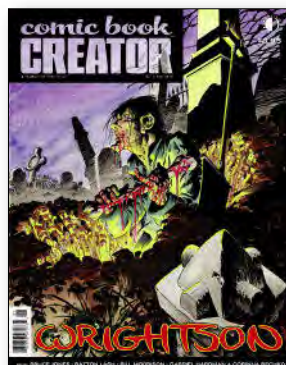
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ALTER EGO #136

BONUS 100-PAGE issue as ROY THOMAS talks to JIM AMASH about celebrating his 50th year in comics—and especially about the '90s at Marvel! Art by TRIMPE, GUICE, RYAN, ROSS, BUCKLER, HOOVER, KAYANAN, BUSCEMA, CHAN, VALENTINO, and others! Plus FCA, MR. MONSTER's Comic Crypt, AMY KISTE NYBERG on the Comics Code, and a cover caricature of Roy by MARIE SEVERIN!

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COMIC BOOK CREATOR #7

BERNIE WRIGHTSON interview on Swamp Thing, Warren Publishing, The Studio, Frankenstein, Stephen King, and designs for movies like Heavy Metal and Ghostbusters, and a gallery of Wrightson artwork! Plus 20th anniversary of Bart Simpson's Treehouse of Horror with BILL MORRISON; and interview Wolff and Byrd, Counselors of the Macabre's BATTON LASH, and more!

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COMIC BOOK CREATOR #8

MIKE ALLRED and BOB BURDEN cover and interviews, "Reid Fleming, World's Toughest Milkman" cartoonist DAVID BOSWELL interviewed, a chat with RICH BUCKLER, SR. about everything from Deathlok to a new career as surrealist painter; plus the late STAN GOLDBERG speaks; the conclusion of our BATTON LASH interview; STAN LEE on his European comic convention tour, and more!

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COMIC BOOK CREATOR #9

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