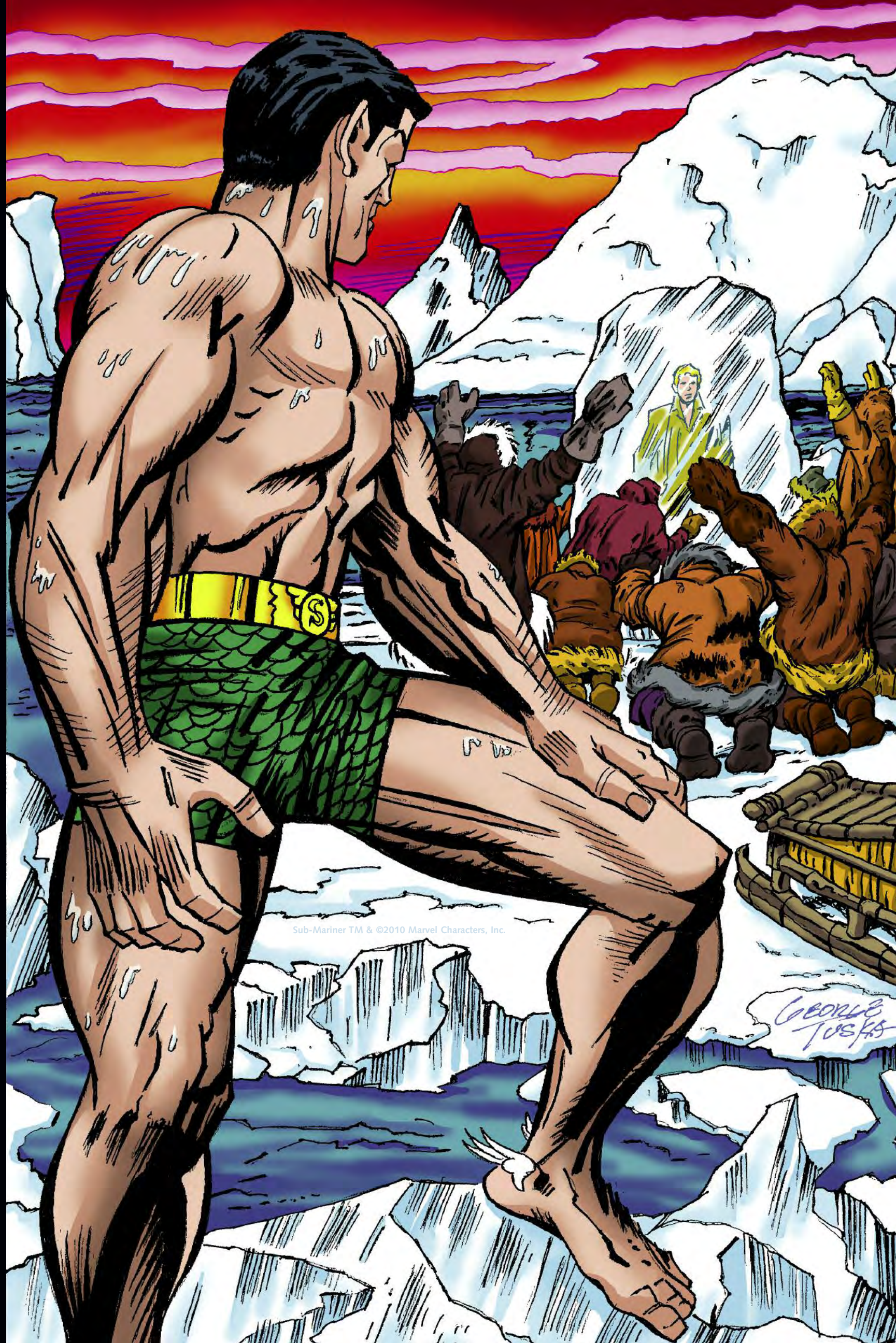


JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR FIFTY-FOUR  \$10⁹⁵ IN THE US



Sub-Mariner TM & ©2010 Marvel Characters, Inc.

A plea from the publisher of this fine digital periodical:

At TwoMorrows, we're on the Honor System with our Digital Editions. We don't add Digital Rights Management features to them to stop piracy; they're clunky and cumbersome, and make readers jump through hoops to view content they've paid for. And studies show such features don't do much to stop piracy anyway. So we don't include DRM in our downloads.

However, this is **COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL**, which is **NOT INTENDED FOR FREE DOWNLOADING ANYWHERE**. If you paid the modest fee we charge to download it at our website, you have our sincere thanks. Your support allows us to keep producing magazines like this one.

If instead you downloaded it for free from some other website or torrent, please know that it was absolutely **100% DONE WITHOUT OUR CONSENT**. Our website is the only source to legitimately download any TwoMorrows publications. If you found this at another site, it was an **ILLEGAL POSTING OF OUR COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL**, and your download is illegal as well. If that's the case, here's what I hope you'll do:

GO AHEAD AND READ THIS DIGITAL ISSUE, AND SEE WHAT YOU THINK.

If you enjoy it enough to keep it, please **DO THE RIGHT THING** and go to our site and purchase a legal download of this issue, or purchase the print edition at our website (which entitles you to the Digital Edition for free) or at your local comic book shop. Otherwise, please delete it from your computer, since it hasn't been paid for.

And please **DON'T KEEP DOWNLOADING OUR MATERIAL ILLEGALLY**, for free. If you enjoy our publications enough to download them, support our company by paying for the material we produce. We're not some giant corporation with deep pockets, and can absorb these losses. We're a small company—literally a “mom and pop” shop—with dozens of hard working freelance creators, slaving away day and night and on weekends, to make a pretty minimal amount of income for all this hard work.

All of our editors and authors, and comic shop owners, rely on income from this publication to continue producing more like it. Every sale we lose to an illegal download hurts, and jeopardizes our future. Please don't rob us of the small amount of compensation we receive. Doing so helps ensure there won't be any future products like this to download.

And please don't post this copyrighted material anywhere, or share it with anyone else.

Remember: TwoMorrows publications should only be downloaded at
www.twomorrows.com



TwoMorrows. Celebrating The Art & History Of Comics. (& LEGO!™)

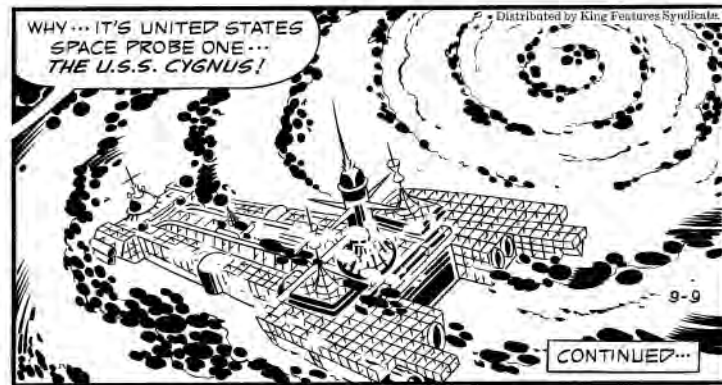
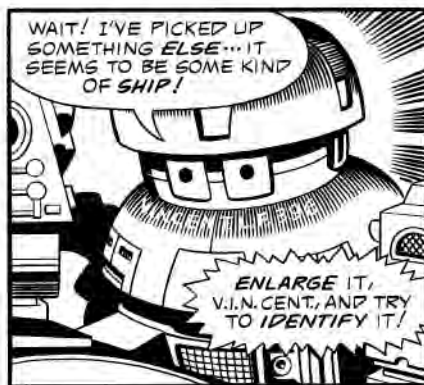
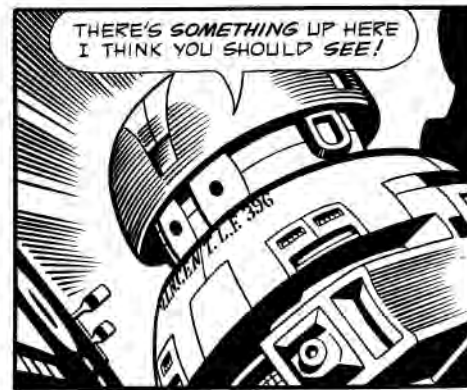
TwoMorrows • 10407 Bedfordtown Drive • Raleigh, NC 27614 USA • 919-449-0344 • FAX: 919-449-0327 • E-mail: twomorrow@aol.com • www.twomorrows.com



THE NEW JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR

ISSUE #54, SPRING 2010

2



(above) Mike Royer inks (and minor corrections to keep the characters "on model") from the September 9, 1979 *Black Hole* Sunday strip. See the pencils on pages 2-3 of this issue.

Black Hole TM & ©2010 Walt Disney Productions.

CONTENTS

THE MAGIC OF LEE & KIRBY, PART TWO!

| | |
|---|----|
| OPENING SHOT | 2 |
| (of Marvel & Kirby, and mice and men) | |
| UNDER THE COVERS | 4 |
| (George Tuska's final interview) | |
| JACK F.A.Q.s | 6 |
| (Mark Evanier clues us into Jack's connection with Welcome Back, Kotter) | |
| THINKIN' 'BOUT INKIN' | 10 |
| (Vince Colletta's thin black lines, and details of our new book on Vinnie!) | |

| | |
|---|----|
| I GO DITKO | 12 |
| (examining the difference between Ditko and Kirby's approaches) | |
| GALLERY 1 | 14 |
| (more looks at Kirby's incredible inkers during the Marvel Age) | |
| INCIDENTAL ICONOGRAPHY | 21 |
| (Kirby captures Stan Lee) | |
| FOUNDATIONS | 22 |
| (the most boring Kirby work ever!) | |
| RETROSPECTIVE | 26 |
| (the formative Fantastic Four!) | |
| KIRBY OBSCURA | 40 |
| (Barry Forshaw in the world of 3-D) | |
| UNCOVERED | 42 |
| (the "Lost" FF wrap-up) | |

| | |
|--|----|
| JACK KIRBY MUSEUM PAGE | 49 |
| (visit & join www.kirbymuseum.org) | |
| NORSE ODDITIES | 50 |
| (just when you thought it was safe to read THOR again...) | |
| KIRBY AS A GENRE | 52 |
| (Adam McGovern takes some CDs for a spin) | |
| FISH OUTTA WATER | 54 |
| (take a dip with Kirby's Sub-Mariner) | |
| THE OL' SWITCHEROO | 57 |
| (transformers!) | |
| GALLERY 2 | 59 |
| (more Fantastic penciling) | |
| NUMEROLOGY | 66 |
| (the mystery of Marvel cover dates) | |

| | |
|--|----|
| TEAM SUPREME | 68 |
| (talkin' about the most talked about team in comicdom) | |
| COLLECTOR COMMENTS | 78 |
| PARTING SHOT | 80 |
| (one more shot of the Surfer) | |

Front cover recreation:
GEORGE TUSKA
Back cover inks: **JOE SINNOTT**
Cover colors: **TOM ZIUOKO**

OPENING SHOT

by John Morrow,
editor of TJKC

(below) Wesley C. Winters, Jr., a dealer in paper memorabilia, came across this interesting artifact in a recent purchase. It's an issue of the *Los Angeles Times*' Sunday *West* magazine supplement, dated October 13, 1968. But while we know Jack contributed an art/prose piece on the Pioneer 10 Jupiter probe to a 1972 issue of *West*, it's not this issue that's Kirby-centric. Check out the note to "Jack Kirby" from H.L. "Robbie" Robinson, dated October 23, 1969. Jack was definitely living in the Los Angeles area by then; was he considering some work for Disney at that time? Or was this directed to a different "Jack Kirby"? If you have any clues, let us know!

A lot's happened between this issue and last: (and thanks for your patience during the delay). The Kirby family made a legal filing to reclaim Jack's share of copyrights on 45 characters he created or co-created at Marvel Comics. If approved by a judge, those rights would revert from Marvel to Jack's estate over the next decade. The filing took place shortly after the late August announcement that the Walt Disney Company had agreed to buy Marvel Comics for \$4 billion. (Yes, BILLION, with a "B." You've gotta figure Stan, Jack, Steve Ditko, and all the other Bullpen stalwarts had no idea what they were creating in the 1960s would ever garner that kind of a payoff for the company...)

Let me clear up one very important distinction here: the Kirbys are not suing anyone. This isn't a lawsuit; it's simply an author/co-author utilizing a contingency in copyright law. (This "loophole," by my understanding, was ironically brought about due to lobbying by Disney, who feared losing Mickey Mouse to Public Domain, and succeeded in getting copyright law changed in the late 1990s.) Jerry Siegel's family set a precedent by using this contingency to regain a share of the copyright on Superman, and the Kirbys have hired Marc Toberoff—the same attorney the Siegels used—for these proceedings. Toberoff won or settled cases on *Lassie*, *Get Smart*, *The Dukes of Hazzard*, and *The Wild Wild West*. And while I'm no lawyer, here's my understanding of the situation.

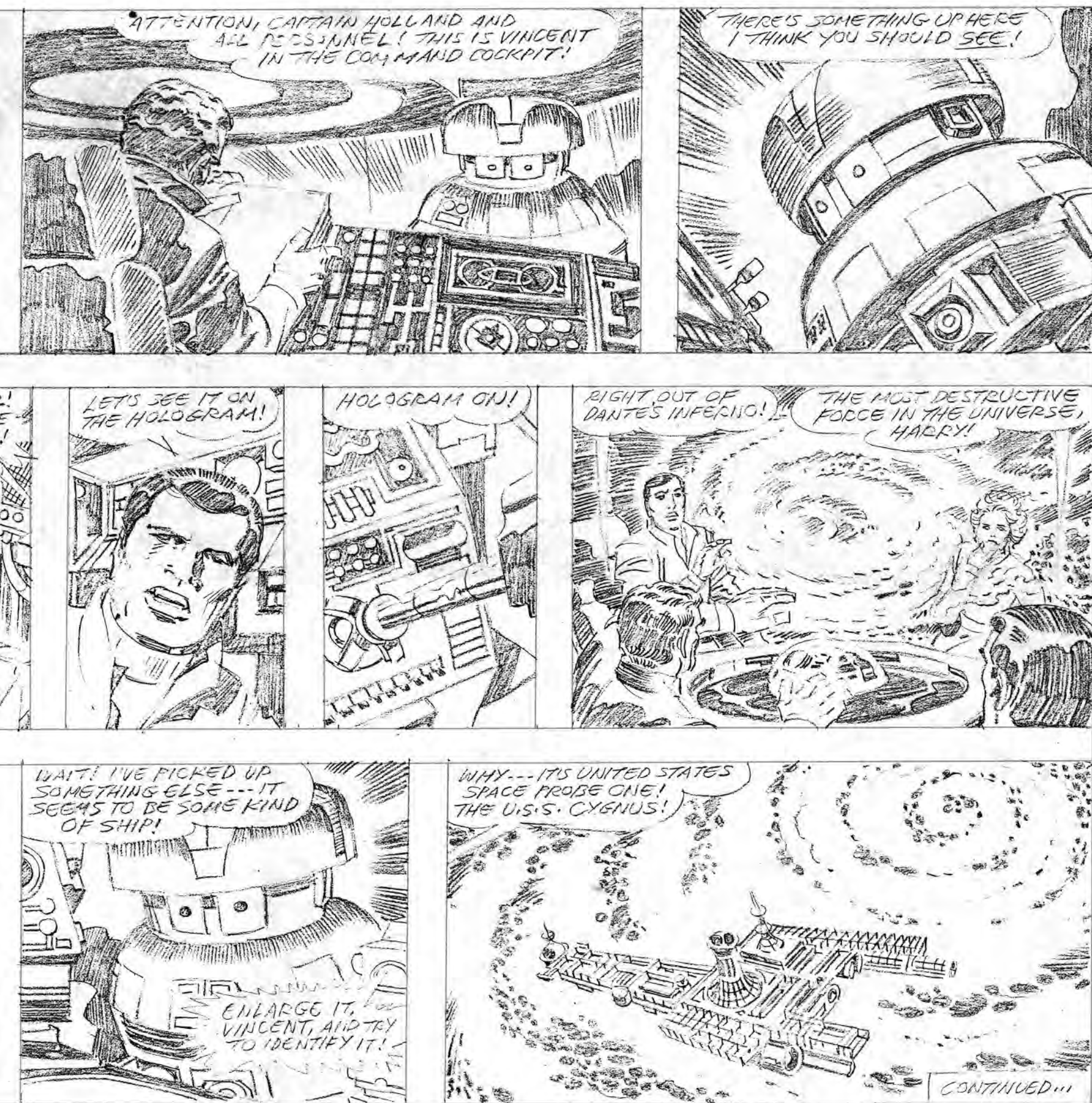
According to current copyright law, even if you've signed away your ownership rights to a publisher, you or your heirs can regain your share of ownership 56 years after the property's first publication, as long as you file papers giving notice of your intentions up to 10 years before that 56 years is up. So the Kirby family is eligible to claim Jack's share of the *Fantastic Four* in 2017, *Hulk* in 2018, and *X-Men* in 2019. (Just what share is Jack's would have to be decided by a judge, but let's assume it's 25%, which I believe is what the Siegels were awarded since Superman was a co-creation as well.) The reclaimed copyright would then last 39 more years, at which time the characters (but not necessarily the trademarks) would fall into the Public Domain, theoretically for anyone to use.

Was it a coincidence that the Kirbys would file when they did? I'm not speaking with any firsthand knowledge, but common sense would dictate that, if you wanted to press your advantage in this situation, the perfect time to file would be when such a huge business deal was about to go down, in hopes of a quick settlement. A Disney spokesman responded to the news of the filing, saying that they had fully considered this happening when they decided to purchase Marvel, so they weren't surprised. (Although, as the Siegel case has shown, there's not a lot a corporation can do to fight this legally; the law's pretty clear, and it's basically up to a judge to decide what exactly is covered, and how it's to be divided. But they can certainly tie it up with expensive legal maneuvers for a lot of years.)

Jack spent his life creating work to support his family. But since Roz Kirby died, the Kirby family has not received one cent in royalties for the multitude of reprints of Jack's work being produced. Meanwhile, other writers and artists who followed Kirby on *X-Men*, *Fantastic Four*, etc. have continued getting royalty payments (as they should; I think all of them should profit for the continued use of their work, including the creator of the strips). This is because Marvel adopted a new policy after Roz's passing, that heirs would only get royalties for a limited number of years after a creator dies, and then nothing after that. *Nada. Zilch.* So if Disney buys you out for \$4 billion, based largely on the characters you created or co-created, Marvel doesn't feel your family's entitled to even the measliest

OF MICE & MEN





royalty payment on reprint books.

Such is the way of corporate America, I know. But such is the way of copyright law as well. I wish Marvel had made a good faith effort to take care of one of its founding fathers long ago, rather than bullying Jack because they had the resources to do so. Now, I guess it's up to the courts to decide what's right.

However it turns out, hopefully Marvel (and thereby Disney) will learn from this experience, and see that taking care of the people that created your properties is not only ethical, it's good business. A simple thing like a generous ongoing pension and royalties for creators and their heirs—particularly of someone as influential as Kirby—would've gone a

long way toward circumventing this current situation. I hope that, as he was in so many other areas, Jack can again be a pioneer, if this case causes companies to initiate new policies that will take care of their talent, and prevent the need for future filings that will only do much worse damage to their bottom lines...

...but don't hold your breath. Rather than settle this once and for all, as of this writing, Marvel (now owned by Disney) has just filed suit in federal court, claiming Kirby's contributions to Marvel were "work-for-hire," and that Marvel is the sole owner of the copyrights—that in spite of all those legal documents they had him sign over the years (in exchange for a meager loan payment to help his

family move to a healthier climate, or to get his rightful artwork back), he never had any rights to sign away to begin with. So it's the same old story, but now it's on Marvel's shoulders to prove that Jack—working from home, with no company medical coverage or paid vacation time, or taxes taken from his check—was somehow a Marvel employee, just like the staff artists that worked in the bullpen in the 1940s, '50s, and '60s. I, for one, hope the courts can see through that argument, and finally reward the Kirbys for all the years of dedication and creativity Jack gave to Marvel as a freelancer. ★





[Editor's Note: This issue's front cover was originally planned to feature the Joe Sinnott-inked Silver Surfer piece that's on our back cover. However, after reading the piece that follows, I decided that my sometimes grumpy, but always well-intentioned buddy Mike Gartland was dead-on; I screwed up. So I swapped the two pieces, and used George Tuska's recreation of the Captain America #112 Kirby page he originally inked, to adorn this issue's frontispiece. It's too late to do right by George, but Mike, you've helped me remember that there's a time when I need to take off my publisher's hat, and put on my fanboy beanie, in order to do the right thing.]

THE LAST INTERVIEW GEORGE GAVE

by Mike Gartland

(This was more of a 'chat' between friends rather than a direct Q&A. I knew George Tuska for many years and we were always comfortable in each other's company. In such instances of trust one tends to relate opinions "unedited" as it were, i.e. expressing your true feelings; with that in mind the following is unedited.)

MIKE GARTLAND: How're ya feelin', George?

GEORGE TUSKA: *[Shakes his head "no"]*

MIKE: George, what do you remember about Kirby?

GEORGE: Very fast drawing, always fast!

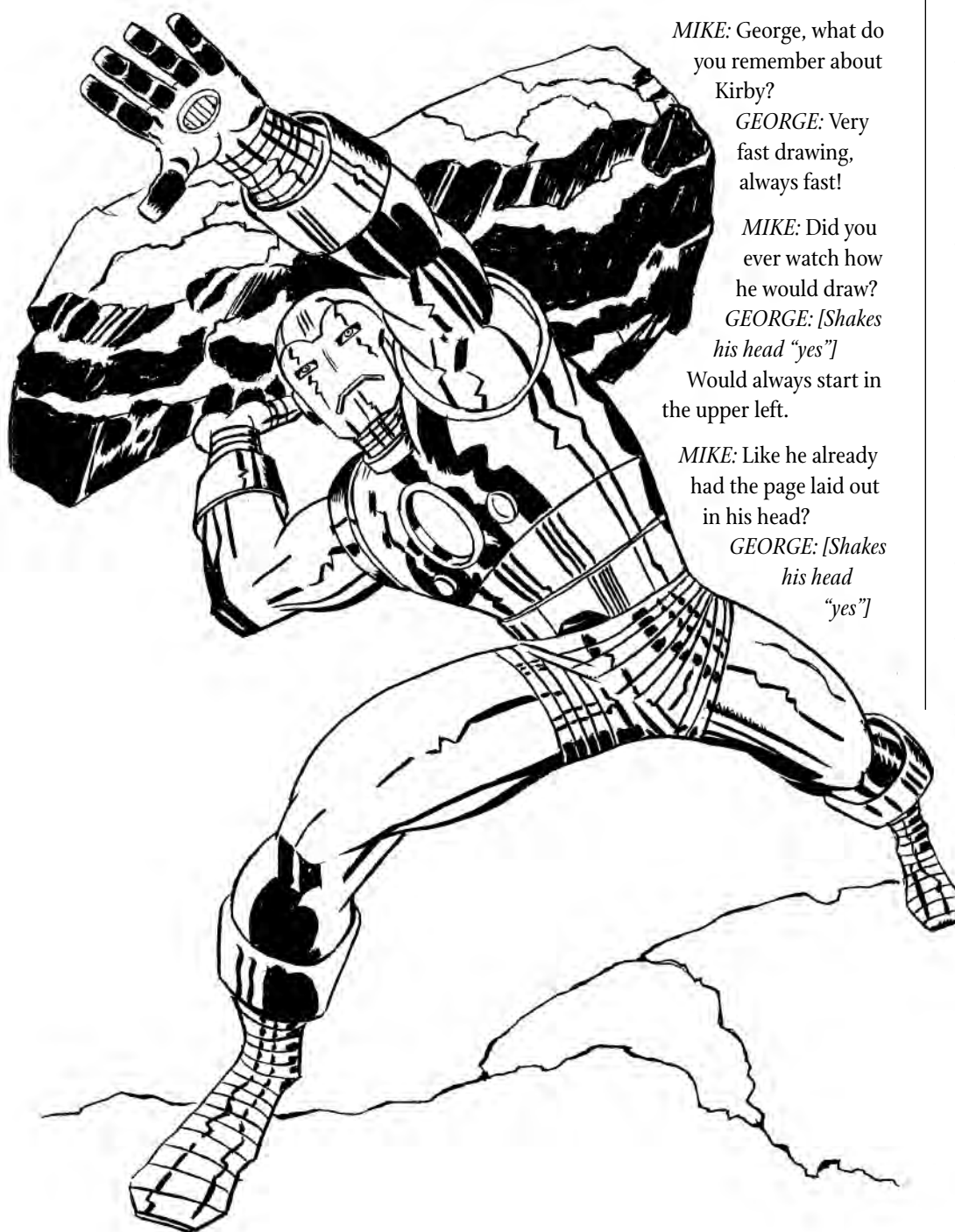
MIKE: Did you ever watch how he would draw?

GEORGE: *[Shakes his head "yes"]*

Would always start in the upper left.

MIKE: Like he already had the page laid out in his head?

GEORGE: *[Shakes his head "yes"]*



Here I briefly reminded George of, while he was drawing Buck Rogers in the Sixties, that he was picking up extra work at Marvel.

MIKE: Why did you go to Marvel and not DC?

GEORGE: Stan wanted me; we golfed together and he was asking me to come up and work for him.

MIKE: When you went back you were introduced to the way Stan was working at that time. *[I briefly covered the "Marvel Method" with George.]*

GEORGE: *[Shakes his head "yes"]* I liked that; it freed you up.

MIKE: You were given pages laid out by Kirby; do you remember working on those? *[I show George stats of the layout pages followed by his finished ones]*

GEORGE: Very loose layout.

MIKE: Do you remember how you were given these layouts? Did you get them from Kirby?

GEORGE: No. I went into the offices and got them.

MIKE: When you would go in to get the pages, would you have a story conference with Stan?

GEORGE: Don't remember; usually.

MIKE: Did you follow those notes on the borders?

GEORGE: Sometimes.

MIKE: You were being asked to draw using Kirby's dynamics; did that bother you at all?

GEORGE: *[Shakes his head "no"]* Kirby was always like that.

MIKE: Even in his romance stories?

GEORGE: *[Frowns]* I hated romance stories...

MIKE: You saw Kirby's drawing style change over the years; what did you think of Kirby's drawing?

GEORGE: A lot of foreshortening, always foreshortening, blocky and square.

MIKE: It became more geometric than anatomical.

GEORGE: *[Shakes his head "yes"]* Square, flat fingers...

MIKE: It wasn't "true" anatomy?

GEORGE: Kirby never was. It was action, not anatomy—that was Kirby!

MIKE: What do you remember about Jack as a person?

GEORGE: *[Smiles]* Tough!

MIKE: Tough little guy!

GEORGE: *[Shakes his head "yes"]*

MIKE: Will Eisner said he was the feisty little guy and you were the quiet giant!

GEORGE: *[Smiles]* I liked Eisner.

MIKE: You lived on Long Island the same time as Jack; did you ever socialize?

GEORGE: *[Shakes his head "no"]* I would see him in New York [City] sometimes.

MIKE: Do you remember going out to lunch with Jack and other artists?

GEORGE: Whoever was around then, we would go out...

MIKE: You used to golf with Stan?

GEORGE: *[Shakes his head "yes"]* He was good!

MT: He says you always would beat him.

GEORGE: I was being nice... *[Both laugh].*

At this point I asked George about the time Jack did the “fill-in” issue of Captain America (#112) which George inked. The story went that Jim Steranko was in danger of missing a deadline on the third part of a three-issue story, so Stan asked Jack to do a fill-in. It became the classic “album issue” with many great Kirby/Tuska interpretations of famous Cap scenes. The rumor surrounding this story was that George was drawing the third part of the Steranko story to follow Kirby’s issue #112; but Jim returned to finish the story arc and Tuska’s pages were shelved (they were used later on, inked by Dave Cockrum, in Avengers #106-107). In past instances, Stan would have Jack launch a book inked by whomever Stan was grooming to replace Kirby. I asked George if he remembered if Stan was going to put him on Cap, but he didn’t recall. At this point George’s working relationship with Kirby had ended. To my knowledge they never worked together again.

I e-mailed Stan and asked him about this, but he didn’t remember either. He stated that, while George may not have been the stylist Steranko was, he always could draw a great C.A. and could always be relied upon to fill-in on anything; he wasn’t flashy but he was one of the best. Stan also related that he loved golfing with George “even though he always beat me!”

Three weeks from the time I had this chat with George, he was gone. He knew he was dying and was ready to go. I was with him the day before he passed and, just as he did all his life, he faced what was ahead without complaint. I wrote at the beginning of this piece that this chat was un-edited and that George spoke as he truly felt. As the reader can see there wasn’t any dirt, any slander, any regret. George, like Stan who was kind enough to respond to my questions, was a professional and a gentleman in every sense of the word. George started out as one of my artistic icons but ended up just being my friend. So long, friend!

On a personal note: the back cover of this issue features a Kirby/Tuska splash of the famous scene when Namor the Sub-Mariner comes upon the frozen Captain America. I thought this piece was beautifully rendered artistically and knew that Tom Ziuko



could do it justice in color. I only wished that John Morrow used it on the front cover rather than another Kirby/Sinnott Surfer. No disrespect intended—I’ve been after John for years asking him to put up a Kirby/Tuska piece for the cover (front, not back). He’s had every other person who inked Kirby do a front cover piece: Ayers, Stone, Sinnott, et. al. and many who never inked Kirby do a cover, but not George. I gave him a Kirby/Tuska Iron Man piece [Editor’s note: see previous page] but he rejected it, giving me excuses like “there should be a background,” and then proceeds to do a slew of TJKC covers without any. I offered him this Cap #112 piece stating that there’s never been a Kirby Sub-Mariner cover; how may Surfer front covers so far, John? How many Sinnott inked front covers, John? (And don’t get me wrong. I love Joe’s inking, but even Joe is a Tuska fan). Don’t think I don’t remember that if not for John, the Art of George Tuska book probably would never have seen print and I’m appreciative, but I knew it would’ve been a shot in the arm for George to see a Kirby/Tuska piece on the cover of TJKC. I know there are many fans who regarded the Cap #112 issue as a beautiful pairing of these two legends and that there are many panels from that book worthy of a cover. Well, it may be too little too late, but George kinda made it to the cover; thanks, John! ★

(above) A Tuska pencil sketch randomly inserted into a 1990s Marvel trading card set.

(left) George produced numerous commission pieces for fans during his retirement. Here’s a self-portrait George did for one fan. A similar piece is on the cover of our now sold-out Art of George Tuska book.

Characters TM & ©2010 Marvel Characters, Inc.



(this page) Jack always found time for his fans, including answering fan mail. Here's his response to questions a fan asked about a 1972 term paper he was writing. Also shown is Jack signing autographs at the 1978 San Diego Comic-Con.

(next page, top) Cover to *Welcome Back, Kotter* #4 (May 1977), which was both written by Mark Evanier, and featured an angry gym teacher on the cover!

A column answering Frequently Asked Questions about Kirby
by Mark Evanier

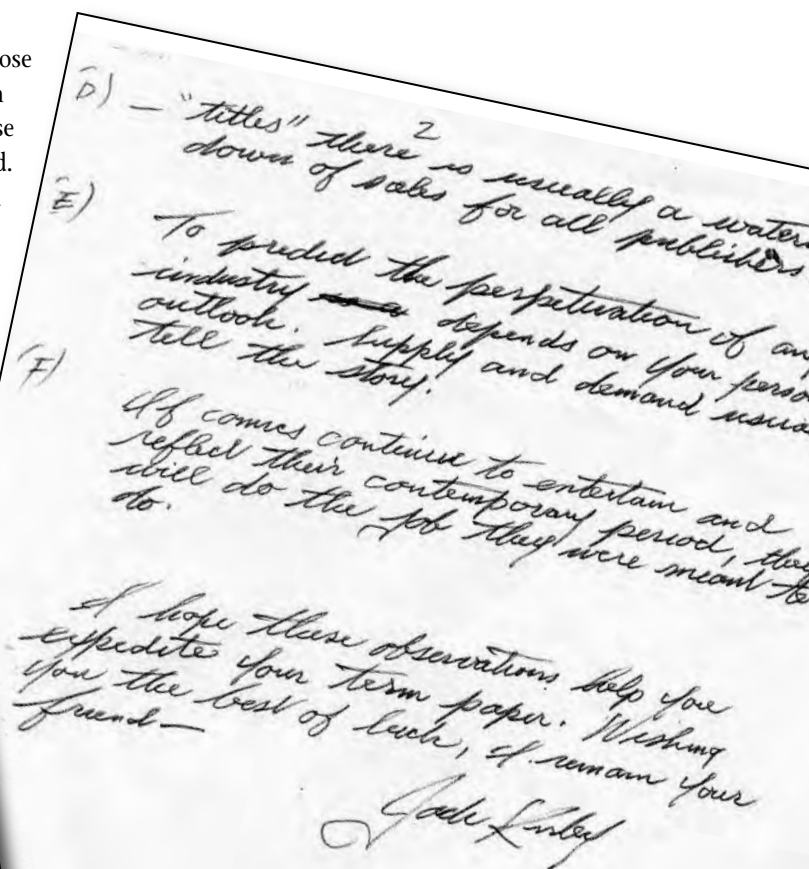
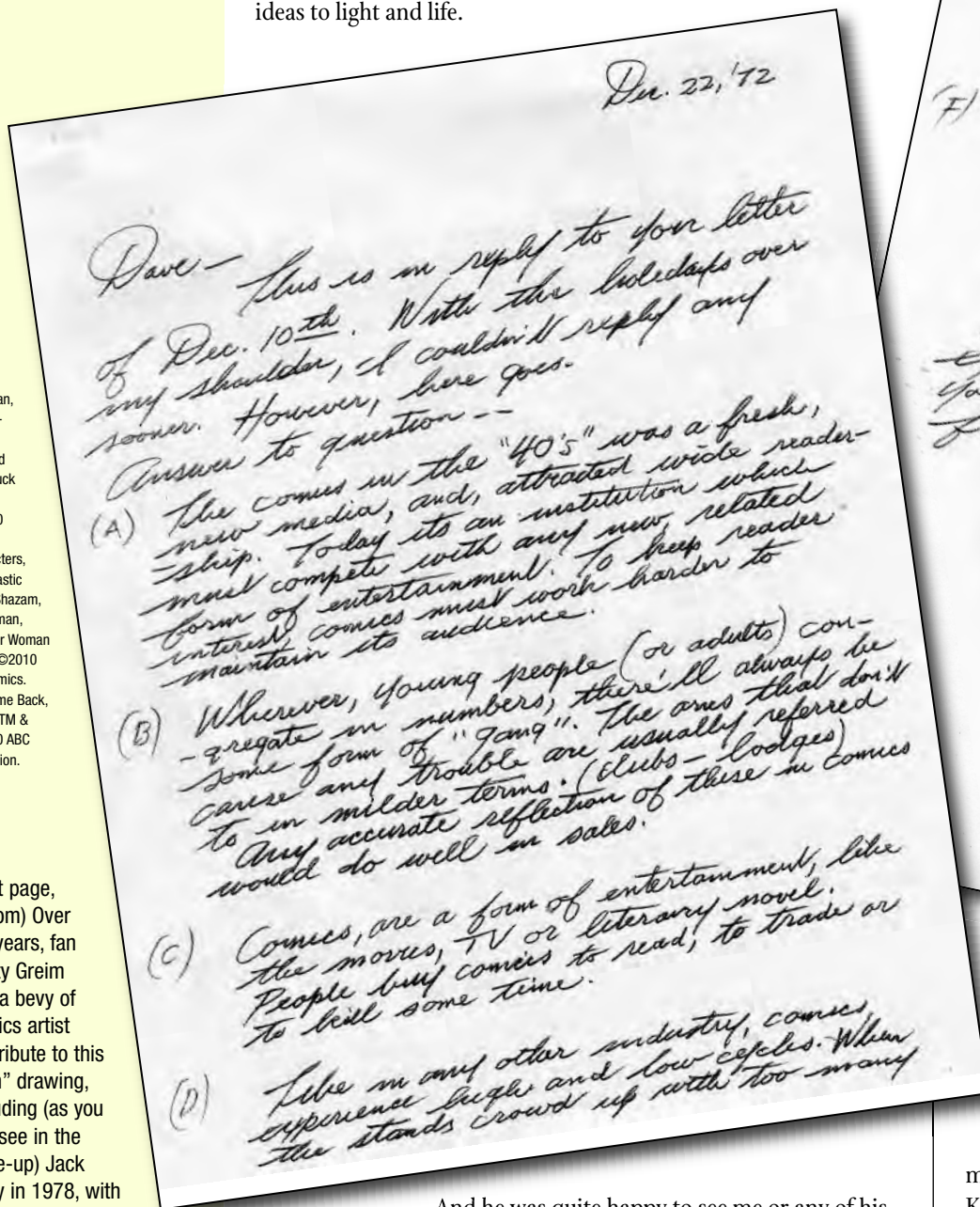
Jim Williman writes to ask...

I loved your book about Jack but longed for more stories about his relationships with his fans and with writers and artists who were inspired by him, and especially yours. Could we have more stories about your relationship with Jack? Very few of the comic books you've worked on in your career have been of the Marvel or super-hero variety, which were his specialties. How did he feel about the fact that you didn't follow very closely in his footsteps?

Well, I don't think anyone could have followed that closely in those footsteps. Whatever else Jack was, he was unique. He was also not, in his mind, a guy who specialized in Marvel or super-hero comics. Those were merely the most commercial things he did for an extended period. He saw himself as a creator of ideas and concepts and characters and as a guy who put pencil to paper to bring those ideas to light and life.

Hulk,
Ant-Man,
Spider-Man,
Howard
The Duck
TM &
©2010
Marvel
Characters,
Inc. Plastic
Man, Shazam,
Superman,
Wonder Woman
TM & ©2010
DC Comics.
Welcome Back,
Kotter TM &
©2010 ABC
Television.

(next page, bottom) Over the years, fan Marty Greim had a bevy of comics artist contribute to this "jam" drawing, including (as you can see in the close-up) Jack Kirby in 1978, with inks by Joe Sinnott. Joe Simon also signed it, and other artists featured include Tom Sutton, Ernie Chan, Michael Golden, Curt Swan (inked by Wally Wood), Joe Staton, Dick Giordano, Gene Colan, John Byrne, Terry Austin, Jim Steranko, and Jim Aparo.



decision to leave myself out of it. I only had so many words in which to recount Jack's life and I figured the book was supposed to be about him, not me. He's a lot more interesting, anyway.

When I handed in what I thought was the final manuscript, my fine editor and friend (those don't always go together) Charlie Kochman called. He was very happy (he said) but, uh, why didn't I say something about knowing Jack, working with him, being around him and so forth? I explained to him why I'd sidestepped the topic. He said, "I understand but I think we need it. We can squeeze in a few more pages." So that's when I wrote the Afterword that's in the book. It really was an Afterword.

For the bigger, forthcoming (don't ask me when) bio, I'm including some anecdotes that involve me because they're unavoidable when telling Jack's life in fine detail. Others I think are worth telling but since they're not primarily about Jack, maybe not in that book. This is one I've decided not to include...

And he was quite happy to see me or any of his fans/friends not wind up, as he often felt, trapped in a situation where all you can do in the world is work for DC or Marvel, Marvel or DC. Today, most of us who do comics also do other things—movies, TV, animation, videogames, whatever. Jack worked in a time and day where he did not have those opportunities. He was quite happy to see that changing for subsequent generations.

Here's a story that may illuminate some of this, though I'm afraid it's more about me than it is about him. Still, telling it here solves a problem I'm having as I work on the long-promised "big" biography of the man. In *Kirby: King of Comics*, I made a conscious

In September of 1976, my then-partner Dennis Palumbo and I were hired as Story Editors of the TV sitcom *Welcome Back, Kotter*. A Story Editor, at least in this context, was a staff writer... or more often, a staff rewriter. Dennis and I, along with six or so other folks with the titles of Producer or Story Editor, wrote scripts but most of our time was spent rewriting. And rewriting and rewriting, sometimes far into the morn.

The show was enormously popular... a fact for which I deserve darn near none of the credit. It was enormously popular before Dennis and I were hired. It was enormously popular much later when we decided to depart and, at the same time, amicably dissolve our partnership. We're still pals, I'm happy to say.

Ratings were great and there was about a one-year wait for tickets to attend tapings, especially if you were a teenage girl. If they hadn't screened some of them out, it would have looked like

The Ed Sullivan Show when the Beatles appeared and the audience screamed, shrieked and swooned throughout the performance.

I enjoyed the job, though not the hours. For months, my life went pretty much as follows: Get up in the morning around 9 AM. Get to the studio by 11 (sometimes 10) for rehearsals. Work on scripts and watch rehearsals all afternoon. Dennis and I were also writing scripts for other, non-*Kotter* TV projects, so that added to the general fatigue.

In the evening would come the rewriting of that week's *Kotter* script, either at the studio or at the home of the show's star, Gabe Kaplan. Either way, I wouldn't see my apartment until two, sometimes three in the morning.

Often, there was an added impediment to sleep. During a rewrite, one person would have to be in charge of typing—or on some pages, writing in by hand the changes. That person would usually be me... the curse of being both the fastest typist and the guy with the neatest handwriting. Then when we were done, I'd phone the script-printing company and they'd send someone to come pick up the new draft. Their staff would retype and print out new scripts in time for the next day's rehearsal while we all went home and slept—

—except that at 4 AM, someone there would phone to wake me up and say, "We can't make out this word you wrote in on page 12." One time, it turned out to be "Kotter."

Still, it was exciting and rewarding in many ways, not all of them obvious at the time... and very different from writing comic books. I'll tell one quick story that may interest you before I get to the part that involves Kirby.

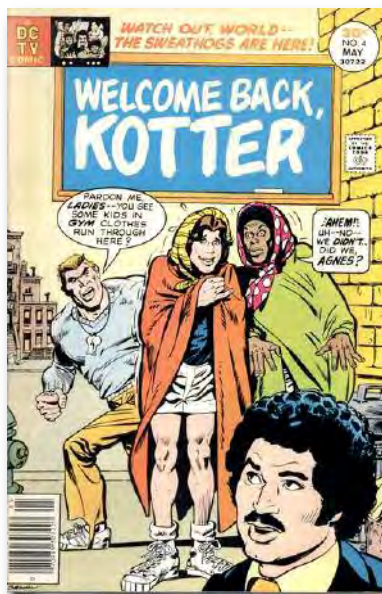
Despite laboring day and night and night and day, I missed doing comic books. Yeah, they didn't pay as well but you also got to sleep once in a while and you didn't have to discuss and debate every line

with eleven different parties. When you write a TV show, between you and the audience you have fifty, maybe a hundred people/obstacles. Actors, directors, wardrobe people, producers, editors, network folks, lighting directors... they all contribute, often greatly. It's very easy to feel distanced from the finished product. Sometimes, I'd watch a finished episode and say of some line, "I *think* I wrote that..."

When you do a comic, however, between you and the audience are usually no more than six people and it can be done in less: A penciller, an inker, a letterer, a colorist, maybe an editor. Sometimes, several of those folks are one person. It's a collaborative medium but not *too* collaborative. There are times when it turns out wrong or not to your liking but the odds are a lot better that when it's all done, it'll be more or less what you had in mind. I think that's one of the things Jack loved about doing comic books. It's certainly one of the main appeals for me.

So in the midst of this Bataan Death March that was *Kotter*, I got one of those offers one cannot refuse. DC was publishing a *Welcome Back, Kotter* comic book. Would I like to write a few issues of it? Yes, unfortunately for my schedule, I supposed I would... and it was actually kind of fun to handle those characters without having to be concerned with what my fellow staff members or the actors would say. Where I had a little trouble was with the comic's editor, Joe Orlando.

The kids in Mr. Kotter's classroom were forever hurling sophomoric insults at one another. At the time, a big news story was that motorcycle daredevil Evel Knievel was planning to leap his bike over the Grand Canyon or some comparable geographic wonder. So in my first of two scripts for the comic, I had one of the characters, Arnold Horshack, say to a particularly loud person, "Hey,



lot of great comics. Many writers and artists loved working with him... and I suppose if I'd done more than about a half-dozen projects with him, I might have, as well. As it was, we were never quite on the same wavelength. Mr. Orlando knew I was a Story Editor on the TV show but I don't think he quite grasped that I was writing lines that the characters were concurrently uttering on network television.

He didn't like the Evel Knievel joke. "Horshack would never say such a thing," Joe told me on the phone.

As he was telling me this, Arnold Horshack walked by. Actually, it was Ron Palillo, the actor who played the role. I asked Joe to hold please and I told Ron the line. He sure seemed to think Horshack would say such a thing. Referring to the episode that was currently being rehearsed and rewritten, he said, "That would fit perfectly into the scene where I'm arguing with Judy Borden. Can we put that in?"

"It's in," I told him... and it stayed in all the way until it aired on the ABC Television Network followed by a tremendous, unsweetened laugh. But Joe Orlando cut it out of the comic and made other changes because he thought I didn't quite understand the TV show I was writing. (In fairness to Joe, I should mention that a lot of other writers have nothing but good to say about their experiences with him. And I still thought he presided over a lot of great comics.)

Now, let me start sneaking up on the part where Jack Kirby comes into this...



Evel Knievel just called. He wants to know if he can jump your mouth!" A typical *Welcome Back, Kotter* joke.

Shortly after I sent in that script, I got a phone message from Mr. Orlando. I returned the call from a phone in the reception area outside our rehearsal hall.

Joe Orlando was a very nice, hard-laboring man who was responsible for a





(above) Kirby cover for *Marvel Super-Heroes* #54 (Nov. 1975) inked by Vince Colletta. (The Hulk is about the closest Kirby character to an angry gym teacher we could come up with.)

(below) George Kennedy in 1967's *Cool Hand Luke*.

(next page, top) Scott Brady, around the time he had a guest spot on *Welcome Back, Kotter*.

(next page, bottom) The cast of *Kotter*.

Hulk TM & ©2010 Marvel Characters, Inc. *Welcome Back, Kotter* TM & ©2010 ABC Television. *Cool Hand Luke* TM & ©2010 Warner Bros.

One morning, Gabe Kaplan came into a writer's meeting and announced that he'd been at some function where he'd met the Oscar-winning actor, George Kennedy. Mr. Kennedy told Gabe he was a huge fan of *Welcome Back, Kotter* (or at least, his daughter was) and would love to maybe appear on an episode some time. Kennedy was a pretty big star at the time and we all decided that we should make his wish come true.

There was a script that had been developed earlier in the season and abandoned. The premise was as follows: There's a boys' gym teacher at the school named Mr. Caruso who has a tendency to hit students. Everyone knows about it but nobody does anything about it. One day, he slaps Vinnie Barbarino (the John Travolta role) and the problem comes to a boil and...

Well, the freelance writer who'd been hired to write the script wasn't able to bring it to a satisfactory resolution. His draft went on the shelf until we could decide what, if anything, to do with it.

Someone suggested that George Kennedy looked like a gym teacher who might slap around his students. In light of that, two of our producers took the script and with an assist from the rest of the staff, figured out a way to make the story work. It was rewritten and someone upstairs spoke



verbally pat you on the back. Everyone got this treatment, including some folks whose work seemed to me so amateurish or unmarketable that it might have been doing them a favor to tell them to forget about the creative arts and to go to bartending school or something.

But that's how I sometimes think. I'm more from the "Anyone who can be discouraged probably should be" school. Jack didn't think like that.

To be sure, he had different levels of encouragement. If you scrawled something on a page that was irredeemably hopeless, you didn't get the same response from him that a kid named Dave Stevens got when he showed Jack his samples. You didn't hear quite the same speech he gave the young Wendy Pini or Scott Shaw or any of the countless young folks who approached him for critiques, guidance, a gentle nudge down the right path and, most of all, approval.

His approval was very important to many of us. Obviously, when you're starting out—heck, even when you're nearing the finish line—approval matters. You're always better when folks like your work than when they don't. But the approval of Jack "King" Kirby was something very precious and enriching. Before I met Jack, one of the few professionals who'd read anything I'd written was Bob Kane and he had nothing good to say about the pages.

He'd asked me to give him samples of things I'd written... and even, God knows why, drawn. This was back when I was 15

with Mr. Kennedy's agent about his availability. A tentative tape date was selected.

The following weekend, I used one of my all-too-rare days off to pop down to a comic convention in downtown Los Angeles. Jack and Roz were there with their daughter Lisa, and we talked a bit—the first time I'd seen them in a while. Jack had heard what I was doing and told me he was pleased... pleased that I was working and even more pleased, I suspect, that it was not in comics.

In what I'm about to say here, I want to make it clear that I was not singled out for special treatment. Jack had a kind of avuncular—some might even say fatherly—approach to darn near every fan of his work that he ever met. If you had the slightest impulse to write or draw or create something, Jack encouraged you. He might not always encourage you in the direction you wished to head (or thought you wished to head) but he would find something positive to say and tell you to keep at it and

or 16 and still doing a little art, more for fun than intended profession. At our next meeting, Bob handed the work back to me with a crude dismissal, suggesting I consider other lines of work than, say, the one I've now been doing for the past forty years. This didn't bother me much because... well, it was Bob Kane. I already knew he hadn't done much of the work that displayed his signature. I also could sense that his "critique" flowed wholly from the fact that he didn't see any way he could use me as an assistant or ghost.

By contrast, it would have devastated me if Jack Kirby had told me to forget about trying to be a professional writer. Which is probably the reason he never said that to me or, as far as I could see, anyone.

What he did was to focus on the positive and on the future. Jack could find something good to say about anything, though he sometimes struggled in two areas. One was if the work did not seem to be done with sincere, hard effort. Not having talent was not half the sin in Kirby's eyes as not giving maximum effort. If you knocked it out fast or did the minimum, Jack would call you on it. He'd do it in a constructive way but he'd let you know you needed a greater sense of commitment to whatever you were attempting to accomplish. It was a lesson that some who professed to worship Jack and to want to learn his "secret" never quite got... or perhaps didn't want to get. You might never be able to match Jack in terms of imagination or vision or sheer ability with a pencil... but it was technically possible to put in as many hours as he did.

The other thing that bothered him was related. It was if the work was derivative, unoriginal, lacking in innovation. He was not impressed by copying, imitations or doing what had been done before.

He wouldn't say to give it up. He wouldn't say you were lacking in ability. He'd just tell you that you were capable of some sort of unique, individual statement and that you'd better start figuring out what one might be. I saw at least one wanna-be artist approach Jack with art samples that faithfully mimicked the Kirby style. He figured, I guess, that was how Jack thought comic art should look so Jack would think his work was great. He couldn't have been more wrong...

...but Jack still encouraged him. He encouraged him to be himself but he encouraged him. Generally speaking, what he liked was when someone built something that wasn't there before.

The flow of support led inevitably to the desire to please. I remember when Dave Stevens published his first *Rocketeer* story. He asked that I accompany

him over to where Jack and Roz were seated—this was at a convention—for moral support when he presented Jack with a copy. It was very important to Dave that Jack get one and that Jack show some form of approval... and of course, he had nothing to worry about. Jack loved it.

We were all that way with Jack to some extent. His motivational speaking was a gift, even if he did hand it out rather willy-nilly. You wanted to be seen as worthy of that gift. Most of those who got the "special" cheerleading that Jack dispensed—the kind he gave to Dave, Wendy, Scott, John Pound, most of the Image guys, Len Wein, Marv Wolfman and so many others—proved worthy.

At that con in downtown L.A. on my day off from *Kotter*, I told Jack about my current job. He said he'd heard... and had made a point of catching my name in the credits. Then he said the same thing all my relatives said... the same thing that all relatives of folks who work in TV say. He said, "Can't you get them to slow down the names? You can hardly read them." (He should have seen how they do credits these days...)

Roz said, referring to the youngest Kirby daughter, "Lisa loves the show. Is there any way you could get us in to attend a taping? Maybe meet the cast?"

I said, "Sure. Hey, we have an episode coming up—it tapes a week from Tuesday—with George Kennedy as a guest star."

Jack said, "George Kennedy? The guy in *Cool Hand Luke*? He's great. Can I go, too?"

"If you behave yourself," I said. And it was all set.

Except that the following Monday, Roz phoned and asked if Lisa could bring a friend. I said yes. So then it was all set.

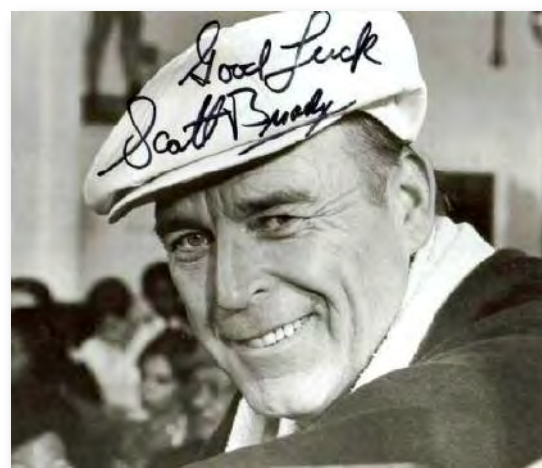
Except that the next day, Roz phoned and asked if Lisa could bring yet another friend. I said yes. So then it was all set again.

Except that later that same day, we lost George Kennedy.

I'm still not sure what happened. Our producer said Mr. Kennedy received the script, saw that he was to be the villain who slapped Vinnie Barbarino and declined. He supposedly said his daughter would never forgive him—this, even though in the end, we see that Mr. Caruso has a good heart and fine intentions. A fellow in Business Affairs said Kennedy's agent just plain didn't care for our monetary offer or how hard his client would have to work to earn it. Someone at the network told us Kennedy got a movie offer that took precedence.

Pick a reason. Whatever it was, he was out so we needed to hurriedly find a new Caruso—like, by the next day when rehearsals commenced for that episode. Our casting director scrambled and came up with a character actor named Scott Brady. Mr. Brady made a lot of movies in the forties and fifties, usually playing a tough cowboy or a tough gangster or sometimes even a tough detective. He was quite good as our tough gym teacher when we taped the show the following Tuesday evening.

That was when Kirbys came. I'd arranged for V.I.P. seats for Jack, Roz, Lisa and Lisa's two friends. The pages were supposed to clear the audience out after the taping so we could do pick-ups and other business but I had them keep the Kirby party in their seats. I went out and explained to them about George Kennedy. Then during a lull in the work, I



brought the "Sweathogs"—John Travolta, Ron Palillo, Robert Hegyes and Lawrence Hilton-Jacobs—up to say hello and sign autographs. I introduced them all to Jack, Roz, Lisa and Lisa's friends.

When it came time to depart, Roz turned to me and said, "Thank you, Mark. This has been wonderful. It's such a thrill to see someone in person who you've been a fan of all your life."

And Jack added, "Yeah! Scott Brady!" He looked for all the world like a die-hard comic fan who just had the chance to see Jack Kirby in the flesh.

The next morning in the rehearsal hall, Larry Hilton-Jacobs came up to me. Larry played the role of Freddie Washington on the series. (This was back when they didn't allow black people on TV unless their character shared the surname of a past U.S. President.) Someone had just told Larry that I was writing the *Welcome Back, Kotter* comic book. "You into comics?" he asked me. I told him I was—deeply—and that I'd been writing them for years.



"I was really into Marvel when I was younger," he remarked. "I had 'em all. My favorite was the Silver Surfer."

I said, "Do you know the name of the artist who first drew the Silver Surfer?"

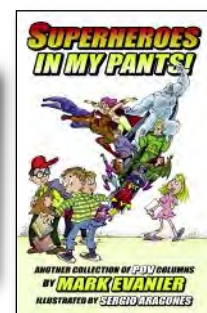
"Sure," Larry replied. "Jack Kirby. My favorite artist."

"Well, I introduced him to you last night."

Larry looked startled. "That was *that* Jack Kirby? That little guy? I always figured the guy who drew those comics had to look like Captain America or someone. I heard the name but I just figured it was some other Jack Kirby!"

Next question? ★

(Mark Evanier, author of *Kirby, King of Comics from Harry N. Abrams—and Superheroes In My Pants! from TwoMorrows—welcomes your questions about Scott Brady's biggest fan. Visit his website, www.newsfromme.com and you'll find a link via which to send them.)*



THINKIN' 'BOUT INKIN'

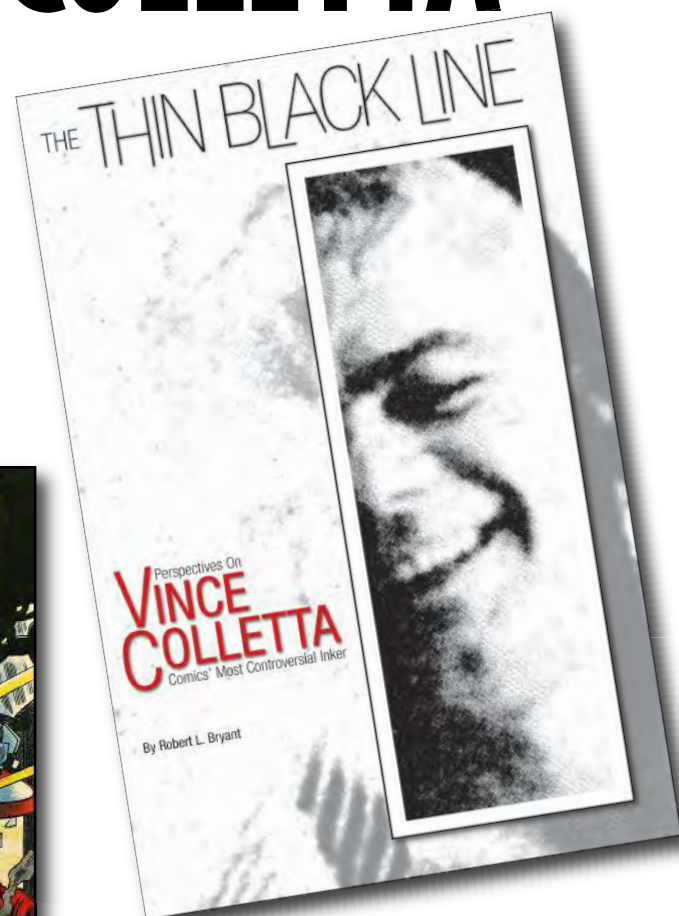
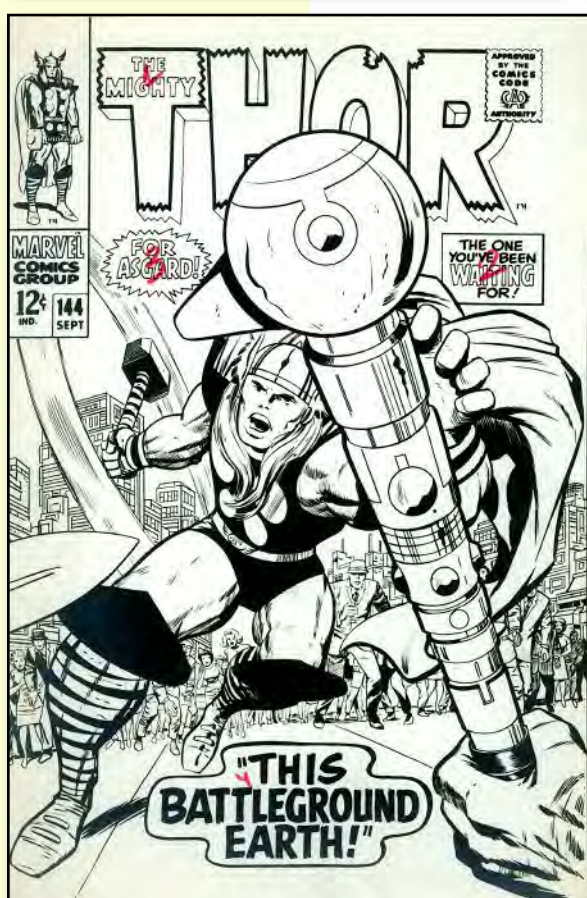
VINCE COLLETTA

NOT ALWAYS THE CULPRIT

by Bruce Hannum

(right) In August, TwoMorrows is publishing *The Thin Black Line*, the first-ever book about Vince Colletta, by *TJKC* contributor Robert L. Bryant. It grew out of Robert's article of the same name for *TJKC*, and features a who's who of comics pros and Colletta family and friends, setting out to uncover the truth about this controversial inker and artist.

All characters TM & ©2010 Marvel Characters, Inc.



We all know that Vince Colletta has been reviled for removing details from Jack Kirby's work. But as fate would have it, he wasn't the only one to feel that Jack's work was either too busy or unfocused and required simplification. And this person was someone who could do something about it—editor Stan Lee himself.

Submitted for your perusal are two Jack Kirby covers from 1967, *Tales of Suspense* #92 and *Thor* #144. Here are two versions of each, one a stat shot before any of the changes were made, and the published cover with the changes. In regard to *TOS* #92, the original in all its

glory was an exciting, dramatic example of what Jack could do with motion lines to convey speed and power (with the aid of inker Frank Giacoia). However, Stan must have decided it too busy and, by removing almost all of the motion lines, rendered the image of Cap as simply "floating" into view as opposed to Jack's original intention of breaking through the glass with incredible explosiveness.

In the case of *Thor* #144, this was already the second cover that Jack drew, again Stan feeling the original cover either too complicated or unfocused. And while I can appreciate the eye-catching appeal of the super-hero coming right at the prospective buyer, I can't help but wonder why, again, Stan felt it necessary to remove an element from the image, namely the "barb" on the end of the weapon in the foreground. Kirby used this weapon as originally depicted for the interior of the comic. Vinnie inked it. Stan removed it. One could speculate that Vince Colletta simply followed the lead of his editor in simplifying Jack's work. Or at least felt that it was condoned by the man in charge.

Things aren't always the way they appear—or at least originally appear. ★

EYE PURSUES DAREDEVIL
AND DEED

F. Four 40

~~STAT THIS PAGE FOR W WOOD~~ DAREDEVIL
TURNS CAME INTO
RIFLE

3

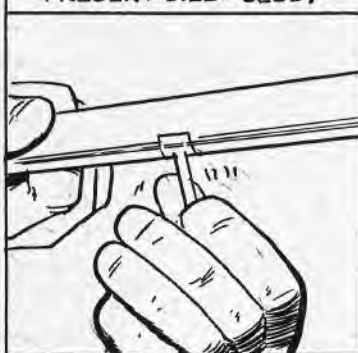
BUT, BEFORE THE MASTER OF MENACE CAN LAUNCH HIS ATTACK, THE SIGHTLESS **DAREDEVIL** SENSES THE PRESENCE OF THE TV EYE AND MOVES WITH THE SPEED OF THOUGHT--!



THEN WE WON'T
TRY TO OUTRUN
IT!



WITH HIS FINGERS MOVING ALMOST FASTER THAN THE HUMAN EYE CAN FOLLOW, THE MAN WITHOUT FEAR MAKES A LIGHTNING-LIKE ADJUSTMENT ON HIS EVER-PRESENT BILLY CLUB!



THE FLYING OBJECT GENERATES SO MUCH POWER, THAT I CAN SENSE ITS EXACT LOCATION AS IT DRAWS CLOSER!



AND, AS LONG AS I KNOW WHERE IT IS--



THIS GIVES US ANOTHER BRIEF BREATHING SPELL! WHAT'S OUR NEXT MOVE, RICHARDS?



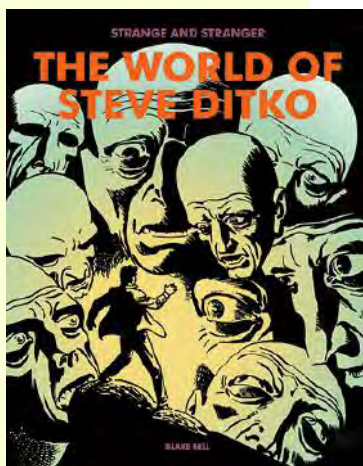
SO LONG AS THE F.F. IS WITHOUT SUPER POWERS, IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE DOOM DEFEATS US! BUT, IF I CAN REACH OUR HQ., THERE'S **ONE** DEVICE UP THERE WHICH MAY TURN THE TIDE--



CAME FIRING AT

EYE BROUGHT

STAN & STEVE & JACK



Most of Jack's attempts at drawing Spider-Man, like the cover of *Marvelmania Magazine* #5 (1970, below), while dynamic, just don't ring true. The same can be said of Ditko's Hulk, a character Kirby's known for. Full stats (right) from *Tales to Astonish* #67 (May 1965), were sent to Kirby, who was taking over the art with the next issue.

Spider-Man, Hulk TM & ©2010 Marvel Characters, Inc. Captain Glory TM & ©2010 Jack Kirby Estate.

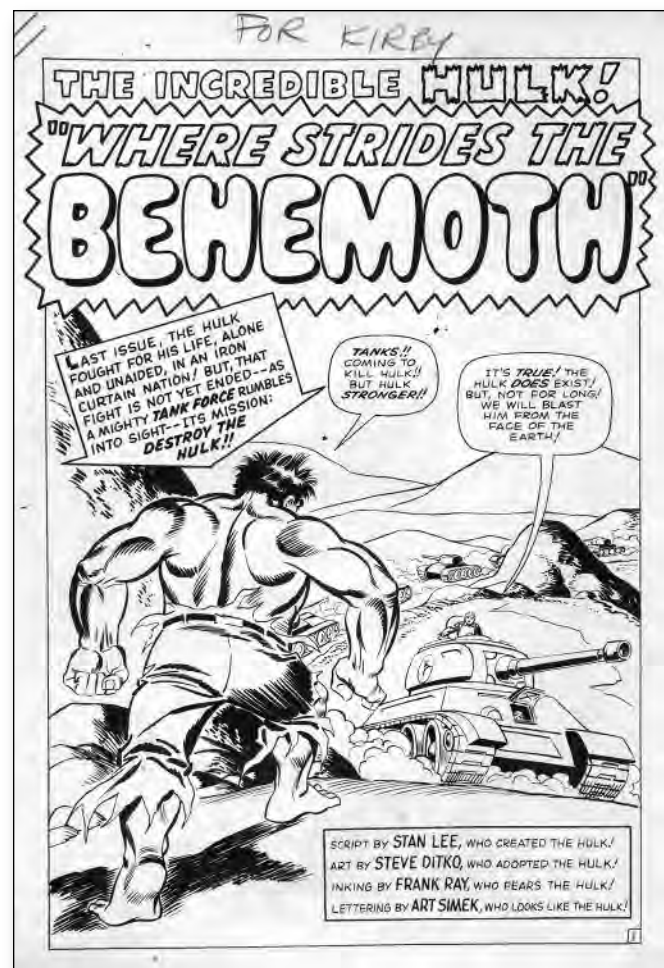
by Robert L. Bryant Jr.

Just try to write a book about Silver Age comics creators without talking about Jack Kirby. You can't do it. Kirby is always there; he's always the giant sun whose gravity keeps pulling your ship from its original course.

In 1996, Marvel published an art book on John Romita Sr., and much of the interview was about Kirby's influence ("He really was like an explosion on paper"). In 2000, David Spurlock collaborated with Carmine Infantino on an Infantino art book, and parts of it were devoted to Kirby ("The artwork Jack was doing was just incredible"). In 2002, Daniel Herman published an art book on Gil Kane, and parts of the interview were about Kirby ("He was so filled up with an intensity and heat... so it just came out in his work").

Now comes Blake Bell's lavish and engrossing coffee-table book on Steve Ditko (*Strange and Stranger: The World of Steve Ditko*, Fantagraphics, 2008), and the Kirby Effect happens again—pieces of the book are about how Ditko's quirky, idiosyncratic style managed to find a following at a Marvel Comics dominated by Kirby's slamming fists and sculpted bodies.

Bell doesn't engage in Jack-bashing; he just makes it clear how different Ditko was from the Kirby model at Marvel. (*X-Men* artist Paul Smith is quoted: "I acknowledge that Kirby is the King, but when you draw Ben Grimm reaching for the salt with the same intensity as you draw Armageddon, it lacks the impact Ditko could create.")



Spider-Man became a sort of flashpoint for the two styles, each of which won and lost a battle over defining Spider-Man's first appearance in *Amazing Fantasy* #15 in 1962.

The basics of what happened are so well-known they have almost become dogma. Somebody—maybe Stan Lee, maybe Jack—pitches an idea for a character called Spiderman (no hyphen yet). Stan decides Jack will draw it. Jack draws about 5 pages of a story about a teenager whose magic ring turns him into an adult hero with spider-powers. Stan doesn't like it. Maybe too similar to Jack's earlier effort *The Fly*, or maybe not. Stan tosses the Jack pages and gives the project to Steve, who takes it in a different direction. Stan likes it! Steve gets the project. He turns in his full story and a cover. Stan doesn't like the cover. He taps Jack to do a new cover. The rest is Spidey history.

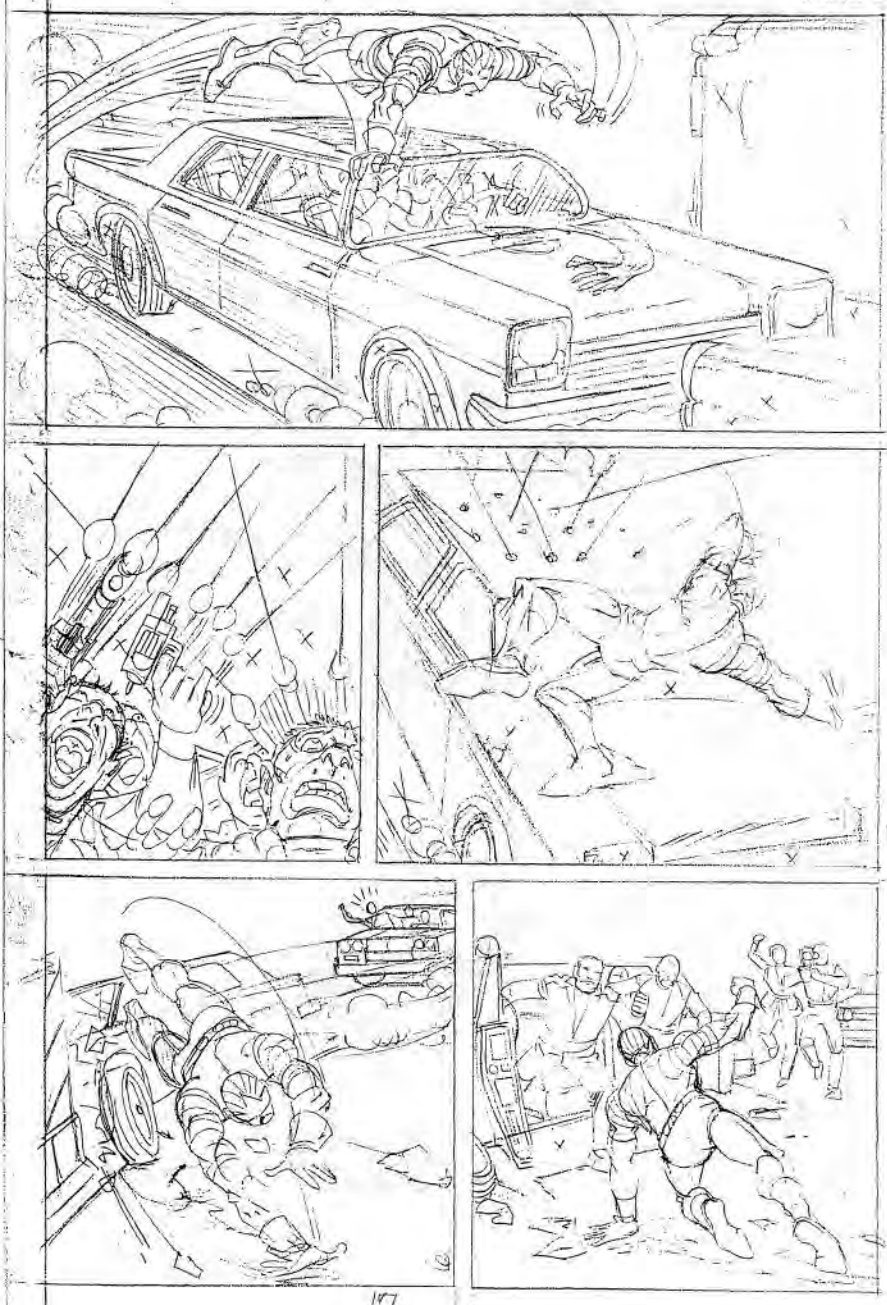
This is a famous story in comics fandom, a game of fruitbasket turnover played out on one issue of one legendary comic—I want Kirby! No, Ditko! No, Kirby (just for the cover)!—and it always mystified me. Ditko was good enough for the comic, but not the cover? Kirby was good enough for the cover, but not the comic? It seemed like madness.

Until I read Bell's Ditko book, and saw the cover Ditko did, the one Stan rejected in favor of the Kirby approach. I'd never seen the original Ditko cover despite a lifetime of grasping after tattered comics histories. It came as a little bit of a revelation, like the time Neal Adams drew Batman with chest hair and nipples, *just like your old man's!*

("It's not the first appearance [of the Ditko cover]," Bell told *TJCK* in an e-mail. "I believe that distinction belongs to *Marvelmania* #2 (1970). I think that was in black-&-white, and then a color version appeared in an issue of *Marvel Tales* in the 1980s.")

Compare the Jack cover, which ran, to the Steve cover, which didn't. Compare the Kirby cover, wrapped around what is now one of the most valuable comics on Earth, and the Ditko cover, a rarely seen relic.

On one, Spidey swings across the city, casually carrying a thug under one arm like a bag of groceries, while making his vow: "THOUGH THE WORLD MAY MOCK PETER PARKER, THE TIMID TEEN-AGER... IT WILL SOON MARVEL AT THE AWESOME MIGHT OF... SPIDER-MAN!" On the other, Spidey swings across the city, casually carrying a thug under one arm



like a bag of groceries, while making his vow: "THOUGH THE WORLD MAY MOCK... etc."

It's the same character, in essentially the same pose, doing essentially the same thing, saying exactly the same words. What's the difference? Why dump Ditko's cover for Kirby's? The only major visual difference is that in Steve's version, the shot is slightly down-angled—as if you're leaning out the window of an apartment building, rubbernecking at Spidey, with gaping crowds down on the street. In Jack's version, the shot is slightly up-angled, as if you're hovering the air, watching Spidey swing, and no other people are visible but Spidey and the thug-under-the-arm, except for a handful of tiny figures on a rooftop.

It's all in the *approach*, Bell argues. The ideology of the artists.

Bell quotes Ditko: "I drew the first cover from a subjective viewpoint. I wanted to put the reader/viewer up front with the swinging Spider-Man, to be a part of the activity, to see and realize the danger in falling, in having a sense of swinging along with Spider-Man."

Bell writes in the book: "The ideological difference lay in Ditko's desire to bring Spider-Man down to street level, on par with the reader and normal human beings. Kirby's version was as grand as all his 1960s strips, with a disassociation between hero and spectator, the former an untouchable icon viewed as if in the heavens."

Department of Idle Speculation: Imagine, if you will, the first 100 issues of *Fantastic Four* as penciled by Ditko, and the first three dozen issues of *Spider-Man* as penciled by Kirby. Would either book have succeeded—or would each have succeeded in radically different ways? Ditko might have grooved on the Negative Zone's twisted dimensions, and I imagine that his Galactus would have looked feral and *hungry*.

"Kirby and Ditko are the perfect 'yin and yang' pair of the Silver Age of Marvel Comics," Bell told *TJKC* in an e-mail. "You get the best of two completely different worlds, two completely different styles, two completely different mind-sets—Kirby's universe, filled with gods and gangs of people, living and fighting together; Ditko's universe, always very solitary, very quiet, yet burbling under the surface with intensity and yearning—but two consummate storytellers almost

without peer in the history of the industry."

Can Bell picture Kirby as the regular artist on *Spider-Man* in some alternate universe? "Given what we've seen of Kirby's *Spiderman* [concept], it would be difficult to imagine it being the same success, because all the key elements that Ditko brought are not present," Bell said by e-mail. "However, Kirby's touch was almost gold at the time, so whatever he would have done, I'm sure would have had some level of success, just a different kind of success. I mean, Ant-Man looks like he's getting his own movie, yes?"

All this reminded me of a zingy comment that author Andrew Hultkrans made in *Give Our Regards to the Atom-Smashers!*, a 2004 collection of essays about the comics. "If Kirby had been a film director," Hultkrans writes, "he would have specialized in Technicolor Westerns, war movies, outer-space science-fiction and mythic sword-and-sandal epics... If Ditko had been a director, he would have turned out nervy, attenuated film noir, moralistic sci-fi miniatures with ironic twists in the mode of *The Twilight Zone*, paranoid black-&-white horror reminiscent of *Night of the Living Dead*...."

Kirby looked up at his heroes. Ditko looked askance at his. Both followed a singular vision, and both saw things no other comics creator had seen before. ★

(left) Ditko's pencils for the 1993 *Captain Glory* one-shot, part of Topps Comics' Kirbyverse, based on Jack's character designs. Put webs on him, and this could be a prime Spidey action page!

(below) Ditko's unused cover for *Amazing Fantasy* #15, and (right) Kirby's published version.



MARVEL AGE OF INKERS 2

Another round-up of some of the key inkers assigned by Stan Lee to work over Jack's pencils during the 1960s "Marvel Age."
Original art scans courtesy of Heritage Auctions.



Steve Ditko
(born November 2, 1927)

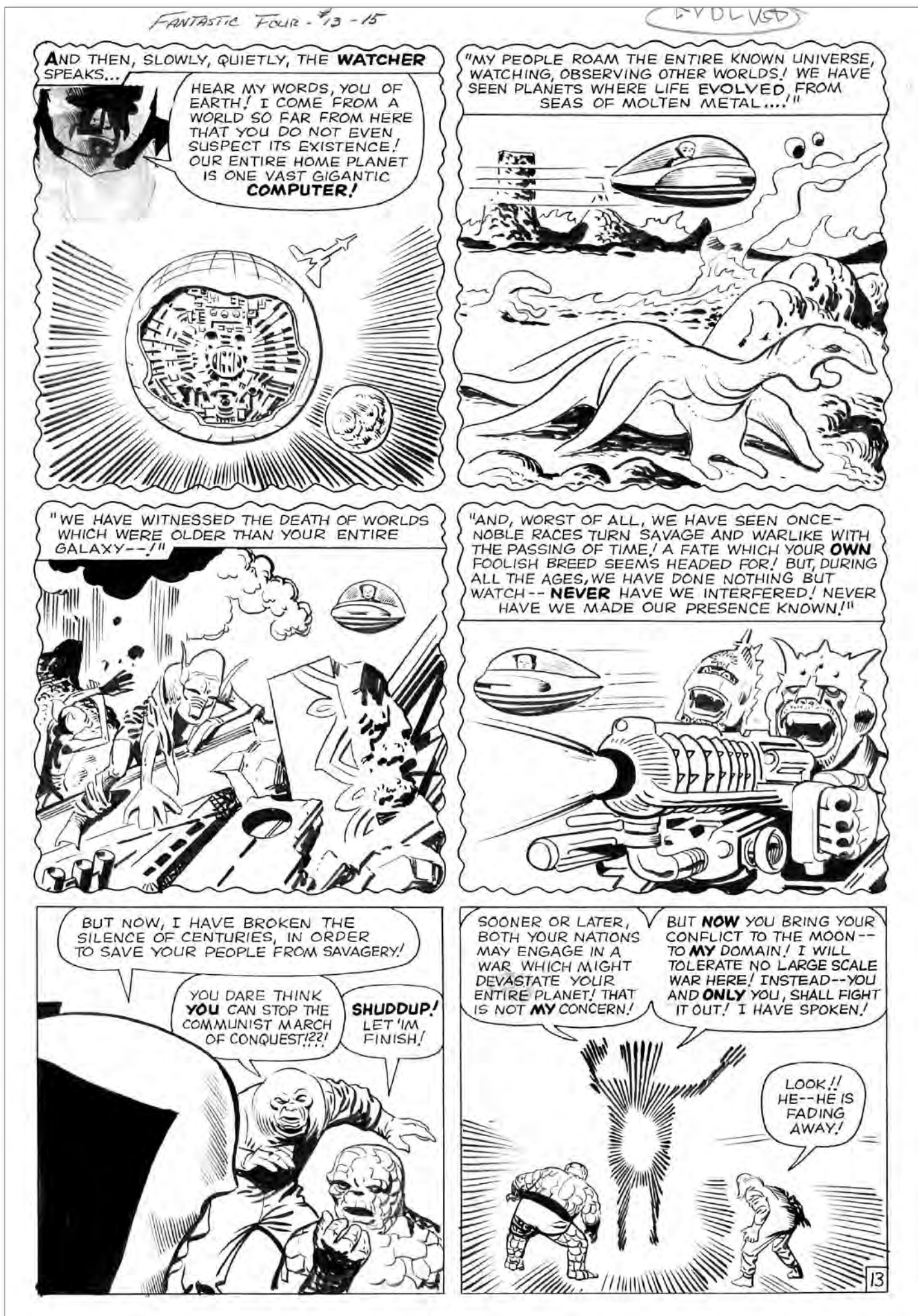
Ditko studied at the Cartoonists and Illustrators School in New York City under Jerry Robinson and began professionally illustrating comic books in 1953. Much of his early work was for Charlton Comics (for whom he continued to work intermittently until the company's demise in 1986), producing science-fiction, horror and mystery stories. In the late 1950s, he also began working for Atlas Comics, the 1950s precursor of Marvel Comics.

Ditko and writer-editor Stan Lee created Spider-Man in *Amazing Fantasy* #15 (Aug. 1962), and shortly thereafter Doctor Strange, in *Strange Tales* #110 (July 1963). Ditko also drew many stories of the Hulk, first in the final issue of *The Incredible Hulk* (#6, March 1963), and then in *Tales to Astonish*, relaunching the character's series in issue #60 (Oct. 1964) and continuing through #67 (May 1965, succeeded by Jack Kirby).

After leaving Marvel and *Spider-Man* in 1966, Ditko went to Charlton Comics, where he worked on *Captain Atom*, *Blue Beetle*, writer Joe Gill's "Liberty Belle" (a backup feature in the comic *E-Man*), and Ditko's own "Killjoy" (also in *E-Man*) and "The Question." Also at Charlton, Ditko did much work on their science-fiction and horror titles. In addition, Ditko drew 16 stories for Warren Publishing's horror-comic magazines, most of which were done using ink-wash.

By 1968, Ditko was producing work for DC Comics, creating or co-creating the Creeper and The Hawk and the Dove, then going back to Charlton through the mid-1970s. He returned to DC in the mid-1970s, then to Marvel in 1979, taking over Kirby's *Machine Man* title and working on such titles as *Rom*, *Spaceknight* and *Speedball*.

Ditko retired from the mainstream in 1998. Since then, his strictly solo work has been published intermittently by independent publisher and long-time friend Robin Snyder, who was his editor at Charlton and Archie Comics. The Snyder-published books have included *Static*, *The Missing Man*, *The Mocker* and, more recently, *Avenging World*,



a giant collection of stories and essays spanning 30 years. [source: www.comicbookdb.com]

(this page) *Fantastic Four* #13 (April 1963), as Ditko inks Kirby.

TM & ©2010 Marvel Characters, Inc.

featuring bios by
Dr. Michael J. Vassallo
and Dewey Cassell.



Sol Brodsky
(April 22, 1923 -
June 4, 1984)

Sol Brodsky was born in Brooklyn and by age 17 was at Archie (MLJ) learning the ropes on house ads and production. For most of the early 1940s he bounced around the industry at Fox, Holyoke, and Lev Gleason, although Timely's *Comedy Comics* #11 (Sept. 42) sports an unidentified singular "Inky Dinky" feature mysteriously signed "Sol." By the later 1940s Brodsky was on the Timely staff and spent most of his tenure on teen humor features like *Millie* and *Patsy Walker*, while simultaneously cranking out crime thrillers for the 1949-1950 crime titles.

When the staff was let go, Sol freelanced primarily on war and spy titles for Atlas, was the artist on the "Clark Mason Spy Fighter" feature in *Spy Fighters* in 1951, and at some point mid-decade joined the production staff, becoming one of the handful of cover artists for Atlas, aligning with Joe Maneely, Bill Everett, Carl Burgos and Russ Heath for cover duties. Brodsky also lined up commercial comic side products for the company like *The Adventures of Big Boy* and *The Birds Eye Kids* giveaway comics.

After Atlas imploded, Sol launched *Cracked* magazine in 1958 and helped post-implosion Atlas artists secure work from Dick Giordano at Charlton before returning to Stan Lee in the early 1960s to do production work. He designed the logos for many of the early Marvel titles including the *Fantastic Four* and inked the title's third and fourth issues. By 1964 he was on staff again as production manager and drew the occasional teen feature and western filler, as well as inking the occasional cover, his last being John Buscema's cover to *Sub-Mariner* #1 in 1968.

In 1970 Brodsky left to form a new company called Skywald with Israel Waldman and returned to Marvel in the mid-1970s to spend the rest of his career pushing Marvel into new commercial endeavors outside the comic books, also appearing as the Human Torch in Jack



Kirby's *What If?* #11 in 1978. Well liked by everyone in the industry, he passed away in 1984, and according to his friend and fellow Timely alumnus Allen Bellman, "There was never a friend like Sol Brodsky." [source: Dr. Michael J. Vassallo]

(this page) *Tales to Astonish* #40 (Feb. 1963).

Characters TM & ©2010 Marvel Characters, Inc.



Syd Shores
(September 4, 1913 -
June 3, 1973)

Syd Shores entered the comics industry in 1940 via the Chesler studio, and some of his earliest work appeared in Timely's *Mystic* #5 (March 1941) on "The Terror," with his brother-in-law Phil Sturm scripting. Part of the loose group of artists that helped produce Simon & Kirby's *Captain America* #1 in addition to *U.S.A. Comics*' "Major Liberty" in issues #1-4, Syd eventually supplanted Al Avison on *Captain America*, becoming the primary Cap artist for much of the 1940s, inked usually by staff inker Vince Alascia. A "senior" artist at Timely for much of the decade, Syd was the unofficial art director and mentored many artists who came through the company, including a young Gene Colan, who relates Syd as his main early Timely artistic influence.

As the decade progressed, Syd freelanced in Goodman's crime magazines and pulps, drawing the *Blonde Phantom* and other Timely hero features, before branching out in 1947-48 into the new genres of crime and western comics, including the book-length, Stan Lee-scripted, 25-page *Complete Mystery* #2 (Oct. 1948), and kicking off the *Two-Gun Kid* in most of the Kid's early 10-issue 1948-49 run.

The years leading into the termination of Timely's staff had Syd everywhere. He drew early issues of *Black Rider* and a concurrent voluminous amount of romance stories. Going freelance in mid-1950 and dabbling at Avon, National, and Orbit (in *Wanted*), Syd's main account was Atlas, and he formed a studio in 1952 with fellow artists Norman Steinberg and Mort Lawrence, all while continuing to draw everything under the sun for Stan Lee: "Battle Brady," "Battleship Burke," "Black Rider" (again) inked by Christopher Rule, "Sailor Sweeney," jungle fillers, horror, war, westerns, romance, and even the last issue of *Black Knight* (#5), again inked by Christopher Rule.

When Atlas imploded, Syd worked for *Cracked* in 1958 and went into commercial art, before returning to Marvel in 1967, inking Jack Kirby on *Captain America*. He also penciled and/or inked a slew of features including *Captain Savage*, *Black Panther*, *Kid Colt*, "The

Watcher," *Red Wolf*, Marvel's black-&-white horror magazines and others, and then branched out to Skywald, Warren and Major's *Web of Horror*, before passing away in 1973.
[source: Dr. Michael J. Vassallo]

(above) *Captain America* #108, page 7 (Dec. 1968). Characters TM & ©2010 Marvel Characters, Inc.



ONE FALSE STEP COULD SEND

DEVICE IN, AND SUDDENLY



Don Heck
(January 2, 1929 -
February 23, 1995)

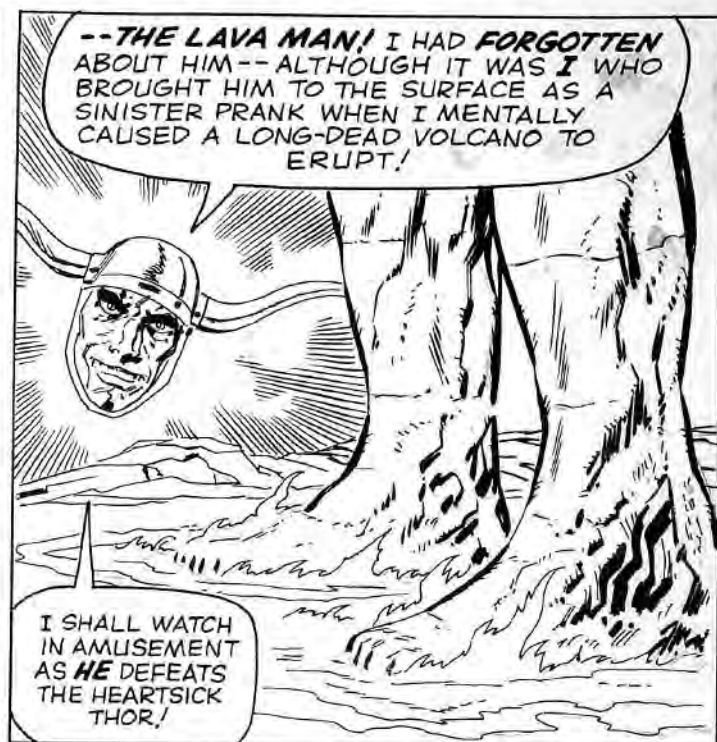
"Dashing" Don Heck entered the comics industry with Harvey Comics in 1949. His first major work was for Harwell's Comic Media where he became their main cover artist and produced some of the pre-code's most riveting horror cover images, including the classic *Horrific* #3's "bullet hole in forehead" cover. At Comic Media, Heck penciled and inked pre-code horror in *Weird Terror* and *Horrific*, westerns in *Death Valley*, and adventure in *Danger* and *War Fury*. Though he also freelanced at Toby, Hillman and Magazine Enterprises, at this time his next big move was over to Stan Lee and Atlas in late 1954, his first stories appearing in March and April 1955 cover-dated issues of *Rugged Action* and *Battlefront*.

Heck immediately dove into Atlas' burgeoning post-code war comic line and launched the "Torpedo Taylor" feature in *Navy Combat*, drawing it for the first 16 issues. Other features include "Cliff Mason White Hunter" in *Jann of the Jungle*, the singular *Police Badge* #459 #5, and generic war stories in every war title Atlas published up through 1957, where he added the superlative western "Kid From Dodge City," including the cover to issue #1. A top-notch romance artist who drew some of the prettiest women in comics, Heck rendered 14 romance stories for Stan Lee from 1955-1963.

After Atlas imploded, Heck left comics for a year only to return to Stan Lee as the third pre-hero fantasy artist behind Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko on scores of fantasy and science-fiction vignettes. He then went over to National, returning to romance from 1963-1965, and drew for Dell, all while simultaneously launching the "Iron Man" feature in *Tales of Suspense*, and continuing with Marvel on "Ant-Man," the *Avengers* and issues of *X-Men* and *Spider-Man*, changing his natural artistic inclinations to accommodate a more dynamic Kirby-like storytelling approach.

By the late 1960s, Heck's Milton Caniff-influenced style had somewhat fallen out of favor on Marvel super-heroes, so he went over once again to National and proceeded to draw nearly

JOURNEY 97-P. 8



Jack Kirby

every character in every title at one time or another from 1970 to the early 1990s. In 1993 Heck helped launch Topps' comic book line, drawing the Kirby-created *Nightglider*, before passing away in 1995. [source: Dr. Michael J. Vassallo]

(this page) *Journey Into Mystery* #97 (Oct. 1963), showing Kirby roughs, and Heck finishes.
TM & ©2010 Marvel Characters, Inc.



George Tuska
(April 26, 1916 -
October 16, 2009)

George Tuska began his professional career as an artist at the Eisner & Iger studio in the late 1930s, drawing features for publishers like Fox and Quality, including "Uncle Sam." He next worked for Harry "A" Chesler, drawing *Captain Marvel* for Fawcett and *Shadow Comics* for Street and Smith, as well as titles published by Chesler himself. From there, Tuska moved on to Fiction House, illustrating *Jungle Comics*, *Ranger Comics*, *Planet Comics*, and others. After service in World War II, he returned to Fiction House before joining Standard Publishing, where he drew the tales of the *Black Terror* and *Fighting Yank*. But he really made his mark in the Golden Age when he was hired by Lev Gleason on *Crime Does Not Pay*, the leading true-crime comic. Tuska worked for Gleason from 1947 to 1954.

When the Kefauver Senate hearings brought an end to crime and horror comics, Tuska switched to newspaper strips, drawing first *Scorchy Smith* and later *Buck Rogers* for the better part of a decade. When the *Buck Rogers* strip ended, Tuska started at Marvel Comics inking Jack Kirby on *Captain America*, followed by a stint inking Marie Severin on *The Incredible Hulk*. After penciling several issues of *X-Men*, fate brought Tuska together with a character called Iron Man, beginning a ten-year run on the title. Tuska also contributed to other books while at Marvel, including *Luke Cage*, *Sub-Mariner*, *Ghost Rider*, *The Avengers*, *Black Goliath*, and *Daredevil*.

Along the way, Tuska also worked for Joe Simon on *Sick* magazine, as well as Archie Comics, Harvey Comics, Warren Publishing, and Tower Comics, where he drew the *T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents*. Tuska also produced a significant body of work for DC Comics in the early seventies, including stories in *Challengers of the Unknown*, *Teen Titans*, *House of Secrets*, and the "Legion of Super-Heroes" in *Superboy*. Then in 1978, Tuska began the newspaper strip, *The World's Greatest Super-Heroes*, featuring Superman and members of the Justice League of America. He remained on the strip until 1983, when he returned to comics, drawing *Green Lantern*,

T. SUSPENSE 73

SUDDENLY, THE PURSUING RED-WHITE-AND-BLUE CLAD FIGURE **HALTS**, TAKES CAREFUL AIM, AND PREPARES TO HURL HIS WORLD-FAMOUS **SHIELD**...



HE'S SO INTENT UPON WHATEVER MISSION HE'S BEEN PROGRAMMED TO PERFORM, THAT HE ISN'T EVEN AWARE OF THE TONS OF ROCK TUMBLING DOWN UPON HIM!



HE'S COMPLETELY BURIED UNDER ALL THAT RUBBLE! BUT, I'VE GOT TO MAKE SURE IT'S **PERMANENT**!



PERHAPS THAT GIANT **BOULDER**, BALANCED PRECARIOUSLY ABOVE, CAN TURN THE TRICK!

IF I CAN JUST STRIKE IT AT THE EXACT BALANCING POINT-- **THERE!**



AN **ELECTRIC BOLT!**

ANOTHER SECOND AND IT WOULD HAVE HIT ME!

HE'S **STILL** AS DANGEROUS AS EVER--EVEN UNDER ALL THAT ROCK!



World's Finest, and *Masters of the Universe*. Tuska retired in the late 1980s, but continued to draw commissions for fans until his death at the age of 93. [source: Dewey Cassell]

(above) *Tales of Suspense* #73 (Jan. 1966), with layouts by Kirby, and finished art by Tuska.

TM & ©2010 Marvel Characters, Inc.



George Klein
(circa 1920 -
1969)

George Klein entered the comic book industry in 1941 as a staff artist for Timely. Early on, in addition to piecemeal inking and backgrounds on later Simon & Kirby *Captain America* stories, he penciled and inked features like "The Defender" in *U.S.A. Comics* #2 and #3 and "Black Marvel" in *Mystic Comics* #8. By the middle of 1942 he was primarily a staff inker across a score of features, over a who's who of Timely pencilers, including Syd Shores, Mike Sekowsky, Ed Winiarsky, Vince Fago, Al Avison, and Al Gabriele. Equally at home on hero or funny animal/humor material, Klein ended the decade on the earliest issues of *Venus* and a litany of romance stories, where his fine line and delicate rendering was in high demand during the Atlas romance glut of 1949-50. During this time he frequently inked Pete Tumlinson and occasionally worked with his friend and colleague Christopher Rule.

When the Timely staff was let go in 1950, Klein continued to freelance up to about 1953 in all genres, penciling and inking "Blast Revere" in *Space Squadron* as well as drawing many solo romance stories (all with distinctive inking and background traits). Klein also dabbled at ACG before settling into a long and storied tenure at National as Curt Swan's main inker on features like "Legion of Super-Heroes," *Jimmy Olsen*, *Lois Lane*, *Superboy* and *Superman*. Moonlighting once again for Stan Lee towards the end of the decade, Klein inked Jack Kirby on at least one *Black Rider* inventory story and a modicum of pre-hero fantasy tales, before having the privilege of inking the first two issues of the *Fantastic Four* in 1961, a credit long unknown but now accepted as a certainty, based upon a long survey and study of all of Klein's inking quirks.

Klein once again worked for Marvel in 1968, inking ex-Timely staffers John Buscema on



the *Avengers* and Gene Colan on *Daredevil*, as well as Jack Kirby once again on *Thor*, before passing away in 1969 at the age of 49. [source: Dr. Michael J. Vassallo]

(this page) *Tales of Suspense* #24 (Dec. 1961).

TM & ©2010 Marvel Characters, Inc.



John Verpoorten
(May 15, 1940 -
December 18, 1977)

John Verpoorten attended New York's School of Visual Arts, and began his career at the Tom Gill Studio for four years, working as Gill's assistant (a position also held at different times by other Marvel alumni Joe Sinnott and Herb Trimpe). Verpoorten is known to have been heavily influenced by the work produced in the 1950s at EC Comics.

In 1967, Verpoorten started working for Marvel Comics as an inker, working on a wide variety of titles. "Jumbo John" came to inking Kirby very late in the King's 1960s Marvel era. His inking contributions were mainly on covers, including some key later *Fantastic Four* issues (#97 and 99), and numerous 1960s Marvel reprint books (featuring new Kirby drawings of classic scenes). But he was also beginning to be assigned interior inks over Kirby just as the artist was preparing to leave Marvel for DC in 1970, and turned in an outstanding job on two of Kirby's final Marvel stories, in *Chamber of Darkness* #4 and #5 in 1970.

Verpoorten became Marvel's production manager in 1970, in the wake of Sol Brodsky's departure from the company to form Skywald with Israel Waldman. He was responsible for coordinating the work of writers, artists, letterers and printers, and as production manager, his hand was undoubtedly present in numerous uncredited stories, doing last-minute touch-ups and fill-ins, especially the heavy reworking on *Thor* #179 (Aug. 1970), Kirby's final issue of the series.

In 1975, Verpoorten also helped produce *Big Apple Comix*, an independent comic book published by former Marvel staffer Flo Steinberg. When Kirby returned to Marvel in the mid-1970s, Verpoorten took on the inking responsibilities on the first four issues of Kirby's *Eternals* series, and on two of his *Captain America Annuals* (#3 and 4) and one issue of the regular *Cap* series. In addition to working on other titles and artists as an inker, he maintained his position

as Marvel's production manager for seven years, until his death in 1977.
[source: en.wikipedia.org]

(this page) *Marvel Super-Heroes* #27 cover (July 1970).

TM & ©2010 Marvel Characters, Inc.



OL' JACK
CAN

DRAW THE
MAN!



INCIDENTAL ICONOGRAPHY

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



As the *Kirby Collector* has taken this and the previous issue to look at the collaboration of Jack Kirby and Stan Lee, it seems only appropriate that this column follow up on that theme. Last issue, I examined Jack's life-long looks at himself, so it's time to examine how Jack portrayed his occasional partner, Stan.

There are some key differences in approach that bear pointing out right off the bat. First, as with all artists, Jack was always able to use himself as a model any time he wanted or needed a subject. He could be on the front lines during World War II and just look in any reflective surface. (Stan wasn't around Jack nearly that much, for which I'm sure they were both grateful!) Second, Jack's appearance didn't change all that much over his lifetime. Sure, he picked up some wrinkles and his hair turned white and eventually started thinning, but a 20-year-old Jack looks very much like a 50-year-old Jack. Stan, by contrast, changed his appearance pretty radically on several occasions. The "Stan Lee look" that he carries today is actually relatively recent, having really only been established in the 1980s. How Stan looked in the 1940s is quite different from how he looked in the 1960s, which is quite different again from how he looked in the 1970s. Unlike Jack, Stan was decidedly more image-conscious and made sure to look the part he was trying to play.

Which means that Jack A) didn't draw Stan nearly as often as he drew himself, and B) had to change his approach to drawing Stan repeatedly. And, as I've noted in past columns, that generally meant that Jack essentially started over from scratch with each story.

The first couple of times Jack drew Stan into a comic (*Fantastic Four* #10 and *FF Annual* #3), he put him in shadows or otherwise obscured his face, which leave only two stories in which Jack drew Stan directly, and one in which Jack created a thinly veiled version of Stan, with Funky Flashman.



Jack's October 1978 take on Stan in *What If?* #11, and (right) Stan during that '70s era.
Characters TM & ©2010 Marvel Characters, Inc.



Kirby's drawing of Stan and himself in *Fantastic Four Annual* #5 (Nov. 1967), and a Stan photo from the 1960s.
Characters TM & ©2010 Marvel Characters, Inc.

The most noticeable visual changes throughout both Stan's career and Jack's drawing him are in his hair. Up through the mid-1960s, Stan's hair was thin and generally slicked back, giving him a high forehead as shown—if you are able to look past the various costumes—in *Fantastic Four Annual* #5. In the late '60s, however, Stan grew a full beard and mustache and took to wearing toupées to present himself more like a professional businessman. Jack parodied this a few years later in designing Funky Flashman [see examples above].

Flashman, of course, has long been viewed as Jack channeling the anger he felt in the relationship he had in his last years at Marvel. It's worth noting that, while Flashman is shown throughout most of *Mister Miracle* #6 with a faux beard and wig, his introduction to and exit from the issue show a small, nearly bald man, apparently emphasizing to the reader that is the man behind the name Stan Lee, who was then 50 years old.

Interestingly, too, it was right around this time that Stan shaved his beard and donned a flashier wig and glasses, just as Jack notes in Flashman's dialogue that, "Image is the thing... I look almost—holy! I'm ready for you again—world!" The appearance Stan wore throughout the 1970s was designed, in part, to present a hip, contemporary image of comics to television and other audiences. Stan's own appearance needed to reflect the "with it" vibe he'd been writing



into his comics for the past decade, not the look of a businessman approaching 60.

It was this look Stan had when Jack returned to Marvel in the mid-1970s, so when Jack drew the "original Marvel bullpen" into *What If?* #11, he gave Stan that same hipster appearance. Curiously, though, in the flashback scenes within that issue, Stan is shown with a full head of thick, wavy hair and no mustache which is, as far as I've been able to tell, a style Stan never actually wore. Certainly, Jack would have remembered that Stan's hair was thin so one has to presume that Jack let the flow of the issue take precedence. From a storytelling perspective, it wouldn't make sense for a man to grow thicker, fuller hair as he aged; it could be explained with mention of a wig or toupée, but that would slow the story down unnecessarily. It makes sense then that Jack Kirby, storyteller, would provide a visual that made sense for that particular story: a man with less facial hair and wrinkles.

That was the last time Jack actually drew Stan for a comic. Unlike other occasions, where he might misremember a costume, though, Jack was forced to deliberately and continually change his approach to mimic the real life changes Stan implemented on himself. ★

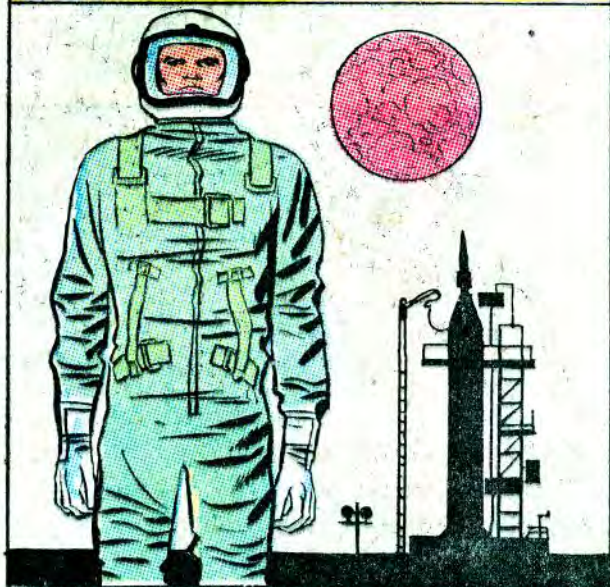


Sean blogs at <http://kleefeldoncomics.blogspot.com>, and is the author of *Comic Book Fanthropology* available from www.comicbookfanthropology.com.

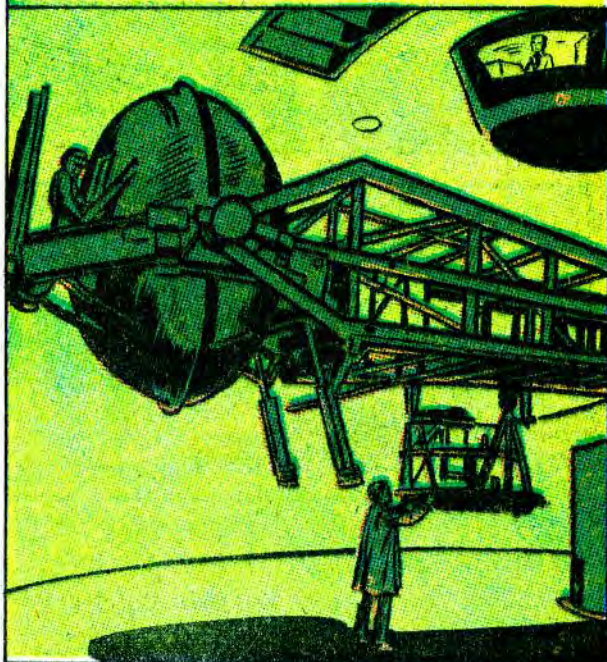
THE CHALLENGE OF SPACE

Aviation medicine, developed during World War I, became more important in World War II. It studied the effects upon humans of reduced oxygen, increased speeds and changes in altitude or barometric pressure. Today, aviation medicine has given way to space medicine.

Space medicine is concerned with how the body and mind of man will react under conditions never before experienced. In the United States, since 1959, seven male astronauts have undergone many tests which imitate an actual space flight. In 1960, a female astronaut was added to the group.

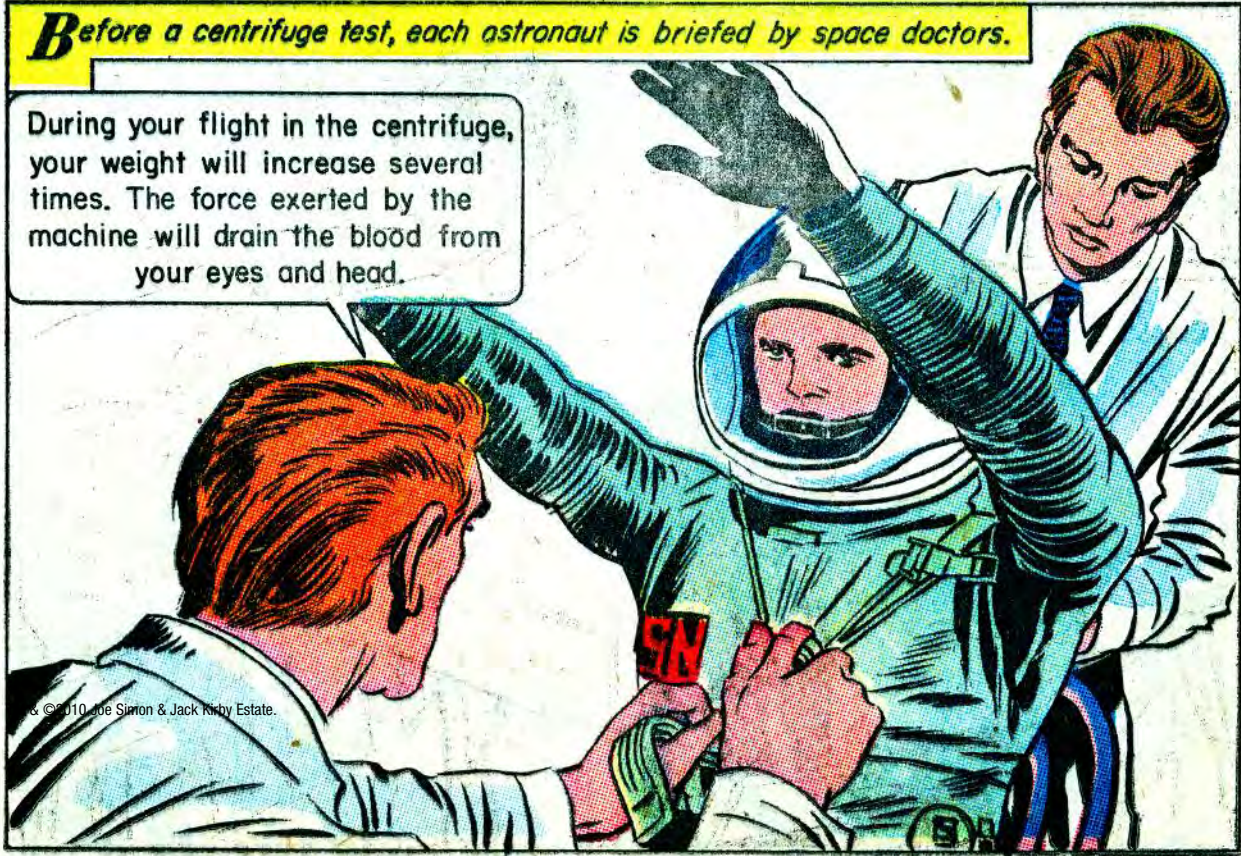


Several of the tests use a centrifuge, a long-armed machine that whirls around at great speeds. The centrifuge duplicates the strains of increased gravity that the astronauts will experience while heading into space and returning.



Before a centrifuge test, each astronaut is briefed by space doctors.

During your flight in the centrifuge, your weight will increase several times. The force exerted by the machine will drain the blood from your eyes and head.



I'll say this for Gilberton Publications (home of the long running *Classics Illustrated* line of comic books): They did more than their share to make the comics medium acceptable to parents and educators. While ol' Freddie Wertham was wailing away about the dangers of comics causing juvenile delinquency, *Classics Illustrated* was exposing the youth of America to... er, the classics of literature. Only thing was, not even an artist with the vim and verve of Jack Kirby could manage to make the Gilberton comics anything but boring!

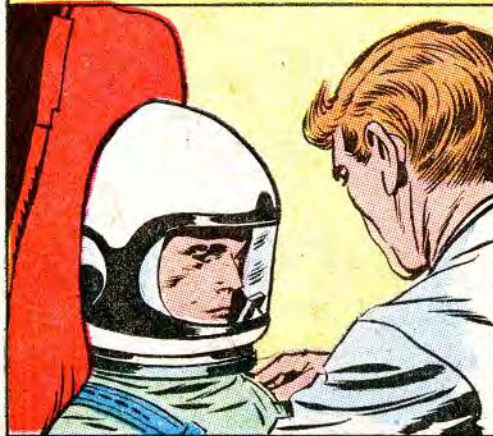
Take, for example, these pages from *The World Around Us* #36 (October 1961, subtitled "Fight For Life"), one of less than a dozen Gilberton issues Jack drew material for. This one's got it all: boring cover, boring theme, boring lettering, and unbelievably enough, boring Kirby art. Jack's been quoted on how much he hated working for the company, due to their insistence on making him render the artistic details with minute historical accuracy. For a "big picture" guy like Kirby, this must have been pure torture.

Now, compare this material to another little four-color pamphlet that came out one month later, entitled *Fantastic Four* #1. Certainly, the art on the first *FF* issue is more crude than what's shown here, but what it lacks in polish, it makes up for with about a zillion times the energy and excitement. With the industry in the doldrums at that point, and faced with the prospect of working on Gilberton material the rest of his career, it probably was sheer desperation that led Jack to put his heart and soul into the comic that started the Marvel Age.

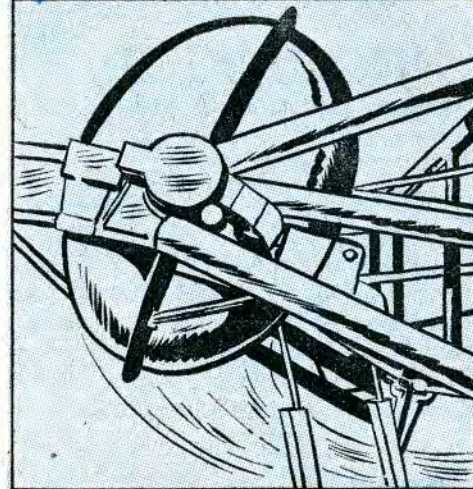
So thanks, Gilberton! Your books not only helped educate a generation of kids, but you likely pushed Jack Kirby into his own "fight for life" and inadvertently nudged him into creating the best comics of his career. ★



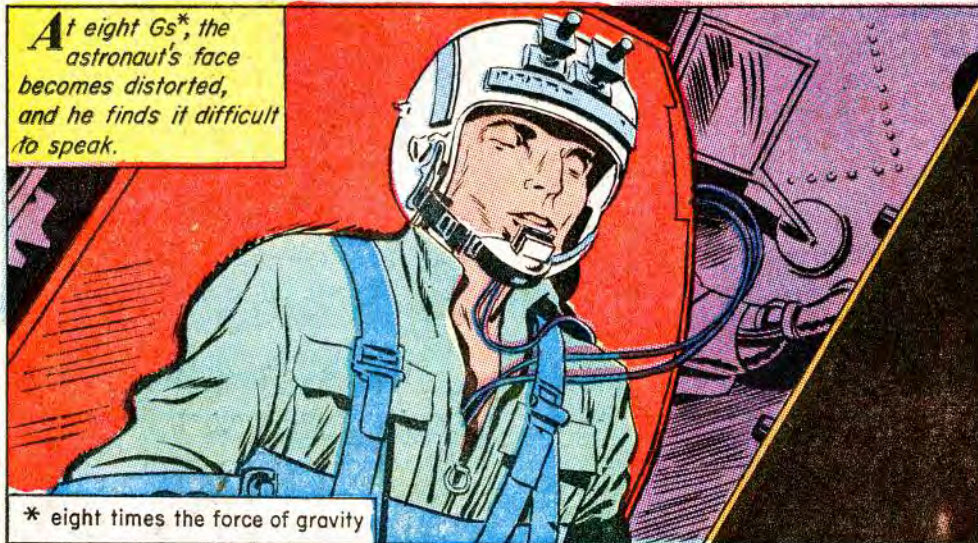
The astronaut dons a flight suit and sits in a plastic seat which has been molded to fit his body. The seat will cushion his ride.



After he is strapped and sealed inside, the centrifuge starts to whirl.

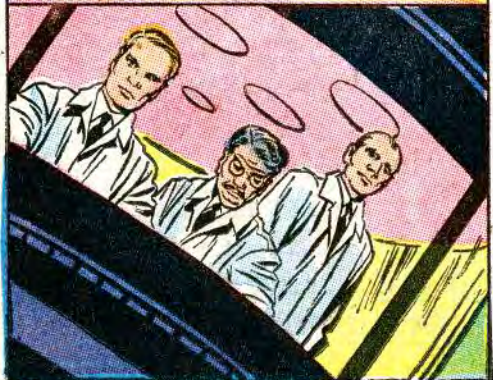


At eight Gs*, the astronaut's face becomes distorted, and he finds it difficult to speak.

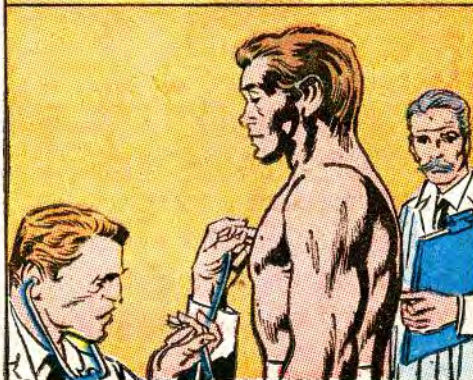


* eight times the force of gravity

In a nearby observation room, the doctors check an instrument panel which records the astronaut's change of breathing, heart beat and other physical reactions.



After the test, the astronaut is examined by the doctors. Their findings will aid in the development of equipment to continue the fight for life even as man soars into space.



QUACKS AND QUACKERY

A quack is a person who poses as a physician. He has little medical knowledge or skill. He promises his patients fantastic cures, but he is really only interested in making as much money as possible. Some quacks have made fortunes selling bottled medicines containing worthless ingredients.

I have here a little bottle that cures hiccups, coughs, sneezes and chilblains.



Other quacks have developed strange machines and devices. In 1796, Elisha Perkins of Norwich, Connecticut, made many Americans believe that he could cure their ailments by moving two metal rods across their skin. The rods were later proved to have no medical value.

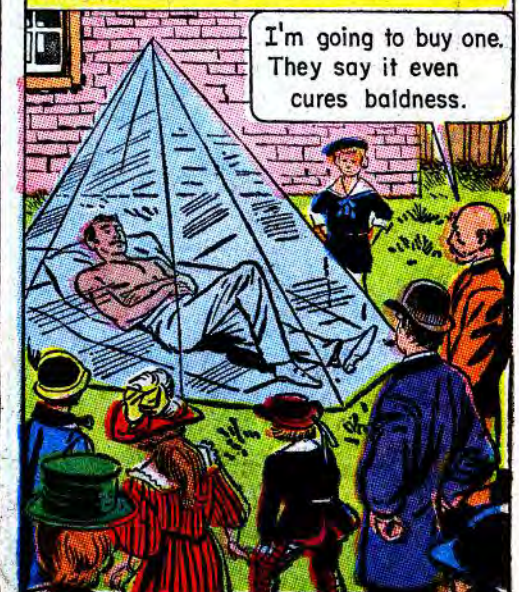


Later cures became popular in Germany during the 1840's. A Silesian peasant named Priessnitz discovered them.

The body must be bathed inside and outside.



In the late nineteenth century, several quacks profited by selling blue windowglass in the United States. Patients believed that lying in the sun beneath the glass would cure any disease.



One of the most successful quacks was a Californian, Dr. Albert Abrams. In 1920, he built several electrical boxes, which he claimed possessed great powers.

I'll call them occiloclasts. That's a good, fancy name.



Abrams sold his boxes to other quacks.

Patients will believe you when you tell them that the occiloclast can cure anything.

Looks like a sound investment, all right.



Explain that it gives off mystical vibrations that change for each disease. Then tell them that the vibrations provide scientific healing.

Sounds pretty good. Folks go for that scientific stuff.



Many Americans were taken in by the occiloclast.

Can it cure my rheumatism?

You bet it will. A series of treatments ordinarily costs two hundred dollars. But I'm going to give you a special rate.



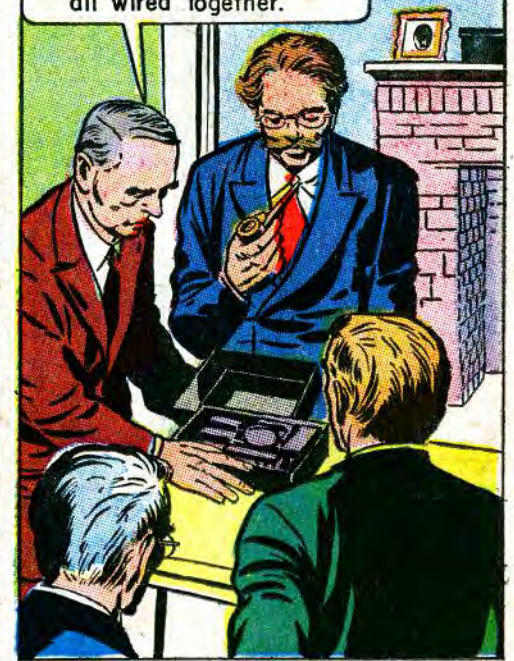
In 1923, the editor of a scientific magazine decided to investigate the box.

We'll have a panel of doctors and scientists examine it.



The investigators took one of the boxes apart.

It contains a condenser, rheostat, ohmmeter and magnetic interrupter. They're all wired together.



But what do they do? What can the box accomplish?

Except for a loud buzzing, nothing at all.



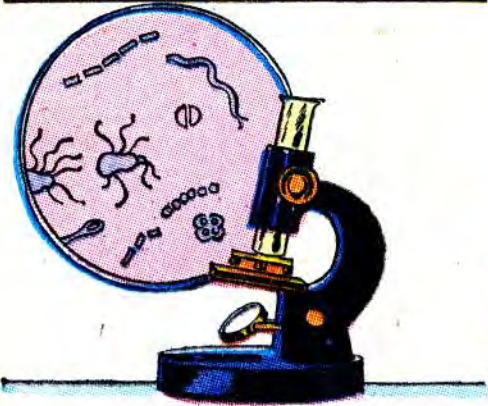
The magazine published the panel's findings, but it turned out that no one had to worry much longer about Abrams. Within a few months, he became ill and died of pneumonia. Obviously, his occiloclast could not cure him.



THE BRANCHES OF MEDICINE

Medicine today is divided into many specialized branches.

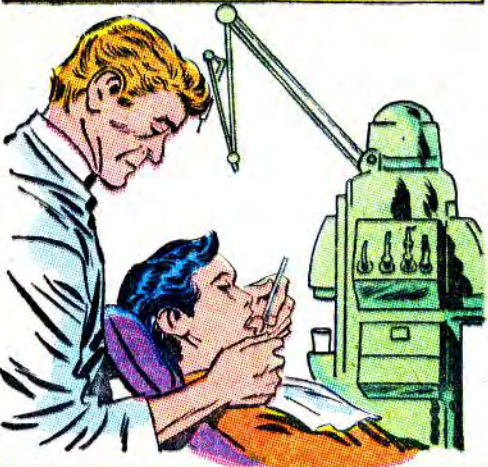
Bacteriology is the study of bacteria, the tiny organisms that cause some diseases.



Cardiology is the study and treatment of the heart and its diseases.



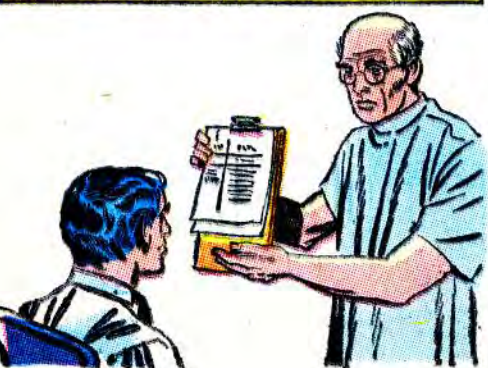
Dentistry is the study and treatment of the teeth.



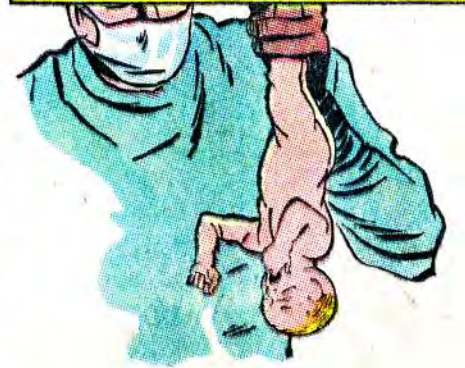
Dermatology is the study and treatment of the skin and its diseases.



Neurology is the study and treatment of the nervous system and its diseases.



Obstetrics deals with childbirth and the care of mothers.

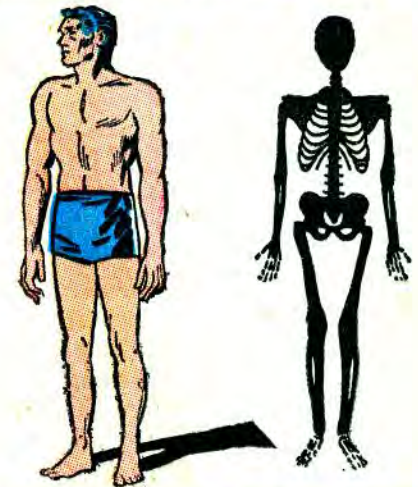


Ophthalmology* is the study and treatment of the eyes.

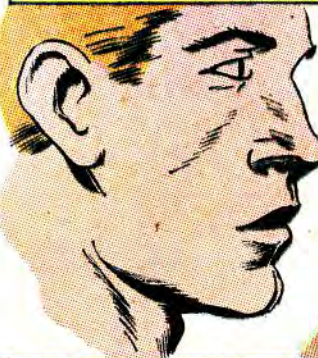


*pronounced off-thal-moll-a-jee

Orthopedics is the study and treatment of the skeletal system and its diseases.



Otolaryngology* is the study and treatment of the ear, nose and throat.

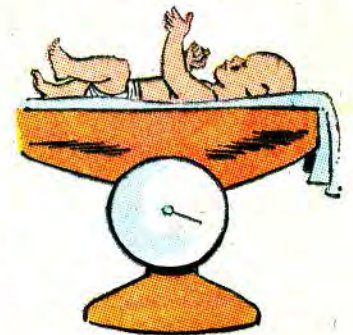


* pronounced oh-ta-lar-ing-gol-a-jee

Pathology is the study of diseases and the changes that they cause in the body.



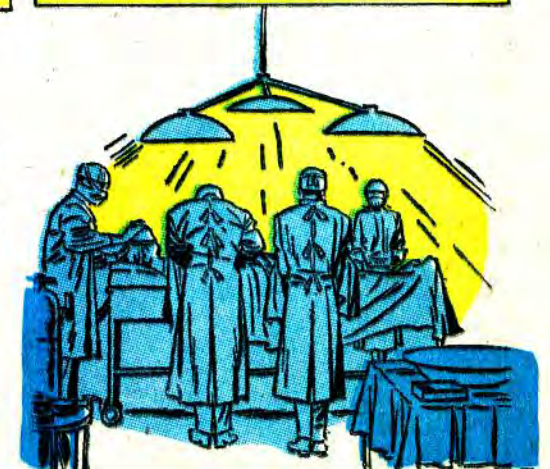
Pediatrics is the study and treatment of babies and small children.



Psychiatry is the study and treatment of emotional problems and diseases of the mind.



Surgery is the treatment of diseases and injuries by means of operations.



RETROSPECTIVE

(below) Kirby's signature character, The Thing, from the fabled "Black Book" Valentine's Day sketchbook he drew for wife Roz.

(next page) The early popularity of the FF led to the Torch getting his own series; here's a page from it in *Strange Tales* #108 (May 1963).

All characters shown TM & ©2010 Marvel Characters, Inc.

PART 1: COSMIC STORM

The World's Greatest Comic Magazine, ironically, emerged from the ruins of a comic book company in such disrepair it didn't even have a brand name. A titan of the Golden Age of Comics, what had been Timely Comics and later Atlas, was about to be reborn as Marvel Comics. And its flagship title would be *The Fantastic Four*.

Artist Jack Kirby had only just returned to the company after an absence of almost twenty years.

"Marvel had monster books, romance books, and westerns—and all of those weren't working any more," Kirby said of that time. "They didn't know what to do with them. Nobody there

could write them so that they didn't remain static. Marvel was stagnant."

In fact, Marvel sales had been dropping all through the last half of 1961.

"Well, we didn't have any super-hero books at the time," recalled Stan Lee, the company's editor and chief writer since 1941. "Primarily we were turning out a lot of monster magazines. Martin Goodman, who was the Publisher, called me in and said, 'You know, Stan, I think that the super-heroes are coming back. I was looking at the sales figures for DC's *Justice League*. Why don't we do a team of super-heroes? They are really selling well.' I had worked that way with Martin all the time. He would say to me, 'Why don't we do some westerns?' So I turned out 50 westerns. 'Why don't we do funny little animated books?' So I turned out 50 animated books. But by now after all those years I

was really ready to quit. I was unhappy and thought I was going nowhere, and my wife said to me, 'Look, instead of quitting, why don't you do the books the way you'd want to do them; just get it out of your system, and then quit. For once, do what you want.' And Martin really wasn't paying too much attention at the time.

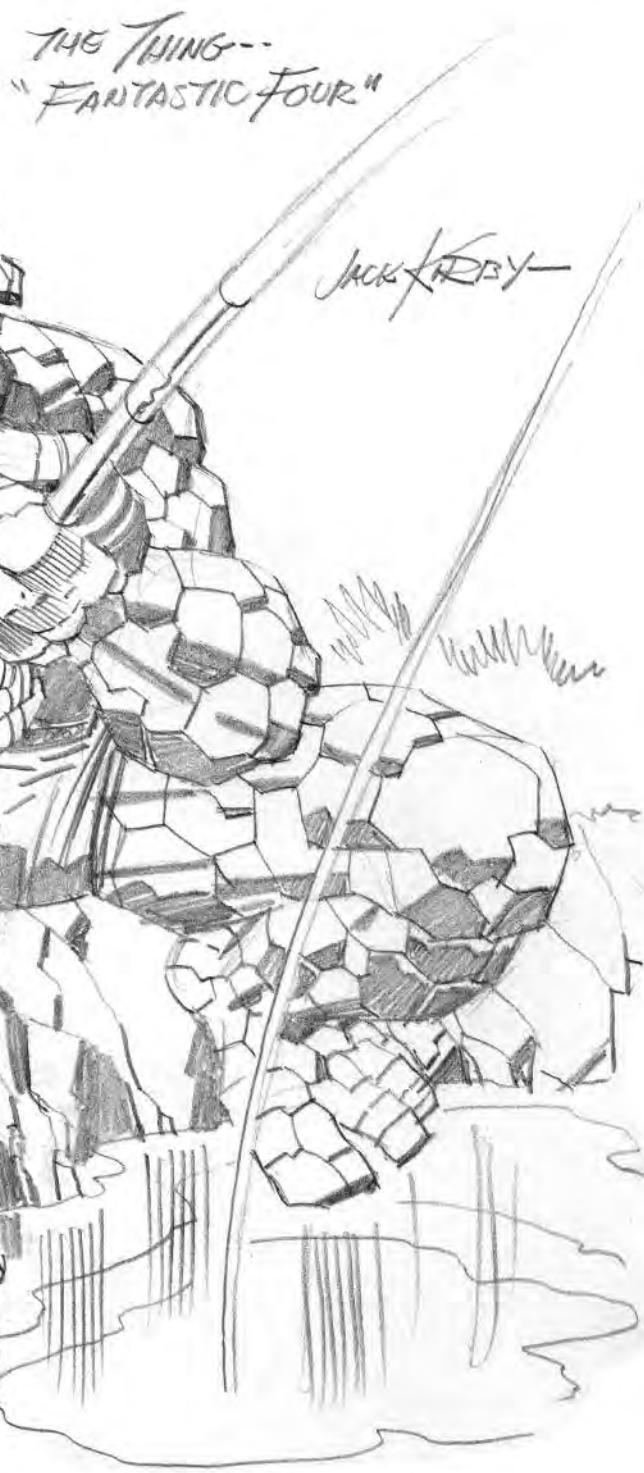
"So I thought, okay, I'll do a team of super-heroes which he wants. But it'll be fun to try to do it in a different way. They won't always win at the end, they'll fight amongst themselves, and they'll talk like real people! And that was the Fantastic Four."

Jack Kirby also claimed his storytelling ideas were maturing. "I was beginning to find myself as a thinking human being," he revealed. "I began to think about things that were real. I didn't want to tell fairy tales. I wanted to tell things as they are. But I wanted to tell them in an entertaining way, and I told it in the *Fantastic Four*...."

Whether it was a natural maturation—both creators had entered middle age—or the need to better compete with powerhouse rival DC, they were about to irrevocably alter the comic book landscape. "I wasn't trying to revolutionize comics or anything," Lee admitted. "I just wanted to get something out of my system and get the hell out of there."

Kirby also wanted to escape the relentless rut of filling the pages of *Strange Tales* and *Journey into Mystery* with giant reptilian monsters like Grogg and Gargantus and the Two-Headed Thing every month. "I had to do something different," he once said. "The monster stories have their limitations—you can just do so many of them. And then it becomes a monster book month after month. So there had to be a switch, because the times weren't exactly conducive to good sales. So I felt the idea was to come up with new stuff all the time—in other words, there had to be a blitz. And I came up with this blitz. I came up with the Fantastic Four. I came up with Thor (I knew the Thor legends very well), and the Hulk, the X-Men and the Avengers. I revived what I could and I came up with what I could. I tried to blitz the stands with new stuff. The new stuff seemed to gain momentum."

Kirby insisted that the original Marvel character concepts were birthed on his basement drawing board.



THE FORMATIVE

by Will Murray

"I did presentations," he asserted. "I'm not gonna wait around for conferences. I said, 'This is what you have to do.' I came in with Spider-Man, the Hulk and the Fantastic Four. I didn't fool around. I said 'you've got to do super-heroes.'"

According to Lee, they emerged white-hot from his poolside typewriter. Lee remembered Goodman suggesting, "You could use our old Human Torch and Sub-Mariner and maybe Captain America. That'll save you from having to dream up any new characters."

Lee demurred. "I really wanted to do something different," he said. "That's why I didn't want to do the Torch and the Sub-Mariner. I wanted to create a new group. I went home and wrote an outline, a synopsis for the Fantastic Four. And I called Jack, handed him the outline, and said: 'Read this. This is something I want to do. And you should draw a team.' But he never pushed me to do super-heroes. Jack was home drawing these monster stories, until the day I called him and said, 'Let's do the Fantastic Four.'"

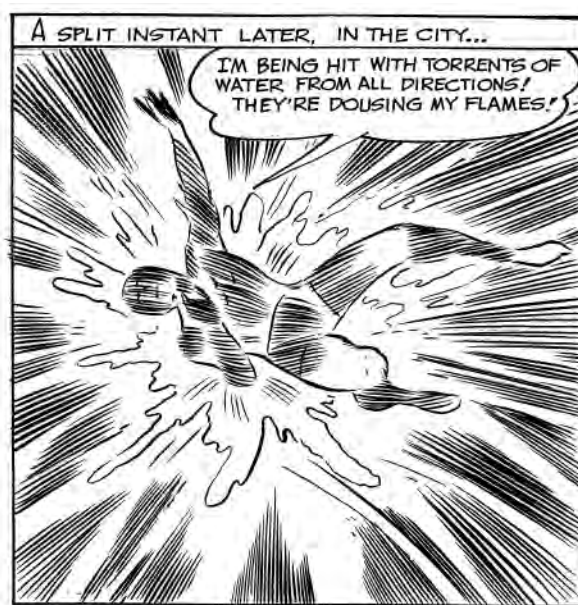
Speculation has persisted that the FF was originally planned as a lead feature in *Strange Tales* or one of the other fantasy titles, but Lee remains adamant that the strip was created for a title of its own from the beginning.

One undeniable truth was that the FF was an outgrowth of the Atlas monster era. "The monster phenomenon got started primarily just because people were concerned about... radiation," Kirby recalled, "and what would happen to animals and people who were exposed to that kind of thing... It was also a sign of the times. What does radiation do to people? And I took this valid question, which I felt had to be done in comics, and we got our Fantastic Four."

Although originally skeptical about new project—Goodman's last super-hero revival had flopped—Lee was determined to make the most of what he planned as his comic book swan song.

"I figured, 'All right, but this time I'm going to do it my way.' Instead of the typical heroes that have secret identities and nobody knows who they are, I did the Fantastic Four—where everybody knew who they were. Instead of the typical junior sidekick, I had a teenager who was also the brother of the heroine—and the hero would soon marry the heroine, so they would be brothers-in-law. The fourth member of the team was a monstrous-looking guy, called the Thing, which was not a typical super-hero type in those days. I also tried to give them fairly realistic dialogue, and I didn't have them wear colorful costumes."

In 1961, the Cold War was morphing into the Space Race. Cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin had just become the first man in space. U.S. astronaut Alan Shepard soon followed him up. *The Fantastic Four* was torn from contemporary headlines.



Four ordinary humans brave the dangers of space in a secret launch. When their spacecraft encounters a cosmic-ray storm, they crashland back on Earth, forever changed. Scientist Reed Richards becomes the rubbery Mr. Fantastic. Sue Storm is the Invisible Girl. Brother Johnny Storm turns into the Human Torch. And pilot Ben Grimm transforms into a brownish-orange brute the others dub The Thing.

"I got the idea about the cosmic rays after

reading about the space program," Kirby remembered. "They were worried about what effect the Van Allen Belt radiation might have on astronauts. It turns out that the radiation was easily shielded, but it had everybody worried for a while. That's the way the Fantastic Four began... Ben Grimm who was a college man and a fine-looking man suddenly became the Thing. Susan Storm became invisible because of the atomic effects on her body. Reed Richards became flexible and became a character

FANTASTIC FOUR



that I could work in various ways. And there were others—mutation effects didn't only affect heroes, it affected villains too."

Kirby had already explored this new frontier in a short-lived newspaper strip, *Sky Masters*, chronicling this first generation of astronauts. But at heart, the cosmic-powered quartet were outcasts—radiation-created freaks rather than classic square-jawed super-heroes.

Kirby explained, "At the time, the big topic was radiation. We had recently exploded the bomb (just 15 years before) and I was looking to create supermen. In all my work, you'll see the times are reflected... *The Fantastic Four* came out of those times."

On an individual level, the FF were a mixture of the revived and the untried. "I decided I wanted four characters that had very definitely different powers," Lee explained. "It occurred to me that the Human Torch, whom we had owned years ago and who was created by Carl Burgos, certainly had a unique power—to be able to burst into flame and fly. There hadn't been a Human Torch for years, and I figured, 'Gee, let's get that character again.' But I would change him and make him a teenager and he'd be the brother of the girl and so forth."

Although Kirby had been in comics for 20 years and had drawn just about every genre from love to war, his super-heroes up until then were merely costumed action heroes. He had only recently begun dabbling with super-powered characters in Archie's Fly and Shield.

"Super powers are a show gimmick," Kirby philosophized. "Why does a comedian decide to drop his pants on stage? Or why does a dancer come out and do a certain kind of dance? Why break-dancing? The answer is attention. You want the reader's attention. If you can't get it with ordinary people, you get it with extraordinary people."

With studied premeditation, Lee and Kirby set about to deconstruct and reinvent the super-hero. "I know up to that time there hadn't been any heroes like Reed Richards," Lee elaborated. "He was very bright but he was very self-absorbed and he wasn't quite the gung-go guy that most of the other super-heroes were. I enjoyed writing him because I enjoyed the idea of a hero who (at least I hope this is the way he came across) was a little bit stuffy, concentrating a little bit too much on the scientific work he was doing and the big words he'd use. Reed was a very intense guy, that's how I saw him. I had fun making fun of him through other characters... the Thing would say, 'Can't he ever just talk plain English?' and things like that."

"Reed Richards was scholarly," Kirby noted, "but he was caught in an extraordinary situation. Of course he would react in a very scholarly way. He would use his powers as a brainy guy would because Reed Richards is a brain—a very cool character."

Lee acknowledged Quality's moribund Plastic Man as his inspiration for Mr. Fantastic's powers. "I liked Plastic Man," he admitted. "I thought that was a great power and nobody was using it. So I gave Reed Richards Plastic Man's power."

But Kirby denied this. "No," he once said. "Plastic Man was not involved. Although Plastic Man existed on its own, I've never followed anyone else's work. I've always been my own individual. I

feel that genetically today we can do Mr. Fantastic. Genetically today we can shape people and animals."

"As for the Invisible Girl," Lee continued, "she's a girl so I don't want her to be strong. I don't want her to be Wonder Woman and punch people. So what power should she have? I figured, 'Gee, what if she's invisible?' I knew there have been invisible people. There was *The Invisible Man*, the movie with Claude Rains."

"She was a very important part of the group," Kirby commented. "The Invisible Girl represents something that we're looking for. Invisibility is a very powerful military conception. I can assure you that if invisibility became an actuality, that there would be a war. The nation that had invisibility would be at war the day that it was made practical. So in her own way, even then, she wielded a variety of powers. Because we don't know the connotations of invisibility."

The FF's breakout character was unquestionably



the Thing. Lee revealed, “The way he came about was we had the good-looking hero, a young boy who was also good-looking, and the girl; what about a real ugly guy who’s a humorous, sympathetic monster? I loved having him argue and fight with the Torch, and tell Reed he was the world’s biggest bore, and why can’t he use *one* word instead of 20? I liked Ben because he was grumpy and irascible. Kind of like me.”

According to Kirby, Stan Lee Kirbyized Ben Grimm. “They used to associate me with the Thing,” Kirby admitted. “I used to talk like him. The Thing always talked like he came from the Lower East Side of New York. Well, I didn’t realize it myself, but that’s how the dialogue came out.”

Over time, Kirby also came to identify with Ben. “The Thing is myself,” he once stated. “If you’ll notice the way the Thing talks and acts, you’ll find that the Thing is really Jack Kirby. He has my manners, he has my manner of speech, and he thinks the way I do. He’s excitable, and you’ll find that he’s very, very active among people, and he can muscle his way through a crowd.”

“The Thing was my favorite,” Lee related. “I wanted to really work on him. I told Jack, ‘I wanted somebody who turns into a monster. The other three are able to change back so it doesn’t affect them, but I want the Thing to be *bitter* because he’s a monster and couldn’t change back.’”

“The Thing is a cantankerous personality,” agreed Kirby, “but you would be too if you had been irradiated and suddenly from being a respectable college man and a fighter pilot and having a wonderful career, you became some guy that had skin like a dinosaur, and became an entirely different personality.”

Although the public perception of the Thing is that he’s made of rocks, Kirby’s vision was more in keeping with the alligator-skinned quasi-dinosaurs he was forever drawing for Lee.

“I felt I should do something new with Ben Grimm,” Kirby said. “If you’ll notice, the beginnings of Ben, he was kind of lumpy. I felt he had the power of a dinosaur, and I began to think along those lines. I wanted his flesh to look like dinosaur hide.”

Lee left those details entirely to Kirby. “Regarding The Thing,” he said, “I had no preconceived notion of what he’d look like. I just wanted him very ugly and very strong. If Jack thought of him with dinosaur skin, that’s fine with me.”

Over time, his personality also evolved. “In the first issue,” Lee pointed out, “he was kind of brooding and his style of speech was almost flowery. Then he started to develop a Jimmy Durante personality... started to become a wisecracker. He’s a learned, intelligent man, but it was like he decided he was so ugly, so horrible, that there was no point in trying to sound intelligent. Who would believe he *was* intelligent?”

“How’d you like to go into a bowling alley and have the ball crumble in your hands?” Kirby asked. “That would be irritating. If I were super-strong, it might not be all beneficial. So the Thing had the problem of looking like a monster and having this super-strength. Therefore you’ve got a good story problem.”

Regardless of how and by whom the Fantastic Four were first conceived, it fell to Jack Kirby to bring them to life on the page.

Stan Lee wrote, “Y’know, as a writer, it’s an amazing experience to collaborate with an artist, especially one as brilliant as Jack Kirby. Normally, I had a conception in my head of what the characters would look like and how they would move and act. But nothing could have prepared me for the shock I felt when I saw Jack’s initial designs. It was as though he had some uncanny power, some indescribable ability to get inside my skull, to grab the images that were swirling around in there and then, in some magical manner, to put them down on paper as if the drawings



had come right out of my head!”

Lee and Kirby’s down-to-earth humanistic depiction of super-heroes contrasted sharply to DC’s traditional larger-than-life portrayal. Stan Lee delineated the difference this way: “I tried to make the FF what I thought of as more realistic, with the characters acting toward each other the way real people might. For instance, instead of the girl being a token female in love with the male though she doesn’t know he’s really a hero, she was his fiancé. She knew damn well who he was, and she was also a member of the team. She wasn’t some helpless girl always screaming, ‘Save me!’”

Even Sue Storm was seen as reluctant heroine. “She’s an average girl and she, too, found herself in extraordinary circumstances,” Kirby explained. “I think it’s hard for a girl to shoulder invisibility. Girls like to be visible.”

Unlike their supposed inspiration, the Justice League, the Fantastic Four fought among themselves as much as they battled their growing host of foes.

“The problem sometimes isn’t the super-villain,” Kirby suggested. “It’s your own super-strength. It’s your own irritability. The Thing would go berserk as much as the villain would. He’d

(previous page, top) Sept. 29, 1958 *Sky Masters* newspaper strip, by Kirby and inker Wally Wood.

(previous page, bottom) Reed wasn’t *always* concentrating only on his scientific work, as displayed in this splash page from *Fantastic Four* #27 (June 1964).

(above) Middle-of-the-issue splash page from *Fantastic Four* #12 (March 1963). Already, the Thing’s personality has gelled close to how he comes across today.

Sky Masters TM & ©2010 Jack Kirby Estate. All other characters shown TM & ©2010 Marvel Characters, Inc.

(below) "I think it's hard for a girl to shoulder invisibility. Girls like to be visible." Well put, Jack, and we're sure it was a constant challenge to keep Sue in interesting situations as you drew pages like this one, from *FF* #10 (Jan. 1963).

(next page) *FF* #9 page (Dec. 1962), as Namor prepares to capitalize on the team's misfortunes. Note the framed photo of Sue that Subby has in his underwater living room. (Boy, he got good TV reception down in Atlantis, huh?)

All characters shown TM & ©2010 Marvel Characters, Inc.

smash everything up and I'd feel the same way."

"We tried to do them realistically!" Lee asserted. "In writing the copy, I'd say to myself, 'Okay, so I can make my body become a flaming fireball and fly through the air. Fine. But, given that ability, how would I act in the real world? What would I say to my friends, my family, my enemies? What would I care about, worry about?' I tried to imagine what life would be like if fantasy characters really existed in New York, and then I'd write it down."

If the *Fantastic Four* were bizarre, their foes were even more so. In the first issue, the FF battled a subterranean outcast named the Mole Man, whom Kirby plainly copied from the old *Dick Tracy* villain, the Mole. The facial resemblance between the two is striking. Next came the Skrulls from Outer Space, shape-shifting aliens whom Reed Richards hypnotized into turning themselves into peaceful contented cows. Compared to typical DC villains, they were more than two-dimensional.

"Comic books and their characters have really changed over the years," Kirby explained. "The era of the '40s and '50s was a colorful time, but everything was depicted in black and white, good and bad. There was nothing in between. At that time,

everyone who wasn't on your side was a bad guy. We've gotten away from that today—even the villains in comic books are more true to life. They have some redeeming qualities."

Initial sales were promising. But readers clamored for changes. "I tried to do it the way I thought super-heroes would be in real life," Lee related. "I even tried to be different by not giving them costumes, but that was a mistake. I got a lot of mail after the first issue: 'Love your book! It's wonderful! Best thing I ever read! Congratulations! But if you don't give them costumes, I'll never buy another issue.' So I don't have to be hit over the head. We put costumes on them. Everything else worked. I never thought it would sell well. I figure I'm getting it out of my system and then I'm going to quit. Well, it was the best selling book we had in years."

Colorist Stan Goldberg recalled, "I remember so clearly Stan saying, 'Let's put them in costumes; everybody wants these characters in costumes.' Jack put them in kind of tights with just the number four on their chests—a very simple costume—and I gave it a very simple color, blue, except for the Thing."

Originally, the FF went into action in modified versions of their space suits. Yet they wore only civilian clothes in issue #2. The classic blue uniforms debuted in *FF* #3. Originally, they included domino masks—which Lee removed during the production stage.

"If you look at the uniforms," stated Kirby, "they're the same. It kind of gets to be a habitual thing. My idea of a super-hero is some guy who can engage in action. And you can't engage in action in a business suit so I always give them a skin-tight suit with a belt. If you notice, the Challengers and the FF have a minimum of decoration."

It was the one element that continually baffled Lee. "I've never understood it," Lee admits. "For as long as I've been doing comic books, fans have insisted their heroes be in some kind of get-up. That's the only reason the Incredible Hulk has green skin. It was the only costume I could think of for a guy who doesn't wear a shirt... I always felt that if I had super-power, I wouldn't immediately run out to the store and buy a costume."

The Fantastic Four solidified with issue #3, which also introduced the Fantasti-Car and their Baxter Building headquarters in the heart of Manhattan. Lee claimed credit for that one. "The only reason why I put the *Fantastic Four* in a skyscraper headquarters was I wanted to definitely base them in New York," he asserted. "So I figured there were three things: They could be in a brownstone. They could be in a subterranean subway. Or they could be in a skyscraper. I picked the skyscraper."

But Lee and Kirby weren't done innovating yet.

Lee continues: "Then after we were in the swing of things, I thought, 'We seem to have succeeded with the Torch. It would be fun to bring back Sub-Mariner.' And that worked."

There, Lee seems to be taking his cue from DC's successful updating of dormant Golden Age heroes like The Flash, Green Lantern and the Atom, all of whom joined the wildly popular Justice League of America. Prince Namor, the antagonistic amphibian Sub-Mariner, had appeared 20 years before in the first issue of Timely's original flagship title, *Marvel Comics*. But Lee and Kirby gave him a tragic dimension when Namor discovers that his Atlantean home was wiped out by atomic bomb tests.

"The characters of the early '40s and the characters of what I call the Groovy Sixties are essentially the same," Kirby allowed, "but... their trappings are different. They must be more showy... I can't give you a simplified comic hero. I can't give you a monster that's just a cutout. I think you demand more and I have to give you more, and I find it more interesting to do it, so I enjoy doing these complicated monsters, and I enjoy it when a monster has an inferiority complex. I enjoy when he has a tragic life



because I work it out for him... So I'll make the Thing tragic and I'll make the Hulk frustrated because he is a hulk and can't be anything else, and it kind of keeps the story pot boiling."

Lee toyed with reviving the third great Timely hero, Captain America, but decided he simply didn't fit the Fantastic Four.

"The Sub-Mariner was easier to get a handle on," explained Lee. "His brooding nature was easy to work with. I just couldn't get a handle on how to do Captain America."

"I felt that Sub-Mariner was a powerful character and should be used," reflected Kirby. "It had originally been done by Bill Everett. But those old characters, like the Human Torch, could be used. I used everything that was at hand, that Marvel had which could be used as a super-hero."

With the third issue, Lee had started calling *The Fantastic Four*, "The World's Greatest Comic Magazine!" By its third year, fans were swearing to it. In 1963, Martin Goodman and Lee renamed the expanding line Marvel Comics.

"Somehow or other," Lee mused, "the book caught on. We had never gotten fan mail up until that point... Sometimes we might get a letter from a reader that would say, 'I bought one of your books and there's a staple missing. I want my dime back.' And that was it. We'd put that up on the bulletin board and say, 'Look! A fan letter!' Suddenly, with *The Fantastic Four*, we really started getting mail: 'We like this... We don't like that... We want to see more of this.' That was exciting! So I didn't quit. Then we did *The Hulk*, and that did pretty well... And then the rest is history."

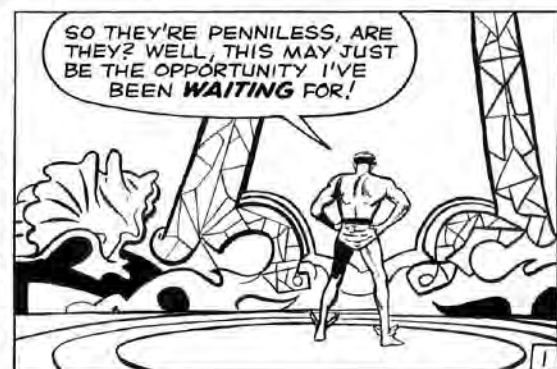
Kirby claimed a significant share of the credit. "Doing stories requires a lot of balancing and a lot of innovation," he noted, "especially if you're planning to build up a line. In Marvel's case, that's what it took. When it began, Marvel was still number two and the idea was to be the leading magazine [publisher] of its kind, and that takes planning and know-how. By that time, I had racked up quite a few years, created quite a few characters, so I was qualified to do it. It wasn't an overnight job."

The most creative period for both men may have been in the stretch between *FF* #3 and 5. Between #4 and 5, they created the Hulk. Then Thor, Spider-Man and Ant-Man, possibly Iron Man too—although he was not published until late in 1962.

Fantastic Four #5 introduced Doctor Doom, who would become their greatest villain—and one of Lee and Kirby's most powerful creations.

"I thought we really lucked out with the first major villain I cooked up for the ol' FF," Lee recounted. "I wanted someone who'd be the intellectual equal of Reed Richards and not merely a superstrong monster who commits wanton acts of destruction. He also had to be colorful looking, and there Jack Kirby created an absolute masterpiece when he designed the unforgettable image of the villain who would soon become comicdom's all-time favorite man-you-love-to-hate—the Lord of Latveria, the Master of Robotics, the man in the all-purpose armor—the unfathomable, inscrutable, and ever-irrepressible—Doctor Victor von Doom."

Kirby constructed him out of a patchwork of gothic literary images. "Doctor Doom was the classic conception of Death," observed Kirby. "I saw Doctor Doom as The Man in the Iron Mask, who



symbolized approaching Death. It was the reason for the armor and the hood. Death is connected with armor and inhuman-like steel. Death is something without mercy and human flesh contains that element of mercy. Therefore I had to erase it, and I did it with a mask."

Their contrasting views sometimes made it seem as if Lee and Kirby were talking about two different characters.

"I love Doom because I never considered him a villain," asserted Lee. "I used to do stories where Doom would promise something to Reed Richards. Nobody else trusted him, but Reed would say, 'Above all else, Doctor Doom is a man of honor. If he gives his word, I know he'll keep it.' I like the idea of a seeming villain who has great integrity."

"Doc Doom was a perfectionist," Kirby later revealed. "He was a scientist and the best-looking guy who ever lived. Then, after an experiment went

wrong, he got a scratch on his face. Although he should have been thankful he wasn't killed in the explosion he caused when his experiment went wrong, he couldn't handle that scratch and went mad. The perfectionist suddenly finds himself imperfect, small as that scar may be. He can't live with himself and the rest of humanity. He knows that every man, woman and child who passes him will know that he has this scar on his chin. So he encases his face in an iron mask. Nobody's ever going to see that scar—but they do! That scar grows so large that it affects his entire brain, and Doctor Doom becomes the ultimate villain."

Doom teamed up with Sub-Mariner in the next issue. Already, the group dynamics were changing. Sue Storm found herself torn between her love for Reed and her attraction to Prince Namor. "I was looking for things to surprise and titillate the readers," Lee explained. "It occurred to me that the Sub-



Mariner was also a wonderful character, he was kind of half-good and half-bad. I mean, he was really good, but in a way he was always the enemy of the super-heroes. I also thought it would be great if he fell in love with Sue Storm because that would cause some real complications."

Although that subplot played out for over two years, according to Kirby, there was never any danger of Sue deserting the FF for Namor.

"No," he said, "because in ordinary terms she would have gotten a divorce in a year. Living with Namor under the water, in the Bermuda Triangle or wherever he had his home, wouldn't have worked. I felt that she would have been happier with Reed Richards, and she was."

Ben's unrequited crush on Sue gave way to a romance with the blind Alicia Masters, who was initially depicted as a double for Sue Storm. "I needed somebody to fall in love with the Thing," Lee recalled. "I couldn't let him be totally tragic throughout the whole series. It seemed to me the best person to fall in love with him would be a blind girl. I thought

that was one of the best things about the series... the Thing's relationship with Alicia. I loved it."

And in an attempt to heal the rift caused by their tragic spaceflight, Reed dedicated himself to restoring Ben Grimm to normalcy.

"In the case of the Fantastic Four," Kirby

observed, "they all adjusted in their own way. Reed Richards was a well-adjusted guy. He could take it in stride... If Reed Richards had been the monster, he might have behaved differently... Reed would react differently than Ben Grimm because he had a different problem. He might have almost poked fun at himself, being able to stretch

almost a quarter mile—he might have found that amusing while Ben Grimm might have found that annoying."

Responding to reader complaints that the Invisible Girl usually didn't contribute much to the stories, her powers were expanded to include the ability to project force fields and turn other people and objects invisible. "...I wanted her to be more proactive," Lee explained. "Being invisible is okay, but it's not very visual. I thought it would be fun for Jack to draw a force field."

With that modification, the last crucial element for the formative Fantastic Four was in place. On this foundation, Lee and Kirby would erect a universe.

PART 2: EXPANDING UNIVERSE

By 1963, Lee and Kirby were in a groove on *The Fantastic Four*. Plots came easily, and from everywhere.

"An idea can come from me," Kirby allowed, "it can come from Stan, it can come from a reader. Sometimes we'll get ideas expressed in letters from readers that we utilize in the comic. We'll build a plot around that type of story. I feel that Stan Lee is very wise in looking over letters from readers, and keeping tabs on the progress that the character is making. Sometimes we'll do too many science-fiction stories, and we'll find that the reader is ready for some other kind of events, so we'll take the character out of the science-fiction atmosphere, and put them back into a credible Earth atmosphere."

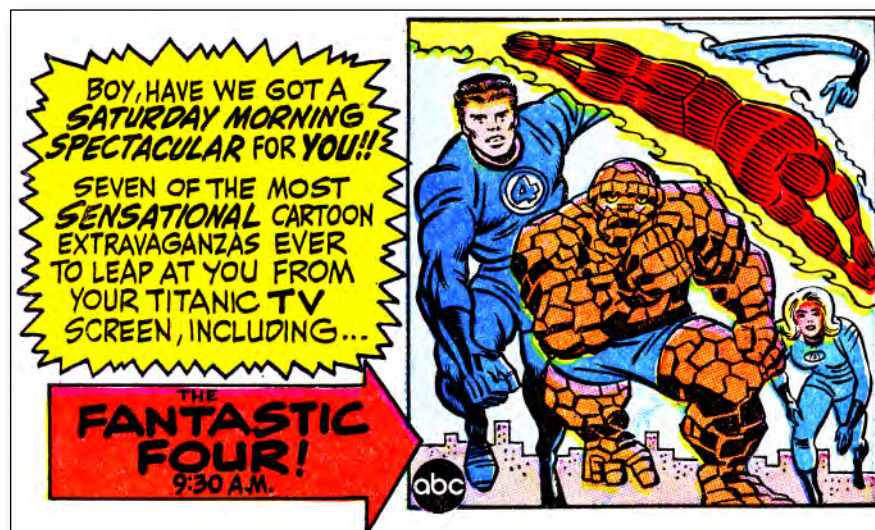
"I wanted those books, more than anything else, to be fun!" exclaimed Lee. "I wanted everything in them to attract reader attention and cause readers to talk. I wanted to do whatever I could to set our books apart from the rest."

The exact nature of the artistic collaboration grew fluid and difficult to define.

Initially, Lee supplied Kirby with plots.

Dialogue was added in the art stage. Gradually, Kirby began generating the storylines.

"Some artists, such as Jack Kirby, need no plot at all," Lee admitted. "I mean, I'll just say to Jack, 'Let's let the next villain be Doctor Doom,' or I may



not even say that. He may tell me. And then he goes home and does it. He's so good at plots. I'm sure he's a thousand times better than I. He just about makes up the plots for these stories. All I do is a little editing. I may tell him that he's gone too far in one direction or another. Of course, occasionally I'll give him a plot, but we're practically both the writers on the things."

"I was a penciller and a storyteller and I insisted on doing my own writing," Kirby asserted. "I always wrote my own story, no matter what it was. Nobody ever wrote a story for me."

Sometimes, there were misfires. "Perhaps my biggest tumble had to do with one of the FF's most off-beat villains, the Impossible Man," Lee confessed. "Personally, I loved the guy. I thought he was one of my cleverest creations. To the best of my knowledge there has never been a villain like him. Well, that's what I thought. The outraged hordes of Marveldom thought differently, and told me so in no uncertain terms. The mail poured in. The phone calls clogged our switchboard. Everyone swore I had gone off my rocker. In a way, it was a worthwhile experience. It should have taught me humility. It's a pity it didn't! I *still* like the pinhead from the planet Poppup."

Once, while stuck in a traffic jam, Lee and Kirby plotted *FF* #30. "I needed a villain very quickly for a *Fantastic Four*," related Lee, "and I came up with the name Diablo, which I thought sounded great. It sounded like the Devil. I said, 'Gee, Jack, you can draw this guy all black and scary and mysterious-looking.' And then I realized I didn't know what to do with him. Jack drew the guy. I couldn't think what power he had or how to use him. But the book had to be drawn quickly because it was due to go to the engravers in a few days. I don't even remember what the story is now, but I know I wasn't too proud of it when I wrote it. And I wish I hadn't come up with that because that was dumb."

Kirby fans recognized the name and look of the villain had been recycled from an old issue of Kirby's *Double Life of Private Strong*. In other respects, Diablo suggested a variant version of Doctor Doom. Yet despite Lee's misgivings, Diablo returned several times. Most *FF* villains ultimately did. Few died absolute deaths.

"In comics," Kirby notes, "they've proven that they can always resurrect characters. In other words, you can't kill a character in comics. Doctor Doom has been resurrected about four times."

Villains came and went, but Doom dominated the series. He too evolved. When it was revealed in *Fantastic Four Annual* #2 that Victor von Doom ruled the Balkan kingdom of Latveria, readers didn't seem to notice that his origin paralleled that of the *FF*'s first foe, the Mole Man, who also fled into exile after a personal catastrophe.

"One of the reasons it took a couple of years for us to whip up a satisfactory origin tale was that I really wanted this one to be something special," Lee acknowledged. "I wanted to explain how Victor von Doom was able to afford his weapons, gadgets, and assorted atomic devices. Also, I wanted to go back to his childhood and establish a solid motivation for everything that followed in his adult years... I wanted a saga of epic proportions, one that would make the reader really understand what motivated him, what had turned him into a villain, what made him the tragic, tortured tyrant he was."

"Doctor Doom is an evil person," Kirby noted, "but he's not always been evil. Doctor Doom was a guy who was a thoroughly respected academician; a highly respected chemist, but through a flaw in his own character, he was a perfectionist. Perfectionists cannot accept imperfections. So what happens to Doctor Doom—who wasn't even Doctor Doom at the time? He was just a chemist. He gets a cut on his chin! He'd do anything to anybody. Why? Because you haven't got that scar! He has! And who do you think you are, not having a scar like that? And that's the

point of Doctor Doom. It's a totally human viewpoint. It's an inferiority complex. To a guy who's superior, can you imagine how devastating that must be?"

The two creators held radically different opinions on what lay behind that mask. Lee saw Doctor Doom as horribly scarred and disfigured. But Kirby insisted the disfigurement was largely in von Doom's mind.

"Actually, he's very handsome," Kirby revealed. "But that scratch was etched on his brain forever. And of course a mental aberration will give birth to evil of some kind, or conflict or jealousy. Doctor Doom is like that. That's the secret of Doctor Doom—he isn't ugly. He's handsome. But he's a perfectionist, and perfectionists are their own devils. And think of all those ingenious traps he's gotten the *FF* into. He's a dark reflection of the heroes."

Both creators ultimately painted the Lord of Latveria in complex emotional colors. "I always thought of Doctor Doom as having a lot of integrity," Lee ruminated, "but I think a lot of that has been lost over the years. I thought of Doom as a man of honor... and the only thing about him was, he wanted to rule the world. I would say, 'Jack, in this next story, I think I'd like to have Doctor Doom kidnap Sue Storm and bring her to Latveria, then the *Fantastic Four* have to go after her and in the end Doctor Doom may promise that he won't hurt Sue if they do something. And Reed says okay, I agree. And the Thing would say how can you trust him? And Reed would say, despite all of his faults, Doom is a man of honor. He would never lie.'"

(these pages) The Kirby family was kind enough to trust TwoMorrows with a loan of Roz Kirby's "Black Book" sketchbook a couple of years ago, so quality scans could be made of each page, like the two here. The sketchbook was since sold to an art collector, who in turn eventually split up the individual drawings and sold many of them off—but not before offering a particularly meaningful page as a gift to this magazine's editor, for which he will be eternally grateful!

(previous page, bottom) Kirby art for an ad promoting the Saturday morning cartoon fare on ABC-TV in 1967, which included a *Fantastic Four* animated series.

All characters shown TM & ©2010 Marvel Characters, Inc.





(top and right) Kirby sketches of some early *FF* villains.

(below) Dr. Diablo from *Double Life of Private Strong* #1 (June 1959) bears a resemblance to the *FF*'s Diablo, who debuted in *FF* #30 (Sept. 1964).

(next page) Kirby finally got to draw (and Sinnott ink) the three classic Timely characters together for the cover of *FF Annual* #11 (1976).

Dr. Diablo ©2010 Archie Comics. All other characters shown TM & ©2010 Marvel Characters, Inc.



"Now I remember one scene I had with Doctor Doom," Kirby recalled of this same sequence. "You knew he was going to kill the heroes, but he sits them down and gives them a nice dinner first—you know, what's he got to lose? He's superior, see? He's arrogant—and he's got them at a disadvantage, so what's he got to lose by giving them a good dinner?"

The humanization of the supervillains contributed significantly to the growing popularity of *The Fantastic Four*. And Doom was not the only *FF* foe given sympathetic treatment.

"We feel that the old villains have never really been explored," Kirby once commented. "We'll bring them back after three or four issues and maybe even longer than that. They'll come back. We may like to explore another aspect of their lives. For instance, I did this Mole Man story in *FF* where he had built a house. I stressed the fact, which hadn't been stressed before, that Mole Man might be a crybaby when a lot of less-talented people are going through life with a lot more courage with their afflictions, and Mole Man became human that way. [Editor's Note: See page 60 of this issue] It humanized him. And then he

retreats again into his own insanity and goes underground. He's ready for another episode. I feel they should be rejuvenated from time to time so people can take a good look at them, and it reflects the fact that everybody has a weakness. Nobody is perfect."

"I'll confess to you that villains are the most fun to write about," admitted Lee.

Lee and Kirby kept tinkering with the cosmic quartet. In the beginning, Kirby tried to make Johnny Storm look distinctively different from the original Human Torch, but settled on a modified version of the famous character with powers infinitely more frightening than his inspiration. Reed Richards also became more adept at controlling his pliable body.

Kirby's Thing evolved as the series moved through its formative years. "I took the liberty of changing him," he acknowledged. "At first he looked a little pimply and I felt that was kind of ugly. What I did was give him the skin of a dinosaur. I felt that would add to his power. Dinosaurs had thick plated hides and of course that's what the Thing had."

The three-toed armored dinosaur known as *ankylosaurus* seems to have been Kirby's inspiration. That evolution was hidden from readers by inker Dick Ayers, who struggled to interpret Kirby's pencils.

"When I first started inking the Thing," Ayers said, "I had him looking like he was made of mud. Then, somebody made him look like he was chiseled little bricks. I could *never* figure out what he was." Although the "rocky" Thing first appeared on the Kirby-inked cover of *FF* #8, it was not until inker George Roussos took over from Ayers with issue #21 that fans saw the character as his creator intended.

The first Marvel crossovers came at the end of 1962, when simultaneously, the *FF* met Spider-Man in that new character's debut issue and the Hulk faced off against the Thing in *FF* #12. It

MORE MARVEL VILLAINS—
MOLE MAN FROM
FANTASTIC FOUR



was just the first of many classic face-offs between Marvel's most popular monsters. He was a more powerful variation on the Thing, yet the Hulk's own title was winding down for lack of sales. But he would live on in the pages of *The Fantastic Four*. He was another tragic Marvel hero-villain.

"I liked the Hulk, the idea of a hero being a monster," Lee recalled. "The whole purpose of *The Incredible Hulk* was to do a monster who couldn't help being a monster, isn't really that bad and basically, is misunderstood—just like I felt the Frankenstein monster was in the old Karloff movie. I wanted to make him more empathetic and more three-dimensional, so it wasn't just a story about a monster running around issue after issue."

Kirby added, "He was patterned visually on Frankenstein and its mood swings were supposed to be like Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. We wanted to illustrate that this was a human being who, by no fault of his own, had developed superhuman characteristics. He wasn't an old-time villain."

The Hulk wasn't actually a villain at all, but a tormented demi-hero in the vein of Marvel's Sub-Mariner. Like the Thing, he was a byproduct of radiation. Doctor Bruce Banner first became the Hulk when he was caught in the blast of his own Gamma bomb, after which he rollercoasted between tormented man and hunted man-monster.

"I thought it would be fun to let him be somebody like Jekyll and Hyde, who changed from normal identity into the so-called monster and back again," Lee elaborated. "In the beginning he hates what's happening to him, but later on he almost enjoys being that monster because it's fun to have all that power. There's a little dichotomy there. I was trying to put a little psychology into it, just give the story an extra dimension."

From the beginning, readers demanded the Thing fight the Hulk. Although superficially similar, the contrast between the two tragic man-monsters put the less-powerful Thing in an increasingly more sympathetic light. Their frequent clashes became classics.

"Deep down in my heart," admitted Lee, "I felt the Hulk had the edge. I saw him as a little larger, more muscular, and far more savage and embittered. Yet I like to think that the Thing is faster, cleverer, and more innovative, which should serve to make them both equally effective in a drag-out fight."

"I feel the Hulk's strength is unlimited for some damn reason I don't understand," countered Kirby. "It's just unlimited and when I had him fight with the Thing I felt the Hulk broke it off at a point where he hadn't fully tested his strength. One of the questions that I always get from fans is, 'Who's stronger, the Hulk or the Thing?' I think it's kind of a silly question, but after some thought, it would have to be the Hulk. He has a well of energy that he draws on that's almost endless. I think everybody has hidden reserves of strength that they're not aware of."

Something new was forming in the comic book firmament.

"It was Marvel that first introduced the notion of one universe in which all its heroes dwelled," suggested Lee, "thus allowing us to mix and match our characters, having any or all of them pop up in practically anyone else's stories. It was Marvel that practically trademarked the concept of realism mixed with fantasy. Our characters existed in the

real world—in New York City rather than Gotham or Metropolis; they lived in real neighborhoods, Greenwich Village or Forest Hills, or they had their headquarters on Manhattan's Fifth Avenue facing Central Park, rather than Main Street in Centerville or Anytown. They drive Corvettes and Thunderbirds rather than Whizbang Eights. They saw movies at the Radio City Music Hall or Lowe's Paradise rather than the ubiquitous Bijou."

The quartet born in cosmic rays began having cosmic adventures, finally reaching the moon in 1963, later penetrating into deep space and other dimensions unexplored and unsuspected by man. They were a blend of crimefighters, scientists and astronauts.

"In comics we have action teams," said Kirby. "Now, an action team has a lot more leeway than, say, a hockey team. A hockey team can only play one game; an action team can play any kind of game, with any kind of villain. We have a broader field in which to tell a story and it gives enough room to tell very, very interesting stories."

In reality, the early FF was less a JLA clone than it was a superpowered version of the new kind of adventure quartets DC was then producing. They included the Sea Devils, Suicide Squad and Rip Hunter, Time Master. The first was *Challengers of the Unknown*, which Joe Simon and Jack Kirby had developed for DC in 1957. "Challengers was like a movie to me," Kirby revealed. "The science-fiction



pictures were beginning to break, and I felt the Challengers were a part of that genre. I began to think about three words which have always puzzled me: What's out there? I thought, what's really out there? Then I began to draw characters from outer space, characters from beneath the earth, characters from anywhere that we couldn't think of. The Challengers were us contending with these very strange people.

"Yes, they were always precursors to the Fantastic Four—except the Fantastic Four were mutations. Stan didn't know what a mutation was. I was studying that kind of stuff all the time. I would spot it in the newspapers and science magazines. I was a student of science-fiction. Stan Lee doesn't think the way I do."

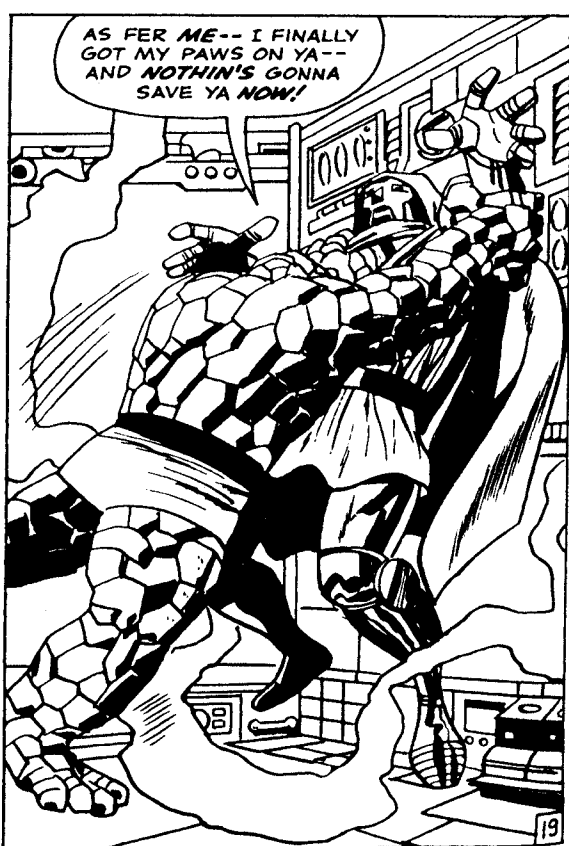
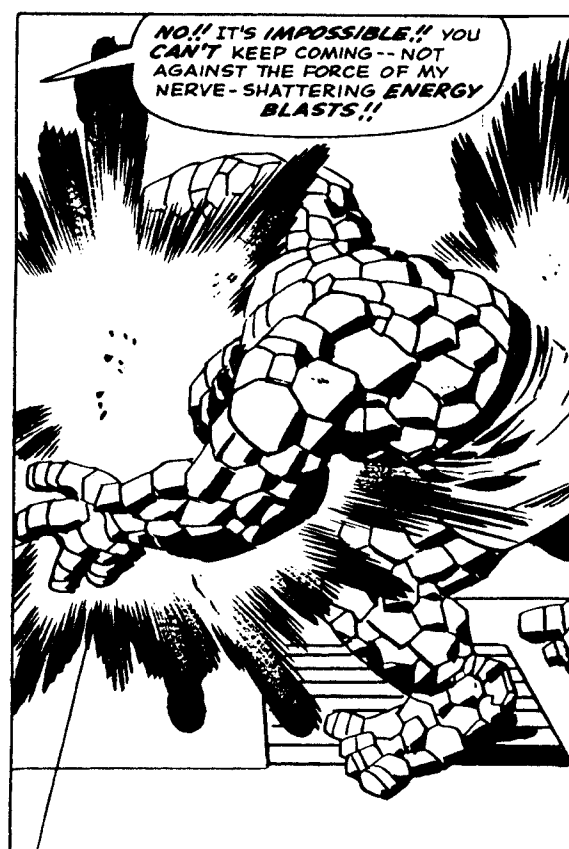
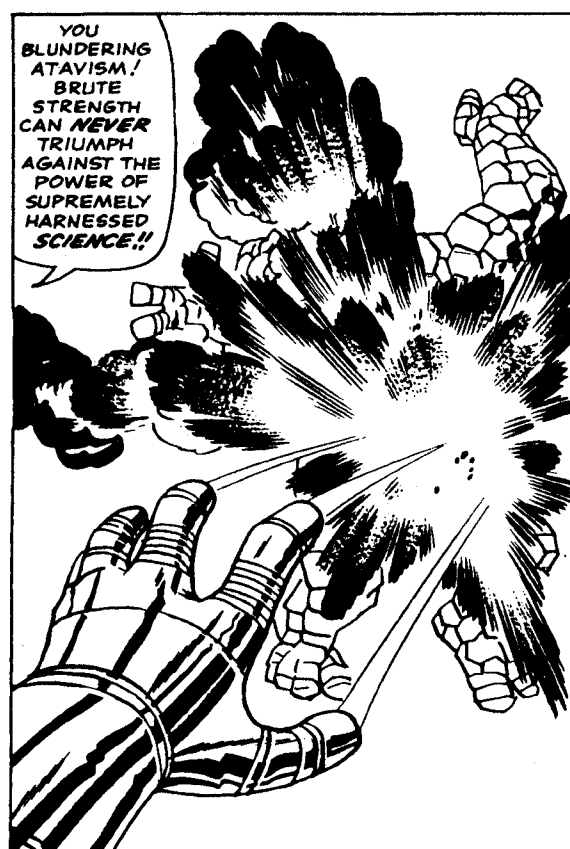
They too were a fighting quartet of adventurers. After surviving a plane crash, they dedicated themselves to exploring the edge of scientific knowledge.

"Challengers of the Unknown came from their own particular time," Kirby explained. "They were post-war characters. What the Challengers of the Unknown were saying is, 'Where are we going now?' And that is a question I asked in all those stories. In the Challengers, I put in new gimmicks and the machines that we already had. I took them two to three stages ahead as to what we might have. I would take them five years ahead. If we had certain generators, I would make a supergenerator of some kind, and have my story revolve around that. What would it do to human beings? Perhaps it would summon aliens from some foreign planet. It gives us the power to do that."

With the Fantastic Four, Kirby took those ideas to the next logical level. One late *Challengers* story might have been a blueprint for the FF's cosmic origin. In it, Rocky Davis (the Challengers' version of Ben Grimm) is sent up in a space capsule and returns with superpowers, some approximating those of the Human Torch.

"The issues I did were still formative and I can't answer for what DC did with them," Kirby allowed. "But they were heading for the super-hero image when I left. In many ways, they were the predecessors of the FF."

Kirby reminded readers that this group-hero concept went back to the beginning of his career when he specialized in kid gangs.



"We did the first one for Marvel called the Young Allies and from that, we hopped to the Boy Commandos, and they did very well. I believe they were the forerunners of many of the adult teams of comic heroes that we have today. We did use three or four characters in unison, and I believe that strips today like the *Fantastic Four* or *Challengers of the Unknown* are probably the descendants of that type of strip."

The wellspring for all of those strips was a 1930s pulp magazine which both men read. Doc Savage and his crew were virtually a blueprint for the Challengers and the FF, although with the central hero as the team nucleus deemphasized.

Although Kirby only acknowledged of reading *Doc Savage Magazine*, Lee was more effusive: "Doc Savage and his oddly assorted team might be considered the progenitors of today's Fantastic Four and many other teams of super-heroes—even Sgt.

Fury and his Howling Commandos. I remember reading Doc Savage when I was young and being intrigued by his abilities and his characteristics as well as those of his teammates. Even though they didn't have super powers as such, they were more colorful and better at what they did than the average Joe and that's what made them so fascinating to me and to a legion of readers—and what has kept them fresh in my mind after all these years."

PART 3: CREATIVE IMPLOSION

The cast steadily expanded. In 1964, Reed and Sue became engaged. They married a year later. Soon Sue was pregnant. Franklin Richards was born in 1967.

"I have no idea what's going to happen," Lee said in 1968. "I really don't know if Sue's baby is going to have supernatural powers when he gets

older. Until the day of the final deadline for the issue, we didn't know if she was going to have a boy, a girl, or a monster. I think we flipped a coin."

"I remember when I came up with Reed Richards having a son in the *Fantastic Four*," Lee related on another occasion. "I said, 'What'll I do with the son? All the readers are going to say, 'He's got to have a superpower.' What would his super power be? And I figured, 'Well, I'll keep him a baby for a long time and I'll make a mystery of it. Everybody will wonder what will his super power be, and by the time it has to be explained, somebody else'll be writing it. I won't have to worry about it.' And that seems to be the way it happened."

Kirby had different plans for Franklin. "Well, we're going to be talking about that," he said in 1969. "He probably will have some kind of powers, and it might be fun to draw him as kind of a normal human being who has to face all these super-heroes and villains on his own. He could be anything, and create a kind of situation which might be interesting to read. And that's the object of his being there."

Ultimately, Stan Lee got his way. As editor as well as collaborator, he was in a position to overrule Kirby when they failed to meet eye to eye.

In 1965, a Martin Goodman plan to expand Marvel's list of titles fell apart and several new Kirby creations were instead launched in the pages of *The Fantastic Four*. The first was the mysterious Inhumans. One Inhuman, Crystal, became Johnny Storm's girlfriend and later substituted for Sue Richards when she was on maternity leave.

Next came their ultimate creation, Galactus. Lee recounted, "Jack and I were doing the *Fantastic Four*, and we came up with this plot; something to do with Galactus and our usual crazy stuff. I was telling Jack. He wasn't listening and I wasn't paying attention to what he was saying. All I remember is we were saying, 'We've already had Doctor Doom, we've already had Sandman, and all these powerful villains. What can we do to top what we've done? The only thing to do is get a villain who's practically a god... who doesn't want to *conquer* the earth; a villain who destroys whole planets!' Well, that sounded good. Jack may have come up with the name Galactus, or I might've. He went off and drew something."

"I began looking for [villains] other than gangsters," Kirby explained. "I got Galactus—where I suddenly found myself confronting God! Like God! I'd never seen a character like that myself. Suddenly—there he was—I drew him. And he's about three or four stories high. He's standing on the Empire State Building."

An advanced being beyond good and evil, Galactus came to Earth to absorb its energy. The fact that this would wipe out all earthly life was of no consequence to him. When his herald appears on Earth to pave the way, both the FF and Stan Lee were surprised.

"I did not really create the Silver Surfer," Lee admitted. "Jack had thrown him in. When he sent me the artwork, there was this oddball on a flying surfboard, and I said, 'Who the hell's this?' He said, 'I figured anybody as powerful as Galactus ought to have a herald who would go ahead of him and find planets.' I said, 'That's a great idea!' So I gave him the name 'The Silver Surfer.' I liked the way Jack drew him very much; there was a certain nobility to his demeanor, so I tried to write him as though he was a somewhat spiritual guy. To Jack, he was just a herald, that's all; just a sort of flunky for Galactus. But I thought he looked like much more than that, so I began to feature him and write him like he was somebody special."

But Kirby did see him as special. "I got the Silver Surfer," he once related, "and I suddenly realized here was the dramatic situation between God and the Devil! The Devil himself was an archangel. The Devil wasn't ugly—he was a *beautiful* guy! He was the greatest of all archangels.

He was the guy that challenged God... and Galactus says, 'You want to see my power? Stay on Earth forever!'"

Resembling Hollywood's Oscar statuette, the Surfer employed a mode of cosmic travel also borrowed from California culture. "My conception of the Silver Surfer was a human being from space in that particular form," explained Kirby. "He came in when everybody began surfing—I read about it in the paper, the kids in California were beginning to surf. And that's fantastic to me! And I said, 'Suppose there was a surfer who surfed the universe?' I couldn't do an ordinary teenager surfing so I drew a surfboard with a man from outer space on it. He also had to have, in my estimation, a godlike appearance. And him being all silver gives him the kind of aura that makes him different from ourselves."

Although Galactus was ultimately driven off, the Silver Surfer remained on Earth to become one of Marvel's most important new supporting characters.

"When I came up with Galactus," Kirby admitted, "I didn't know what to do with him. I couldn't kill Galactus; he was my God. What do you do with God when you have him on your hands? So I backed away from him, which is what the characters in the book did. It cost the Silver Surfer his power and position and he became a fallen angel. Galactus zapped him and made him stay on Earth forever. That concept is so powerful because it moved me and it sold a lot of comic books."

After the Galactus trilogy, Lee and Kirby created the first black super-hero in comics. Both men later claimed to have

(previous page, bottom) Kirby splash page for *Challengers of the Unknown* #7 (April 1959), with inks by Wallace Wood. Don't you wish Woody had inked all those early FF issues?

(previous page, top) Say what you will about Vinnie Colletta, but while his inks generally fell short on FF #40, his work on the Thing really captured a reptilian/dinosaur look for the character.

(below) Crystal and Lockjaw from Jack's sketchbook gift to Roz.

Challengers of the Unknown TM & ©2010 DC Comics. All other characters shown TM & ©2010 Marvel Characters, Inc.





(above) The mysterious Inhumans, originally conceived as an expansion series for Marvel, debuted in *Fantastic Four* instead. Here's a page from issue #46.

(right and next page) More amazing sketches from Roy Kirby's "Black Book" sketchbook.

All characters shown TM & ©2010 Marvel Characters, Inc.

been motivated by the realization that there were no African-American super-heroes in creating the Black Panther. "I had a lot of friends who were black and we had artists who were black," observed Lee. "So it occurred to me... why aren't there any black heroes?"

"I got to hemming and hawing," Kirby said. "'You know, there's never been a black man in comics.' And I brought in a picture of this costumed guy which was later modified so he could have a lot more movement. Actually, at first he was a guy with a cape, and all I did was take the cape off and there he was in fighting stance, unencumbered. The Black Panther came in, and of course we got a new audience!"

"I loved the concept," added Lee, "and as usual Jack did a truly magnificent job. When he became the Black Panther, Jack would draw him like a human being but with poses that were always a little bit catlike, especially when he went into action or when he ran." Kirby originally called him the Coal Tiger. It was Lee who renamed him, inadvertently colliding with 1960s counterculture. The rise of the black-power group known as the Black Panthers created an unexpected public relations issue.

"Yeah, that was unfortunate," acknowledged Lee. "I made up

the name 'Black Panther' before I knew there was a militant group called the Black Panthers. And I didn't want it to seem that we were espousing any particular cause. And because of that we're not able to push the Panther so much, although we're still using him."

Elsewhere, Lee had this to say: "We were going to play him up as the first black super-hero with his own comic book. But then we became a little gunshy. He was created before the Black Panthers got their notoriety, and now I really don't know what to do with him. The name is an unlucky coincidence, really. If we want to get involved in a civil rights story, we want to do it our way and not stumble into it because the name of one of our characters happens to be the same as that of a militant group. Maybe we'll let him get involved in Harlem teaching Negro youth who do not suspect that he's really their hero, Black Panther."

After a few appearances, Lee moved the Panther out of the FF and into other Marvel titles, thwarting Kirby's plans to further develop him. "Originally," Kirby said, "I had intended to reveal more about the Panther's ancestry and the cosmic origins of vibranium, but we simply didn't have the room."

John Romita recalled that the Panther readers read about was only the tip of the iceberg looming in Kirby's imagination. "I remember asking Jack about the Black Panther," he noted. "He said that was from some storyline he'd worked on for years, that he loved the idea of a black hero like that. He loved mythology. So if there was an African mythology, then he was going to latch onto it, just like he practically lived in Norse mythology. When he did the *Thor* stuff, he was in his own backyard. He loved those characters so much. He lived and died with them. African mythology was one of his pet projects, and he told me he loved the idea of The Black Panther being a royal African with a 500-year history, and things like that."

Lee explained, "It would also have been a bit strange to have a black hero who just happens to be the richest man in the world. So the whole idea was a little bit off. I told Roy Thomas what I'd like to do with him is have Roy write the Panther so he teaches underprivileged children in the ghetto and uses his own knowledge and his own force and leadership to help these kids. But I think we have a better chance with the Falcon (as a black super-hero)."

In later years, Kirby would return to the Black Panther, but without Lee. No matter.

Others cosmic concepts followed. The Kree. Ronan the Accuser. The Negative Zone. Psycho-Man. There seemed no bottom to the creative wellspring that was truly "The World's Greatest Comic Magazine."

Over time, the Lee-Kirby collaboration became like a strained marriage in which the two partners had stopped listening to the other.

"Sometimes Stan would offer to drive Jack and me home and they would plot stories in the car," recalled Marvel artist John Romita. "I would be in the back

seat of Stan's convertible, and these two giants were up front plotting the future of the *Fantastic Four*, or *Thor*, or whatever they were working on. And I would listen—absorbing all that stuff, and getting a big kick out of how they ignored each other. Sometimes I could hear that one was talking about one story and the other was talking about something completely different. It was interesting because it appeared that they would finish their conversation, each thinking that he had convinced the other, when it was obvious to anybody else that they hadn't."

More and more, Kirby was creating the stories and Stan Lee was rewriting them his way. "As things went on," Kirby recalled, "I began to work at home and I no longer came up to the office. I developed all the stuff at home and just sent it in."



Lee never disputed this. “Very often I didn’t even know what the hell he was going to give me,” he admitted. “I’d get some pages of artwork, and I wrote the copy and turned it into whatever story I wanted it to be.”

This “floating gears”-style of collaborating began to break down as the 1960s matured. A running subplot involving Johnny Storm and his college roommate, Wyatt Wingfoot, fell by the wayside unresolved.

Kirby was upset at Lee’s scripting for the two-part story which introduced a character the artist called Cocoon-Man and Lee renamed Him (later to become Adam Warlock) when the motivations of several characters were turned upside-down. Then Lee was taken aback when after plotting one issue with Kirby, the artist turned in a completely different story featuring a throwback to the big monster era, Toomazooma the Living Totem.

Concerned about holding onto younger readers, publisher Martin Goodman laid down new restrictions in 1969, asking Lee to pull back from the elaborate multi-part storylines and focus instead in simpler, single-issue stories. “I think when Stan developed the Marvel super-heroes he did a very good job,” Goodman told the *New York Times* in 1970, “and he got a lot of college kids reading us. They make up a segment of our readership, but when you play it to them you lose the very young kids who just can’t follow the whole damn thing. We try to keep a balance. Because I read some stories sometimes and I can’t even understand them. I really can’t!”

The series fell into a lull in which old storylines were recycled, long-unseen villains were dusted off and given new imperatives. Lee struggled to keep the magic alive, but Jack Kirby had seemingly lost interest.

Lee always felt that in an ongoing series like *The Fantastic Four*, each new episode should build on what had come before.



“In any action story,” he explained, “the battles should escalate until the climax which should, of course, be the most colorful and dangerous battle of all. That also applies to any repeat appearances of any particular villain in different stories. Whatever battle was fought in the first story should be followed by an even more dangerous and unusual battle in a succeeding issue. That goes for every succeeding episode. Readers don’t wanna see the same slugfest time after time. So, each time (for example) Spidey meets the Green Goblin, the battle’s intensity should escalate with each new meeting.”

Escalating the return of an über-menace like Galactus seemed impossible. Yet they tried. More and more, Kirby plucked his plots from popular TV shows like *Star Trek* and *The Prisoner*.

A critical turning point in their collaboration came when Lee teamed up with artist John Buscema on a prestigious new *Silver Surfer* comic book in 1968. Their origin conflicted with Kirby’s original concept of the Surfer as a pure energy being having no human experiences.

“I meant to round out the Silver Surfer,” said Kirby, “give him his own motivation, which has never been clear. The Silver Surfer himself has never had any real dimension in the books. He just fought battles for other characters. I felt there was real meaning to the Silver Surfer. He is a character with a lot of power and that power was never really exploited.”

Where Kirby had envisioned a Luciferian fallen angel, Stan Lee transmuted the Surfer into a spiritual descendant of Jesus Christ. Kirby later complained, “There were times at Marvel when I couldn’t say anything because it would be taken from me and put in another context, and it would be lost—all my connection with it would be severed. For instance, I created

the Silver Surfer, Galactus and an army of other characters, and now my connection with them is lost... You get to feel like a

ghost... It’s a strange feeling. But I experienced it and I didn’t like it much... It wasn’t recognition so much—you just couldn’t take the character anywhere. You could devote your time to a

character, put a lot of insight into it, help it evolve and then lose all connection with it. It’s kind of an eerie thing; I can’t describe it. You just have to experience that relationship to understand it.”

Fed up with having his concepts turned inside-out and his storylines hijacked, Jack Kirby left *The Fantastic Four* and Marvel Comics in 1970. Over 100 issues of the *FF* had been produced by this talented team, and five *Annals*. Now, there would be no more. Before long, as if he too had lost his creative connection to them, Stan Lee relinquished *FF* scripting duties. Yet despite the loss of the

book’s creators, *The Fantastic Four* is still being published today. In a strange parallel, the long-running off-Broadway show, *The Fantastiks*, was only in its second year when the *FF* were born. It did not close until 2002—an incredible record. Yet the *FF* are still going—and fast approaching fifty years of continuing adventures.

“I suppose the Fantastic Four captured everybody’s imagination,” Kirby once mused. “It really held a lot of attention. The Fantastic Four had a classic element in it. It couldn’t be denied by anybody. It was read by a wide variety of peer groups. Of course, that’s the reason why it’s still here today and going strong. The Fantastic Four is a strong combination, and I think it’ll stay strong.”

Who created the Fantastic Four? Only two men can really answer that question—and their accounts are diametrically opposite.

“I came up with the Fantastic Four,” insisted Kirby. “It was my idea. It was my idea to do it the way it was; my idea to develop it the way it was. The Fantastic Four to me are people who were in a jam—suddenly you find yourself invisible, suddenly you find yourself flexible. I’m not saying that Stan had nothing to do with it. Of course he did. We talked things out.”

“Jack never pushed me to do super-heroes,” contradicted Lee. “Jack, of course, contributed many, many ideas to it. And I would venture to say that Jack and I co-created The Fantastic Four, in a way—although the name was mine, the characters were mine, the concept was mine, originally.”

Even in disagreeing, Stan Lee and Jack Kirby couldn’t help acknowledging the critical contributions of their respective creative partners. ★

(Thanks to Stan Lee for answering so many questions. Other quotes first appeared *Comic Scene*, *The Comics Journal*, *Comic Book Marketplace*, *The Jack Kirby Collector*, *Castle Of Frankenstein*, *Jack Kirby Quarterly*, *The Jack Kirby Treasury*, *Alter Ego*, *Comics Interview*, *Hero Illustrated*, *Comics Feature*, *Stan Lee’s Origins Of Marvel Comics* and *Tom Defalco’s Comics Creators On The Fantastic Four*. Apologies to any primary source I’ve overlooked.)

KIRBY

OBSCURA



Looking for inexpensive reprints of these issues? *Captain 3-D* unfortunately hasn't been reprinted, but below is the original art from page 12 of that issue (there are several layers of overlaid art). And on the next page, we present a Mort Meskin pencil page from the unpublished #2.

Challengers of the Unknown
TM & ©2010 DC Comics.
Captain 3-D TM & ©2010
Harvey Comics. Yellow Claw
TM & ©2010 Marvel
Characters, Inc.

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

LAST HURRAH FOR THE CHALLENGERS

It was the end... the very end. Jack Kirby's glorious mid-1950s period working for DC Comics had produced a brace of wonderfully idiosyncratic fantasy and SF tales for editor Jack Schiff's popular books in that genre. But few would argue that Kirby's magnum opus in that era was his stint on his co-creation, the death-cheating *Challengers of The Unknown*, premiered in *Showcase* and subsequently burnished to perfection through the first eight issues of the Challs' own title. But as the editor of this magazine details in his introduction to DC's two splendid Archive editions collecting Kirby's work on the title (before Bob Brown took over the feature), Kirby's bitter dispute with editor Schiff over the newspaper strip *Sky Masters* that the latter facilitated was about to boil over—and his work on issue #8 of the Challs magazine was to be the Last Hurrah.

In some ways, it's a great shame that this last Kirby issue is not a final blaze of glory: it goes without saying that it's unmissable for Kirby fans, of course. And it's also unmissable for Wallace Wood fans, as his *nonpareil* inks were still bringing Kirby's dynamic pencils to a peak of perfection and adding a stunning gloss. But the story and art in the two tales in the issue don't attain the heights of the delirious "Wizard of Time" in issue #4, the apex of the team's run on *Challs*. While the title story "Prisoner of the Robot Planet" gives rise to a striking cover illo (with the Challs being launched into space encased in purple globes by a bizarre yellow-skinned alien), the tale itself is relatively routine. The most fully realized piece in the issue—and the penultimate Kirby/Wood *Challengers* tale—was the first story, "The Man who Stole the Future." Another 'track-down-the villain-in-pursuit-of arcane-powers' adventure, the piece

boasts the kind of kinetic draftsmanship that made the Kirby/Wood team such a hard act to follow for the efficient—but less inspired—Bob Brown. Take the splash page, for instance: as so often in JK/WW jobs, the sheer energy of the figure work positively (and almost literally) leaps off the page, with the jack-in-the-box physicality of the Challs foreshadowing the similarly eye-popping work that Kirby was soon to be essaying at Marvel for Stan Lee. Reading this final issue is a bittersweet experience (the artwork looks better in the more subtly colored original book than in the poster-colored hardback reprint, however glossy the pages of the latter). Perhaps if Wood and Kirby had stayed on the title, and the *Sky Masters* debacle had ended amicably rather than acrimoniously, there may have been another "Wizard of Time" up their sleeves. Who knows? It's one of the great might-have-beens of comics history.

INTO THE THIRD DIMENSION

Ah... *Captain 3-D*. What a fondly remembered one-shot! It's certainly true that Jack Kirby inaugurated many short-lived projects (projects, at that, which far outlived their blink-of-an-eye appearances in terms of legendary status). But *Captain 3-D*—with its single published issue in 1953, at the height of the short lived 3-D craze—was really something special. And, interestingly, it could be said to be one of the few occasions in the Golden/Silver Age of comics which gave American comic buyers of the day a sense of the comic buying experience for Brits before American comics began to be imported in large quantities to the UK. Why? Well, UK comics fans of the late Fifties/early Sixties were used to a glorious eye-catching cover in full color which was wrapped around monochrome interiors (reprints were seldom in color—though George Evans' *Captain Video*, another SF Captain, ran to two-color overlays for the UK). This color cover/monochrome interior arrangement wasn't quite the case with *Captain 3-D*—the contents are a kind of muddy brown and green—but the eponymous Captain, with his yellow tunic and helmet, plus blue-striped tights and red boots, is only seen in that apparel on the cover; the contents (with the primitive 3-D effects of the day) were largely colorless when viewed through the requisite red and green glasses.

KIRBY: THE ARTIST WHO DIDN'T NEED 3-D

This is not the place to rehearse the splendors and failures of the comics of the 3-D era (let's not even mention American Comics Group's cheating glasses-free 'Truvision' process—readers all knew that was a con), but to celebrate—as ever—the



nonpareil achievements of The King. With the invaluable input of Joe Simon (who, regrettably, seems to remember very little these days of the creation of the book other than the business side—but who can blame him after all these years?), Kirby created another work of art that—as so often the 1950s and '60s—prefigured the unfettered imagination that would blossom forth for Marvel and DC in later eras. For a start, there is the clandestine underground war conducted between two groups of nonhuman creatures with the planet Earth as the battleground (and the dauntless Captain as the champion of the good aliens); then there are the animal-faced nemeses (such as the startlingly nasty cat-faced creature which the young hero Danny sees through his own 3-D glasses—and which looks like one of the gruesome creatures from Simon & Kirby's horror title *Black Magic*), and sexy villainess Tigra with her skintight, low-cut leopard print costume (who was to have various descendants in Kirby's later Fourth World outings). And there is a surrealist imagination most notable in the second story of *Captain 3-D* #1, "The Menace of the Living Dolls," with its splash panel of a paper-thin one-dimensional creature being punched straight through by the Captain (even as Tigra aims a gun at him).

The book actually functioned as a compendium of many of the concepts that Kirby was developing in the 1950s (and which he would refine in subsequent eras), and it was unusual in actually building the 3-D ethos into the actual plotting—but perhaps the most significant thing to be said about the book is actually an expression of regret that this was Jack Kirby's single 3-D outing. For what other illustrator's style so lends itself to the medium? On the other hand, it might be said that the Captain (who, incidentally, had not the slightest development whatsoever as a character in the book—he was 3-D in appearance only) may have leapt out of panels—and the 'Book of D', which is the story device used throughout—but, strictly speaking, those red-and-green glasses are rather unnecessary, such was the customary dynamism of Jack Kirby's art that he hardly needed this artificial aid to knock the reader back in his chair.

THE CAPTAIN RETURNS

Many a fan of the shoot-ing star that was *Captain 3-D* looked in vain for the second issue of the book, which was advertised in his premier appearance (he was, we were told, to tackle "Solitaire, King of the Crazy Playing Cards"). But fans waited in vain. However, a truly cherishable item appeared from Bill Black in his useful *Golden Age Men of Mystery* series, when he devoted issue #15 to Simon & Kirby. As well as discussing such fondly remembered strips as *Fighting American* and *Bullseye*, the issue boasted a forensic analysis of the fleeting phenomenon that was *Captain 3-D*. But the real value of the issue—and the plus factor that makes the acquisition of this book such a must for Jack Kirby aficionados—is the full-color reproduction of the cover (by Kirby, and probably inked by Joe Simon) of the unpublished issue #2, with the Captain pulling through the air a small boat to which his juvenile sidekick Danny clings (as costumed heavies shoot at them). And if that isn't tempting enough, there is a 2-D

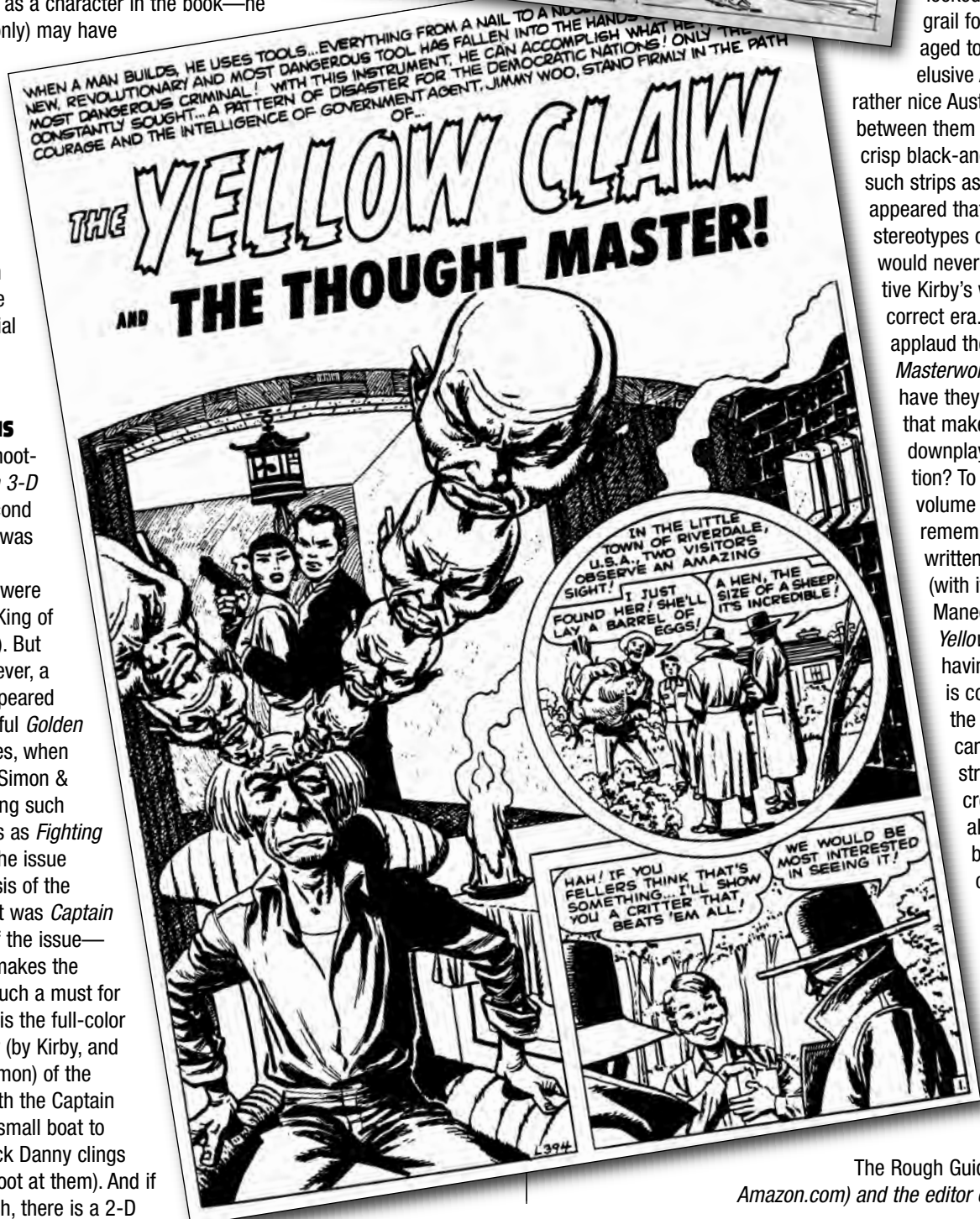
representation of the "Living Dolls" story, lovingly restored in black-&-white, which gives a far more accurate picture of the original artwork than the muddy reproductions of the 3-D

comic itself (although, of course, in the final analysis there is no substituting for the charm of the original 3-D book itself). And that isn't the end of the temptations the book offers—it also reproduces, partially inked, the one remaining Captain 3-D story, the cover piece, involving gangsters and a gambler. It has none of the surrealistic invention of the Kirby stories in the first book, and the King's art is not to be seen—but Mort Meskin's dynamic, balletic work more than makes up for it.

HOW TO REPRINT THE YELLOW CLAW

This column has discussed before Jack Kirby's work on the brief run of the Atlas/Marvel oriental super-villain of the 1950s, the Fu Manchu knockoff, *The Yellow Claw*, and this other short-lived Kirby outing (shared, of course, with other artists from the Marvel stable of the day) looked set to be something of a holy grail for the Kirby collector. I had managed to pick up a couple of copies of the elusive American book as well as two rather nice Australian comics (*All Star*), which between them carry the entire Kirby run—in crisp black-and-white—along with reprints of such strips as *Jann of the Jungle*. But it appeared that the dated yellow peril racial stereotypes of the strip would ensure that it would never be reprinted, however imaginative Kirby's work was, in today's politically correct era. Not so! One really had to applaud the ingenuity of the *Marvel Masterworks* reissues in this case. How have they done it? With a canny device that makes Kirby's work available, but downplays the tricky elements; the solution? To reprint in one beautiful hardback volume the complete runs of two fondly remembered Marvel titles, both largely written by Stan Lee: *The Black Knight* (with its beautifully rendered Joe Maneely artwork) and—yes—*The Yellow Claw*, numbers one to four! By having the latter as a back-up strip, it is contextualized in such a way that the colorful and fast-moving SF strip can now be seen as one of the most striking pieces from Jack's most creative period. The splash panels alone are worth the price of the book—in fact, if you are not a fan of Lee and Maneely's *Black Knight* (but then what true comics fan wouldn't be?), it would still be worth buying the book for its Kirby goodies. The 21st Century is proving a great time for handsome reissues of the greatest illustrator in the history of comics. ★

Barry Forshaw is the author of *The Rough Guide to Crime Fiction* (available from Amazon.com) and the editor of *Crime Time*. He lives in London.



THE LOST FF WRAP-UP

(below) Jean Depelley helped *TJKC*'s editor track down Frederic Manzano, the publisher of this French silkscreened edition of the FF Marvelmania poster, who in turn provided the original scan to Marvel Comics to use as the cover of *Fantastic Four: The Lost Adventure*. Here's the art, created from color guides by Mike Zeck.

by Richard A. Scott

(It's to your BENefit that you find a copy of Fantastic Four: The Lost Adventure (April 2008). That has FF #108 reprinted (in which much of the story was incorporated as a flashback), John Morrow's amended Jack Kirby Collector #9 article (reconstructing Jack's pencils and the border notes that existed) and the reconstructed story as originally intended with additional art by Ron Frenz and Joe Sinnott. See TJKC #53 for the original Kirby pencils from the unused story. By the time this article sees print, I will have posted my detailed notes, indicating placement and arrangement of the two stories as it was unusable as an article here, on my website: <http://home.wavecable.com/~richardscott/>)

On February 13, 2008, a rather interesting tome came out. 64 pages in length, *Fantastic Four: The Lost Adventure* hit the stands. I had waited a year-and-a-half with bated breath for this issue to come out—it was new Kirby, after all.

The cover for *FF: TLA* is the Marvelmania poster that was released in the late 1960s through Marvelmania International fan club. The cover art is from a re-colored version done for a French lithograph in the 1990s. It's the original 1960s art that was penciled and, in a rare occurrence, inked by Jack, making this absolutely pure Kirby Magic.

For the interior of *Fantastic Four* #108, the original pencils (meant for *FF* #102 but then shelved) were by Jack Kirby, with

Joe Sinnott inks. John Romita (Marvel's art director at the time) reworked faces in some of the original panels for issue #108. The published version of *FF* #108 included numerous pages of John Buscema pencils with Joe Sinnott inks, possibly working over John Romita layouts. The art for *FF: TLA* features additional Ron Frenz pencils and Joe Sinnott inks.

From John Morrow's examination, it appears there were ten non-existent or missing panels in the original story. This is partially due to the fact that the art was cut up and scattered during reproduction. Four of these panels are existent now, due to the discovery of page 9 (recently discovered, and presented in *TJKC* #53). 23 Kirby panels are not utilized in *FF* #108 (this total is estimated due to still missing art).

There are 20 panels of art in *FF* #108 that are Buscema and/or Romita. There were also 3 additional pages of bridging art (Buscema) for the then-running story in *FF* #108.

Ron Frenz and Joe Sinnott had 8 panels included of the 18 that they produced for *FF: TLA*; it's quite the comparison. I really enjoy Mr. Frenz's work—however, when you have the choice between him and Kirby, I'll take Kirby. (No offense, Ron.)

All in all, this was a sweet little package; the *FF* #108 reprint was colored to closely match the original. (Yes, I did check with an original copy of *FF* #108.) The lettering also looks like it was copied or statted off the original artwork for "*The Menace of the Mega-Man*." It is noticeable if you study the panels of the two stories. On page 3 of "*The Menace of the Mega-Man*," you can see part of the flashback balloon (from *FF* #108) encroaching into the word balloon on the first panel of the second tier. The balloons tend to hold similar shape between the two stories as well. Add the fact it's on slick paper with superior reproduction, as well as with a card stock cover, and you have what amounts to a low-end *Marvel Masterworks* collection.

I would be neglectful here if I didn't mention that the original story could have been intended for *FF* #102. Seeing as how this was the period where Jack had left Marvel to go to DC, this is entirely probable. However proving it is an entirely different matter. As it was, the story got delayed for several months (due to uncertainty as to what to do with it) and was put out the same month as DC's *New Gods* #1 hit the stands. Coincidence? Probably not; Marvel would want to make more money with what little they had left of Jack's work; some Kirby was better than none at all.





These are my notes of the overall differences for "The Menace of the Mega-Man" only. Full detailed [and somewhat confusing] notes taking **FF: TLA** into account will be posted on my website.



FF: TLA Page 1: Original pencils, new Sinnott inks. [This page as pencils was published in *TJKC* #41]



Page 2: Original pencils, new Sinnott inks. Panels 1-5 not utilized in *FF* #108. Cropped panel 6 was used in #108, page 1, panel 2. Changes in dialogue.

Page 3: Original Art from *FF* #108. Changes in dialogue, especially this caption which helps make sense of all the original confusion:

NOTE: if any of this makes SENSE to you, don't WORRY about it. Only mixed-up MARVEL would attempt to show FLASHBACK scenes from a story we've never printed before!

—Sincere Stan.

And now you know.



Page 4: Original Art from *FF* #108. Changes in dialogue.

Page 5: Original Art from *FF* #108. Dialogue intact.



Page 6: Original Art from *FF* #108. Dialogue intact.

Page 7: Original Art from *FF* #108. Dialogue intact.



Page 8: Two out of six panels from original page 9 are used here. Panels 4, 5 and 7 are new Frenz/Sinnott panels; of these, 4 and 5 appear to be based off of page 9's art. Panels 6 is Kirby and Sinnott. Changes in dialogue.



Page 9: Four panels from the original page 9; possibly the page was intended not to be used. The large blue X's in panels 3-4 indicate as such. None of these panels were used in either story. Was page 8 of *FF* #108 used in its stead? Margin notes on both pages support this finding. Kirby pencils, Sinnott inks on panels 1 and 5 are as was. However, much of this page was heavily reworked; the four panels on page 9 might have been used here. Three panels (2-4) of Frenz and Sinnott artwork are utilized.



Page 10: Panels 1-3 are new Frenz pencils, new Sinnott inks. Kirby panels 4-6. Original Kirby panel 3 is moved to panel 4. Changes in dialogue [panels 5-6 were published in *TJKC* #2].

Page 11: Original unused Kirby pencils, new Sinnott inks. Panel 7 re-inked; the original showed Romita influence. Changes in dialogue. [This page of inks and the original pencils were published in *TJKC* #47]

Page 12: Original Kirby panels 1-3. Re-inked by Sinnott. Original Kirby pencils 4-6, new Sinnott inks. This was to be a split page according to the layout art 12-13. Changes in dialogue.

Page 13: Original Kirby pencils, Original Sinnott inks. This page is re-lettered, and there are dialogue changes reflected. Midvale is now Kansas.

Page 14: Original Kirby pencils full page, panels 1-4 Sinnott re-inked. Previously unused panels 5-6 with new Sinnott inks. Changes in dialogue. (Panel 6 is cropped panel 2 of split page 12 in #108. Note the sliver of wall next to Janus on left.) [The pencils for panels 1-4 were published in *TJKC* #47]

Page 15: Original Kirby pencils whole page, panels 1-2 original Sinnott inks. Panels 3-7 new Sinnott inks. (Panels 1 and 2 are panel 1/2 of split page 13 in *FF* #108.) Original dialogue in panels 1-5. Changes in

dialogue for panels 6 and 7.

Page 16: Original Kirby pencils. Panels 1-7 original Sinnott inks? These seven panels were spread across three pages in *FF* #108.

Page 17: Original Kirby panels, 1-7 original Sinnott inks (redone Frenz panels 2-5 not utilized). Panels from this page are split between two pages.

Page 18: Original Kirby panels, new Sinnott inks. Only panel 1 here was originally used, the rest of them were unutilized Kirby pencils.

Page 19: Original Kirby panels, new Sinnott inks. Panels 1-4 were unutilized Kirby pencils. Panel 5 is original Frenz pencils and Sinnott inks.



The new version of this "lost" story was as difficult to re-assemble as the published version of *FF* #108! Here's a page of unused Ron Frenz/Joe Sinnott artwork for *FF:TLA*, and below are some of Stan's script and notes (not sure if it's for this page) from an early stage of the new story's development.

Panel 1.
GOOD JANUS: No one—except the man BEHIND you!

Panel 2.
REED: This is IT, Janus!
REED: The FINAL ACT!
EVIL JANUS: WHA—??

FF #108 Page 17 Panel 2
REED: No one, Janus?
EVIL JANUS: WHA—??

Panel 7.
(Please omit the second "Mine" in Good Janus's balloon)

FF #108 page 18 Buscema Not part of Kirby story
*Kirby panels 2-7 not utilized
FF: TLA page 18 Panel 1 Re-inked, panels 1-7 new inks

Panel 1.
GOOD JANUS: It's time to END this-forever!
EVIL JANUS: That's IT, brother! Just ONE shot and the world will be OURS!

FF #108 Page 17 Panel 6
GOOD JANUS: And I must MAKE it NOW!
EVIL JANUS: That's IT!
SHOOT him! HURRY
Brother—SHOOT him!





(above) Ron Frenz pencils from *FF:TLA*.
 (right) John Buscema pencils from *Fantastic Four* #108.
 Characters TM & ©2010 Marvel Characters, Inc.

HOW IT WAS DONE

The work involved with this examination was maddening. I had to reference and cross-reference both stories. I had to keep my notes straight, as I could easily confuse and befuddle myself while compiling this article. *Fantastic Four* #108 was confusing enough. However when you throw together that story, the newly crafted story, and John Morrow's updated notes from *FF: TLA*—well, that's a recipe for disaster! I also took into account John Morrow's recent find of the original page 9 (on February 28, 2008—just two weeks after *FF: TLA* was published, no less) and the ten new unused panels (from a total of 18) that Ron Frenz and Joe Sinnott crafted. I had to photocopy all the pages and arrange them in order to be able to keep things from getting confused. Then Mr. Frenz sent me copies of his 18 panels of pencils along with a copy of Stan Lee's script for "*The Menace of the Mega-Men!*" (Thanks very much, Ron!) Now I have everything save for copies of the original *FF* #108 pencils by John Buscema [a few of which I have copies of, and present here - John Morrow], some of the Kirby pencils, and copies of Joe Sinnott's original inks (of Buscema as well as Kirby) for both versions of Kirby's story. If anyone is willing to share copies of those pencils and/or inks for inclusion at a later date, I'd say I have compiled most everything I could get my hands upon.

If you spot anything off in my work, please keep in mind what I had to do to accomplish this. A lot of work went into this examination. No-Prizes will not be handed out for inconsistencies—so please don't ask!

STAN LEE

Phone interview conducted April 10, 2008.

www.powentertainment.com

RAS: Did it feel strange to revisit that (*FF* #108) story after 37 years?
 STAN LEE: No, it didn't feel strange; it's kind of fun. I like revisiting the old issues.

RAS: You just scripted it after all the art was in?

LEE: Yes, it was done that way. So my involvement with the others was minimal.

RAS: Page #4 *FF: TLA* Caption at the bottom of the page: "Lack of action!?"

LEE: That was a gag. Note the "Sarcastic Stan."



RAS: Duly noted. Did you know about the 18 panels of *FF: TLA* art that Ron Frenz and Joe Sinnott did for the book?

LEE: Yes, I did know about the additional panels. Ron did an excellent job of mimicking Jack's style. Joe's inks were perfect as ever. And I can't say enough good things about Jack and his work.

RAS: Did you know about the page of art that was unearthed two weeks after the issue came out? [It was] numbered page 9. It has Johnny, Crystal and Ben in the hospital room. Very similar to the printed art. The other panels fill in the missing sequence where Reed and Sue are meeting at the good Janus house; Reed's the one that planted the camera, not Sue, as shown in *FF: TLA*.

LEE: No, I did not know about it. [Stan was provided a copy following this interview.]

RAS: DSL, Digital Subscriber Line and a mini-camera are mentioned in the book. The techno-babble doesn't hold up like it used to.

LEE: I have no ideal as to what I would have used back then as descriptions. I would have made it up.

RAS: The *Last Fantastic Four Story* (Oct. 2007): Is that truly your last *FF*? Like *Thor* #385 (by you, Erik Larsen, and Vince Colletta)? If so, does *FF: TLA* qualify as a "new" adventure, therefore not being your last?

LEE: I don't plan to make [*The Last Fantastic Four Story*] the last one, no. It was intended as a possible line of books that one of the editors suggested. They wanted to do a line of them: *Last Spider-Man Story*, *Last Thor Story*, *Last Avengers Story*. So no, I don't intend it to be my last.

JOE SINNOTT

Inker Supreme, and the best Fantastic Four inker, period.

Also present was his son Mark [who has been invaluable to this examination] at this in-person interview, conducted Sept 22, 2007.

www.joesinnott.com



RAS: What about your work on John Buscema for *FF* #108?

JOE SINNOTT: I didn't like the way that John [Buscema] did the Thing. The stones were always too square, too angular. I didn't like the way he did the [Thing's] brow, things like that. John [Buscema] wanted to ink himself and he could do a tremendous job or he could do a lousy job. He didn't like anyone inking him.

RAS: What about Jack on this particular issue?

JOE SINNOTT: Jack seemed like he was disgusted with that book.

Stan's notes for these unused Ron Frenz/Joe Sinnott panels:

(We can't use the first three panels because they're the same as the first three panels of page seven! Therefore, let's replace all three with two panels as follows—)

Panel 1.

(We see a truly scary image of Janus on a screen, snarling and threatening)

JANUS: The so-called GREAT Fantastic Four!

JANUS: BAH! You're yesterday's news!

JANUS: You're over-the-hill HAS BEENS!

Panel 2.

(Another similar shot-different angle)

JANUS: Janus is your MASTER!

JANUS: I could defeat you ONE BY ONE—

JANUS: Or ALL at once!

Panel 3.

(Let panel three be below the first two panels and have it go right across the page.)

(We see Reed, Sue and Johnny, reacting to Janus' image which is now unseen out of

The panel. As always, of course omit Crystal)

BALLOON: (From Janus, off panel) and so I WILL—

BALLOON: (From Janus, off panel) after I've ENSLAVED the human race!

THING: The nutcase MEANS it!

REED: What's worse—he has the power to DO it!

REED: Sue and I must leave—right NOW!

Panel 4. (We'll keep this artwork, but make it look as if the Thing is reading the comic pages instead of the news.)



MARK SINNOTT: He was leaving Marvel at the time.

RAS: I know that he felt like he wasn't appreciated at the time.

JOE SINNOTT: And you can see it in his work.

MARK SINNOTT: It wasn't Kirby. He just rushed through it. He couldn't care less.

RAS: It's interesting that they are bringing up that story decades later.

JOE SINNOTT: Karl Kesel sent me blueline output for the pages.

RAS: This must have been a blast to work on.

JOE SINNOTT: No, it was really confusing. It actually took me 3-4 months to get started on it. Molly Lazar said, "Joe, there is no rush on this. Take your time on it."

MARK SINNOTT: Some of these inks are brand new.

JOE SINNOTT: Anything not marked with a question mark was re-inked. [Referring to the pencils that John Morrow showed in FF: TLA]*

*I conferred by e-mail, my suspicions with Mark and Joe and was informed that I was correct on every count as noted here in this article.

RON FRENZ

A great penciler and major Kirby enthusiast.

Phone interview conducted April 12, 2008.

www.catskillcomics.com/frenz.htm

RAS: So just what was your involvement as the Kirby fill-in artist for the 18 [only 8 of which were used] panels on FF: TLA?

RON FRENZ: I had originally heard about the project through Catskill Comics and Joe Sinnott. Joe and myself had worked together on *The Mighty Thor*, where we gained a great admiration for each other. I often have been noted as the go-to guy on emulating particular artists [Ditko and Kirby]. I try to maintain the original intent of the artist's style that I'm trying to emulate. I myself am a huge Kirby fan. I had hoped that I would be the [pencil] artist to do the Kirby fill-ins. I would have been horribly disappointed if I wasn't the one selected. We very much stuck closely to [Kirby's] liner notes.

RAS: So that is to say that you do heavy research on the particular artist? In this case Jack Kirby?

FRENZ: Most definitely. I try to invoke the feeling of Kirby's work [Not copy, as



many seem to think—RAS]. I don't really feel that anybody gets it truly correct, as they go for particular "Elements" of his style. Not quite nailing what made Jack "Kirby," myself included.

RAS: Tom Brevoort seemed to really care about this project, as did Molly Lazar, even though this isn't the best example of Jack's work. There really seems to be a deep level of love by everyone involved in recreating this work.

FRENZ: Tom Brevoort has had a lot to do with my involvement. I would have to agree with the level of love and care that this project has been given, from Stan, Joe, Tom, Molly and myself. We all paid very close attention to the history of the story and did our utmost to maintain consistency. We also tried very hard in recreating the feel of the '70s.

RAS: I have noted earlier in my article that Joe Sinnott was taking his time [with permission] with inking. I had also heard about some delays which pushed back the project.

FRENZ: After Joe re-inked the original story pages, he injured his shoulder. That caused him to not be able to work on the panels that I did. It was delays like that and Stan not being able to script it in a timely fashion [due to the problems involved]. It eventually caused it to

More notes from Stan for this unused Frenz/Sinnott art:

Panel 1.

(This should be a wide panel, going right across the page. Very similar to panel 3 of page 18 of the original story—Evil Janus dramatically fading away into nothingness. We see balloons from Reed and Sue and Good Janus—or, we can even see them, if possible—whichever looks more dramatic)

SUE: He's FADING AWAY—into NOTHINGNESS!

REED: Yes, into the nothingness from which he CAME!

SUE: Wha-what do you MEAN?

REED: He never REALLY existed!

Panel 2.

REED: He was created by the MEGA-POWER which my friend Janus discovered!

SUE: You mean—?

Panel 3.

GOOD JANUS: It's true. My greatest discovery turned me into—

GOOD JANUS: The ULTIMATE SCHIZOPHRENIC!

REED: Like the legend of JEKYLL AND HYDE come to life.





JOHN ROMITA

Romita at the time of FF #108 was Marvel's newly appointed art director and fresh off a four-month run of *Fantastic Four* (#103-106, Oct. 1970 - Jan. 1971). Phone interview conducted March 5, 2008 • www.romitamam.com

RAS: Mr. Romita, you supposedly did layouts for FF #108. [As noted by Joe Sinnott]

JOHN ROMITA: Yes. I did layouts and corrections on faces, for the John Buscema penciled portions of the story. I was moving into doing house art as the newly appointed art director for Marvel during that period (1970).

(left) Published Ron Frenz pencils from *FF:TLA*.

(below) More John Buscema pencils from *Fantastic Four* #108.

Characters TM & ©2010 Marvel Characters, Inc.

be pushed back from its original release date. That would have allowed it to come out with *The Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer* [June 15, 2007].

RAS: Any contributions that you are responsible for? FRENZ: The final panel flashback scene [page 19].

After we got the script back from Stan I noticed that they [FF] hadn't come out of the flashback sequence. The last page of the original pencils had three panels unaccounted for. I realized that they hadn't come out of flashback; I called Stan's office, and brought it to Stan's attention. That is why the final panel is there as it is.

RAS: It certainly seemed to be a nice way of bringing the story back around to where it started, in a round-robin fashion.

FRENZ: It certainly was.

TOM BREVOORT

Editor of *Fantastic Four: The Lost Adventure*.
E-mail interview conducted January 28, 2008.

RAS: I had heard there is a section that has others trying their hands at Mr. Kirby's pencils.

TOM BREVOORT: We toyed with the idea of other modern writers coming in to do their own take on the story, but everybody we approached found the assignment too limiting—there wasn't really any other story that could be told besides the one that Stan and Jack had done. And we also toyed with coloring the story from Jack's pencils in a modern style, but not having all of the pencils kind of halted this idea in its tracks.

RAS: The coloring from the reprint looks to be that of the original printing in FF #108. Am I correct with this assumption or was it re-colored?

BREVOORT: It was colored to match the original.



RAS: Your run on the book [FF] was so short.
 ROMITA: Well, coming in after Jack [Kirby] is a tough act to follow, especially on the flagship book. I just didn't feel that I could live up to it, as much as I wanted to. I highly admired Jack's work, but I was more than a little nervous about taking over on it. When the opportunity came with John Buscema to take over, I left the book.

RAS: This was while you were still working on Spider-Man?

ROMITA: Oh most definitely. [Spider-Man issues #89-92, Oct. 1970 - Jan. 1971. Gil Kane assisted with pencils on those issues.] I was doing double duty. Triple, if you count being the art director.

KARL KESEL

Another great FF inker.
 Phone Interview conducted April 17, 2008.

RAS: I wanted to talk about your involvement in FF: TLA.

KARL KESEL: Well, it was more of a technical assist to the project more than anything. Tom Brevoort knew this project was coming together. He got hold of me and asked me if I could take the Kirby pencils and blue-line* them for him to send to Joe Sinnott.

[*Blue-line: Taking the pencils into Photoshop and converting them into non-photo blue and then printing them on Bristol board.]

RAS: You have also had other recent involvement with Jack's work with Jack Kirby's Galactic Bounty Hunters.

KESEL: Yes, that came about due to Lisa Kirby and the Genesis West crew [Richard French, Michael Thibodeaux, and Steve Robertson, www.genesiswest.com]. It's been lots of fun, with a second series on the way.

JOHN MORROW

Ye esteemed publisher.

MORROW: This project started when Marvel's Tom Brevoort asked me to update my article about the story (which ran back in TJKC #9) for FF Masterworks Vol. 10. The issue was to have featured two versions

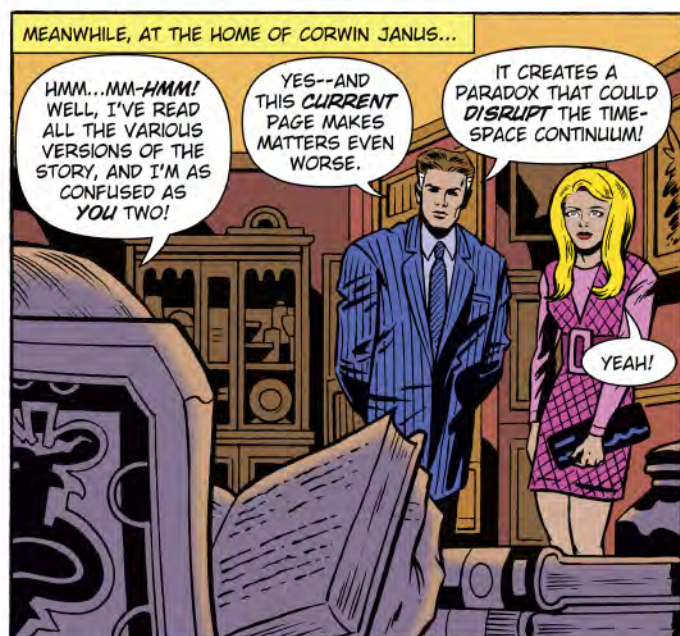
of the story: One modern, with inks by Danny Miki and Richard Isanove (this didn't happen), and one classic (as was presented). ★

(I'd like to thank the following people for their help in making this examination possible. Jack Kirby, Ron Frenz, John and Sal Buscema, Joe and Mark Sinnott as well as the rest of the Sinnott clan, Stan Lee, John

Romita, John Morrow, Karl Kesel, Andy Mangels, The Academy, Kat and Linda Wollfe, Scott and Deb of Catskill Comics, and my parents Mr. and Mrs. Walter L. Scott. If I missed you, my apologies.)

And now, we'll leave the last word on the "Janus" story to Bruce McCorkindale, who used the newly discovered Kirby pencil page 9 from FF #108 (see last issue) to create what we think pretty well sums up the whole shebang:

A FINAL CONCLUSION TO "THE JANUS SAGA"!



JACK KIRBY MUSEUM

Newsletter

TJKC Edition Spring 2010

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

Board of Trustees
Randolph Hoppe
rhoppe@kirbymuseum.org

Lisa Kirby
lkirby@kirbymuseum.org

John Morrow
twomorrow@aol.com

All characters TM ©2010 respective owners.

www.kirbymuseum.org

Only the best dressed comics fans support the Kirby Museum!

Jack Kirby's 1969 *Julius Caesar* costume designs, by Rand Hoppe

While I've continued the Kirby Museum's efforts at Comic-Con International: San Diego and the HOWL! festival at NYC's Tompkins Square Park, I'd really like to report on activity regarding the costume designs Jack Kirby created for a May 1969 production of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* at Cowell College of the University of California at Santa Cruz.



Having just set up at fellow Trustee John Morrow's TwoMorrrows booth at San Diego, I checked my e-mail account with my cellphone. What I found was a message from one Stephen Drewes, who came across the costume designs on the web. He told me he was in the play, and had a picture of himself in his Kirby designed Sophist costume. After some e-mail back and forth, brought about by both of us travelling, I finally spoke with Stephen, who told me he had a copy of *Markings*, the Cowell College yearbook which featured a spread of photos from the production, the handbill, and the program. Oh yeah, the photo he had of himself in the costume was one of two color photos; the other photo was of the actress who played Caesar's wife, Calpurnia, with a maid.

To briefly backtrack, I was so happy to have received that e-mail from Stephen while at the San Diego Convention, I mentioned it to Steve Robertson, friend of the Kirbys (and a Museum member of long standing!). I also expressed regret that I haven't seen all of the designs. There were clearly some characters missing from the scans I'd made a few years ago. Steve replied that he'd seen them all, and made color photocopies of them. Well, as I was waiting for Stephen Drewes' package to arrive, I contacted Steve and asked if he could find the color photocopies he'd mentioned. He found them, sent them, and they're now up on the site.

I also have to thank Jim Vadeboncoeur for the pleasant correspondence regarding the clippings from *Peninsula Living*, a Santa Cruz-area Sunday magazine supplement that featured an article about the designs in its May 3, 1969 issue. These were featured in *TJKC* #19 (and *Collected Jack Kirby Collector*, Volume 4).

To see everything we've got, including Kirby's original designs for the above costumes, visit kirbymuseum.org/caesar.



(top) Detail from *Markings*. (left) Stephen Drewes as Artemidorus: A Sophist of Cnidos. (below) Bert Richardson as Calpurnia: Wife of Caesar, and Kathy Martin as Maid.



New Members

Richard Massie, Enzo Marcello Crescenzi, Mitchell Schauer, Frank Svengsouk, Michael Vazquez, Al Johnstone, Serge Ouziel, Nicholas Williams, Dan Shea, Tom Kelly, Marty Erhart, Peter Buxton

Renewals

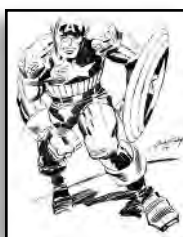
Ralph Rivard, Anatasios Lazaridis, Matt Webb, Casey Bruce, Mark Miller, Trevor Craft, Tom Kraft, Scott Rowland, Ron Lopes, Peter Kruse, Jeff Hollick, Philip Miller, Melvin Shelton, Tom Brevoort, Peter Cluck, Christopher Harder, Richard Pineros

Kirby Pencil Art Archives

Log on to see numerous examples of Kirby pencil pages and be sure to join the Museum to get access to even more exclusive, members-only art!

**Please add \$10 for memberships outside the US, to cover additional postage costs. Posters come "as-is" and may not be in mint condition.*

Annual Membership
with one of these posters: \$40*



Captain America—23" x 29"
1941 Captain America—14" x 23"



Strange Tales—23" x 29"
Super Powers—17" x 22" color



Annual Membership
with one of these posters: \$50*



Marvel—14" x 23"



Galactic Head—18" x 20" color



Incan Visitation—24" x 18" color

(right) Just who did draw that close-up face of Thor on the cover of issue #158? We've heard Marie Severin, Vince Colletta, and even Tom Palmer. Anybody out there know for sure?

Characters TM & ©2010 Marvel Characters, Inc.

Questions raised by Glen Gold and Tom Scioli

Now that we've totally befuddled Kirby fandom about the "lost" *Fantastic Four* #108 story, it's time to move on to examine Jack's other main title of the 1960s, *Thor*. In *TJKC* #52, we addressed the mystery surrounding *Thor* #168-170, and reassembled it into its presumed original form.

Think that's the only *Thor* epic that was a patchwork job? Think again!

Our *Thor* reconstruction brought us a lot of mail, but none more interesting than an exchange with original art collector and author Glen Gold about an earlier hatchet job. "Richard Howell [has] said, as if everyone knew this already, that *Thor* #159 was in fact assembled from one or more unpublished "Tales of Asgard" stories," Gold told us. "I said, 'but the art is small.' He said that the art in the *Inhumans* back-up stories was small, too. Ooooh. Interesting." Glen is perplexed about the need for a fill-in issue around then—the obvious cause would've been the Kirbys' move from New York to California, but that didn't occur until 1969. Gold reasons, "The cover date is November 1968, which means he would have been drawing [#158] in May/June 1968... I always figured they were shopping for houses around *FF* #87-89 [cover-dated June-August 1969], when the *FF* move into the Mole Man's house."

We must admit, before this, we never considered there was any kind of mystery surrounding *Thor* #158-159, similar to #168-170. But after more consultation with Glen, we think it bears further scrutiny. "The more I look at them the more I think something similar was going on," said Gold. "There's a really strange feeling of recycled and rearranged pages with weird transitions.

"Alas, I have no answers, only questions, about the incredible weirdness that is *Thor* #158-159. This would be Thor's origin, reconsidered. And from the very first page, it's a bizarre mess. I suspect it was Frankensteined from multiple sources, possibly rewritten at the last moment.

"Oh wait, *before* the first page," Glen chimed, as he raised these valid questions to us about:



THOR #158

- "The cover [above right]. There are three little Kirby/Colletta Thor vignettes that were drawn, I think, for this cover. They certainly don't appear anywhere in the previous dozen issues. When else did Kirby do vignettes for a cover? Also: who the heck drew that big Thor head? And why? Isn't this the first non-Kirby Thor on a *Thor* cover? Like, *ever*?"
- "On the title page [left], it says 'Pandemoniously produced by Stan and Jack.' Why Pandemonious? Because of some disaster during its creation? Or because of the quote on page 18? And what's going on with the head of Thor's hammer poking out of the bottom of the frame in the splash? That's never happened before. Why didn't Romita catch this?"

Was *Thor* #159 assembled from unused "Tales of Asgard" stories, left over when the "Inhumans" back-ups started in *Thor* #146? And were those "Inhumans" back-ups in issues #146-152 originally meant to be the first two issues of a solo *Inhumans* series?

- "What's weird about the beginning? Only that for the first time since *Thor* #142, there's no attempt at continuity. (Really—every one of the previous 16 issues depends on you having purchased the prior one to figure out what's going on.) They just averted Ragnarok, for crying out loud! Shouldn't someone mention that? But no, this could have occurred any time. Almost as if it's a fill-in."
- "Where would the missing pencil panel [below] fit? Page 4? Why didn't Kirby finish this page?"



- "Thirteen pages of this is a reprint, which never happened in another Silver Age book by Marvel. If Jack needed to revisit an origin, he redrew it, as in *FF* #2, 3, 11, *Cap* #63, 100, 109, etc. Why the reprint here? Did he run out of time because he was also working on *FF Annual* #6?"

THOR #159

- "On page 2, Blake mentions Mangog (oh, finally!), suggesting to me that the continuity here was originally different. Why skip an entire issue before mentioning him?"
- "What the *heck* is going on with the page 3 splash? [right] Thor, with his face turned away? Has Kirby ever drawn something so awkward, especially something that became a blacklight poster? And Don Blake dreams himself into Asgard? Huh? Has that ever happened before?"
- "On page 5 [next page, top], there's Loki. Why?"
- "Why exactly does Odin wake Blake up only to show him visions? That interaction

seems pasted together from disparate elements.”

- “The 5-page story of Thor’s arrogance ends not with Odin punishing him for his transgressions, but... uh... say, how does that end, anyway?”



- “On page 13 there’s another flashback about Thor’s arrogance that... well, not exactly. It seems to be about a tavern brawl that isn’t really Thor’s vault. And it ends with zero transition to Odin punishing him. For reasons unexplained, Odin meets him on a mountaintop instead.”

Glen also questioned why there are no page numbers in the *Essentials* reprints. “If the *Essentials* were shot from original stats, it’s possible

someone added page numbers as the issue was going to press in the 1960s.”

His only hunch to explain any of these questions is that perhaps Jack was way stressed by *FF Annual* #6—or the debut of *Silver Surfer* #1 while he was drawing this threw him for a loop—and maybe he and Stan disagreed about what the origin of Thor was going to be. “Maybe it was just going to be one issue at first. Maybe the two flashbacks in *Thor* #159 were from Kirby’s stock of set pieces.”

Certainly a lot of mead for thought there, fellow Asgardians. But just as perplexing is this unused *Thor* pencil page [right], which got scrutinized by *Godland* artist Tom Scioli:

“It’s a picture of Thor and Ego the Living Planet, in his human guise, fighting alongside each other in Asgard. I don’t remember any issue of *Thor* that even hinted at such a thing. It looks like it’s part of a whole issue where Thor and Ego fight alongside each other. Where would this story fit? Is there an entire story



CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

that’s never surfaced that takes place after the Ego/Galactus fight? Thor leaves Ego pretty abruptly after that two-issue story, which makes me think that maybe there was a whole issue that got thrown out.

“It also looks to me like maybe it’s part of another Asgard civil war, so it might fit in with Jack’s Surtur story. Maybe Jack intended to have the Recorder and Ego involved in that story? It’s possible that Jack meant to have Ego show up for the Mangog story, which would fit with Recorder’s presence, but that seems like it would be too early. He needed to first establish Ego as an ally of Thor, as he did in the Galactus vs. Ego story, before he and Thor can start having adventures together. Since the Surtur story is in many ways a retread of the Mangog story, maybe having Ego involved was Jack’s way of adding some more novelty to it?”

One thing’s for sure: These puzzles sure add a lot of novelty to the study of Lee & Kirby’s Marvel work. Stay tuned; there’s plenty more *Thor* to explore. ★



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



PLAY IT AGAIN, JACK

Our retrospective box-set on the Lee/Kirby team stretched to a second issue, and there is just as fast-growing a canon of Kirby-influenced and comic-centric music so it seemed right to give the last column's survey a closely-matched companion. The musicians covered here are colliding visions like Lee & Kirby did, and collaborating with the King across space-time in a call-and-response of imagery and sensation that expands his creations to more of the dimensions he meant you to meet them in.

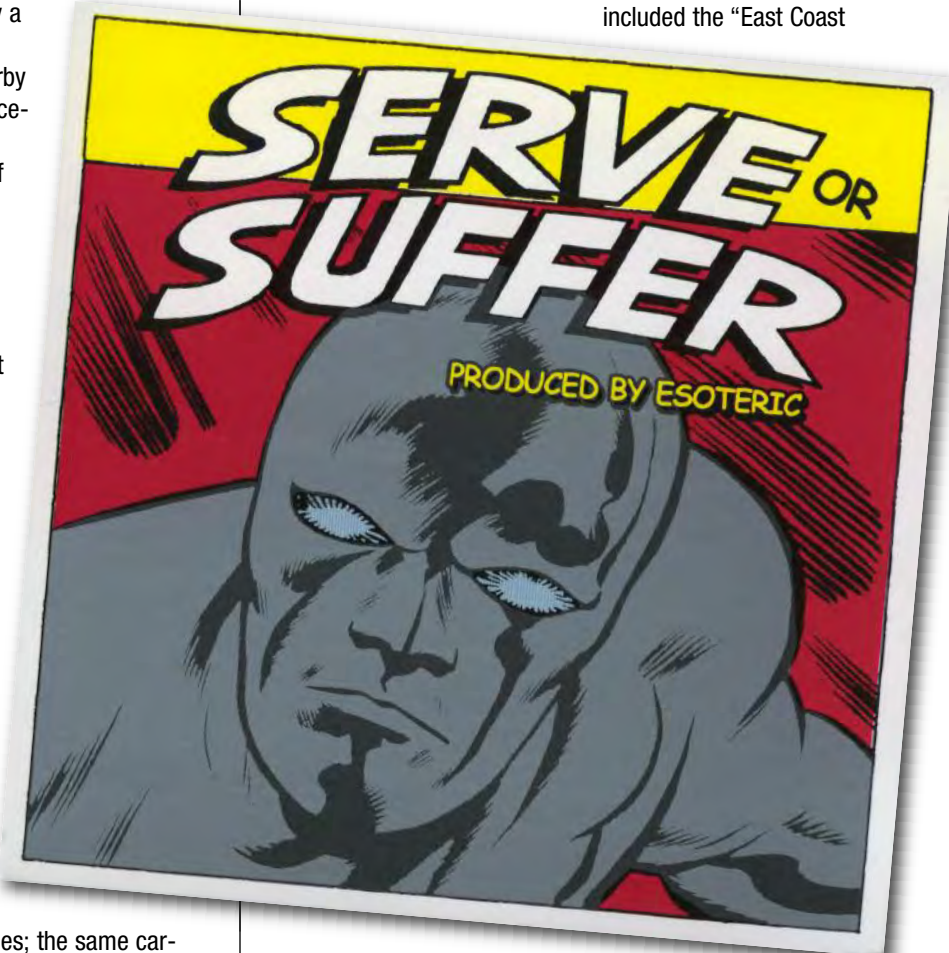
Straight Outta Cosmic

"Inspired by and dedicated to the genius of Jack Kirby," New England rapper Esoteric's first all-instrumental disk *Serve or Suffer* neatly rearranges the '60s *Silver Surfer* logo into an aphorism for Kirby's cosmic morality play. "Instrumental" doesn't do it justice; these are dense yet lean grooves rich in sonic samples and pulp references, like a comic page with just the sound effects and pictures, telling its own essential story like Kirby could before you even looked at the words.

Fans of the King will enjoy the magisterial "Shalla Ball" and the spirit-lifting "Steve Rodgers," the latter of which works a much-needed hip-hop beat makeover behind the old Captain America cartoon theme song. The whole collection is an audio pop-art collage of well-woven soundclips from those kitsch-classic '60s Marvel cartoons, which were often shot directly from Kirby's pages; the same cartoons were infamous for barely moving more than the pages themselves, so there's rich humor in hearing them reprocessed for this most kinetic of albums. A moving quote-sample from Kirby himself about how the characters he brings to life in this world "have already lived" endorses Esoteric's method of creative re-scoring and opens a great thundering background anthem of spiritual persistence, "Galactus Trilogy." And there's sheer non-genre joy in the sonic

reprint-pile of found sounds and revealed grooves in tracks like "Silence Is Golden," "Hero's Plight" and "Go Ask Malice."

Esoteric's like a one-man compilation of all my formative obsessions, with raps, remixes, and activism about everything from comics and Japanese monsters to Gary Numan and animal rights. The generous cross-section I got from his geek-friendly publicist included the "East Coast



(right) Chrome Plated Man: Esoteric pours on the galactic bling. ©2010 respective owner.

(below) Kind of Blue Beetle: the Nickel & Brass Septet jazz for Kirby. ©2010 respective owner.

(next page, top left) Ghost in the record machine: On the front cover of their CD, *The Gear* keep watch. ©2010 Mike Allred.

(next page, top right) Jam Comic: On *The Gear*'s back cover Atom Bomb, Mikey Hahn, Michael Allred, Connor Bond, Mr. Gum, Madman and the real-life Allred sons share space. ©2010 Mike Allred.

(next page, bottom) Courtesy of scanner Eric Nolen-Weathington, this unidentified Kirby concept has been dubbed "The Future of Country Music." ©2010 Jack Kirby Estate.



(Thanks to Rand Hoppe for cuing the turntable.)

Avengers" album *Prison Planet* (featuring the much-banned "Kill Bill O'Reilly"); *Esoteric vs. Japan: Pterodactyl Takes Tokyo*, with Gigantor and Mecha-Godzilla shooting it out in the audio arcade of kaiju heaven; and the turbulent soul-baring tour de force *Saving Seamus Ryan* (Esoteric's non-codename), all from within about a year (along with *Serve or Suffer*) and all showing acrobatic production and the clever, credible white rap that's more rare than *Whiz Comics* #1. Hear one disk and you may find yourself wanting to collect the whole stack. [www.esoterichiphop.com]

Gotham After Hours

The Kirby references are literal on *Four-Color Heroes!*, the debut disk from the improvisational jazz ensemble Nickel & Brass Septet, led by Andrew Boscardin. There's "The Miracle of Thaddeus Brown," "Grimm's Waltz" and "The King of Yancy Street" for the first three tracks (with homages to many another supercreator from Siegel & Shuster to Steve Gerber filling out the rest), though these titles represent a kinship as much as a companion-piece. Instrumental music will always by its nature be an abstract impression of its inspirations, though it's satisfying to listen to these tunes in their own right and fun to complete the circuit of imagination with the Septet's intent in ways which may be as varied as there are listeners and Kirby creations.

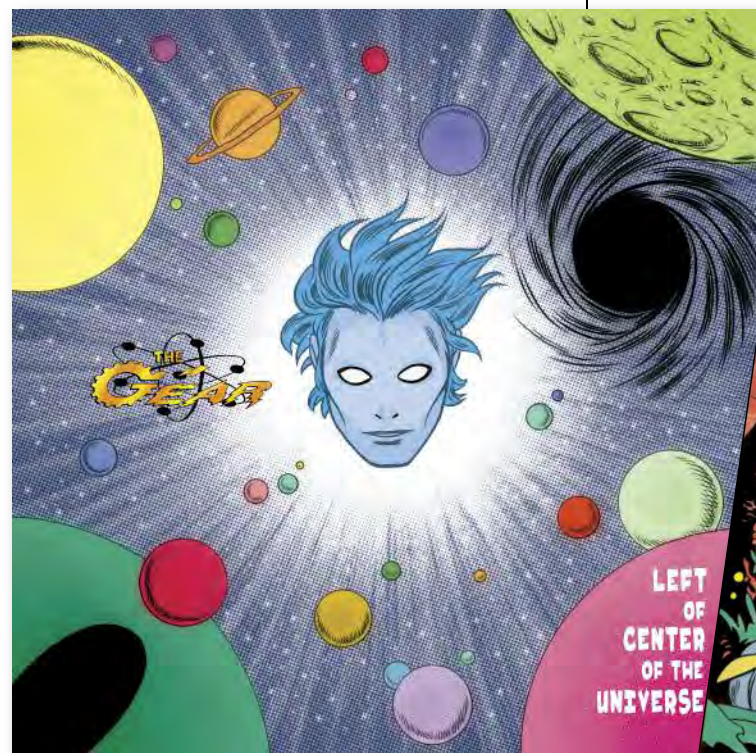
"Thaddeus Brown" breathes a certain smooth midcentury self-assurance as befits an extreme-stunt icon, and "Grimm's Waltz" casts Aunt Petunia's favorite boy as a kind of half-ton orange Pal

Joey in its bittersweet shuffle, while “King of Yancy Street” is like a melancholy pan through the streets Ben Grimm (and Kirby) left behind. Of the others, “Kane and Finger” conjures the cosmopolitanism and mystery of their creation’s two identities; atmospheric and rich

Like its ephemeral but heartfelt sources, *Four-Color Heroes!* is an immensely entertaining and pleasant pastime with as many layers as you care to find. [www.boscology.com]

Night,” *Left of Center* splices and layers sonic sensations in merciless experiments that start to make addictive sense well before the classic three-and-a-half-minute mark. It’s irresistible pop melody filtered through fractured high-tech psychedelia, with the sound warped like an old vinyl record left too close to Alpha Centauri and Bowie-esque croons and

rants competing with a multitracked chorus of the inside-out voices in the band’s heads. Folky strumming, car-horn electronica, hyper-heavenly choirs, gauzy ambience, punk sturm-und-drang and some stray signals of Anglo reggaeton and western Middle Eastern melisma clash, drift past each other and come through in currents that suggest ancient soundwaves just getting here from a distant galaxy, or maybe a belated hundred-volume



in personality, “Will’s Ghost” does for movies-on-record what Eisner’s art did for movies-on-paper; and “Professor Kubert” bristles with Joe’s confidence and his art’s rough edges. “Mr. Ditko” signals a nimble elegance and a whiff of opacity, a kind of astral politeness, that fits its admired, enigmatic subject; “One for Steve G.” is a somber yet supple requiem that saddens and satisfies with Gerber’s own clear-eyed witness of the way things are; and “Joe and Jerry S.” sketches the undiluted optimism and irreducible contribution of two very complicated lives.

Clone of the Cool

There’s scarcely any direct Kirby content in most of Michael Allred’s comics work, and even less on his band The Gear’s newest album *Left of Center of the Universe*, but this disk is sure to induce what it must feel like inside one of those fifth-dimensional photocollages of Kirby’s ‘60s/’70s heyday. Beamed in from some planet where “Tomorrow Never Knows” charted higher than “A Hard Day’s

response to that Chuck Berry disk we sent up on the space-probe. Allred’s offworld clone rocker Red Rocket 7 and his family make a musical appearance, as does the spirit of Syd Barrett and doppelgangers for star-surfing visionaries from the mists of medieval history to the towers beyond time. You need this album. A work of shattered majesty. [www.aapop.com]★



FISH OUTTA WATER

(top) Here's Prince Namor, the Avenging Son, drawn in pencil by Jack, inside one of the King's own books.

(below) The original cover (left) for the first *FF Annual* was probably rejected because it put Sub-Mariner and his warriors too far into the background. The published version (right) is certainly more dynamic.

(next page, top) Atlantis attacks! Subby and his loyal followers trap the FF on this dramatic page from the first *Annual*.

(next page, bottom) Mighty Marvel reprinted *FF Annual* #1 in the summer of 1970. Jack's first successor for the book's art chores, John Romita Sr., did a stupendous new cover for that issue.

Characters TM & ©2010 Marvel Characters, Inc.



RAISING ATLANTIS

When the lower depths arose, by Robert Knuist

A FICTIONAL REENACTMENT FOLLOWS:

Jack Kirby entered the Marvel offices at 655 Madison Avenue bright and early on the last day in February of 1963. His spiral sketchbook was under his arm and Flo Steinberg and Sol Brodsky smiled warmly at him when he came in.

They didn't begin their usual small talk with Kirby because they knew his meeting with Stan Lee would be taking up the early part of Stan's busy morning. There had been a few rumors about a very special project around the Bullpen, so there was no surprise when Jack angled his way toward Stan's office, only to see ol' Smiley step out when he heard Jack's name being mentioned.



STAN: Great! Jack's here. C'mon in, buddy. You're right on time.

JACK: Stan, how are you doing? Mind if I light up? (Kirby produces a cigar.)

STAN: Naahh, go ahead. Like I said in January, I'd like to push for an *FF Annual*, or special issue this summer. Martin's behind it. It's going to be the Sub-Mariner's show all the way, as we discussed.

JACK: Good. We can do it. I've been kicking around some ideas for that guy Namor. Let's make Atlantis,



and the Atlanteans, like a support system, and supporting characters in this story. It'll add some depth to it, I think.

STAN: Well, we'll have to flesh out Subby's kingdom. We can't have him fight the FF for thirty-five pages or more. We'll start with an establishment of the undersea situation and end it....

JACK: ...after the battle? You want to end with the kingdom setting, too?

STAN: Maybe. We'll come up with some new reason to have Namor and his warriors confront our team, and have a couple of battles to add to the suspense—in water and on land—and end it with... I'm not sure yet!

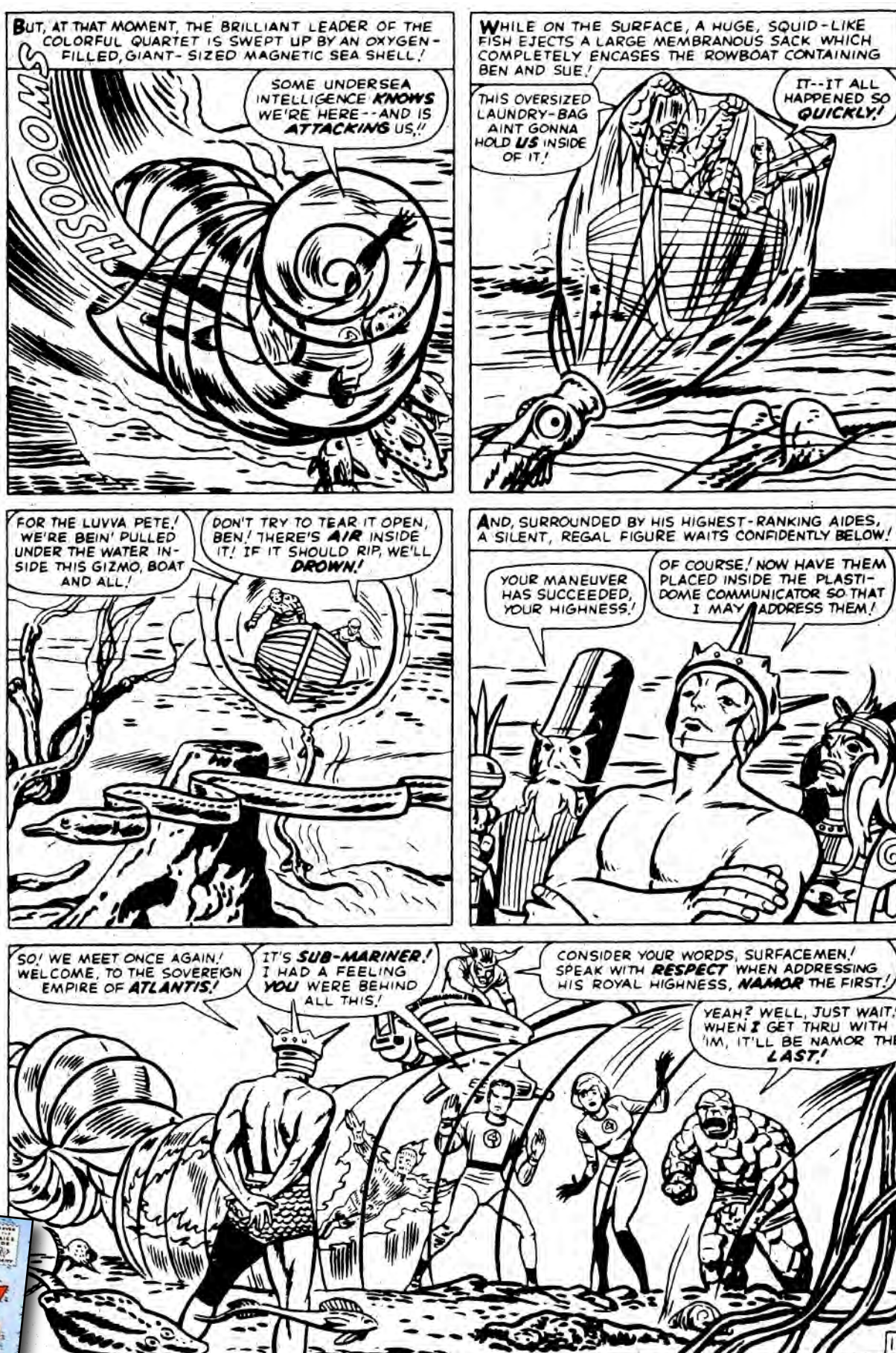
JACK: Let's keep that love triangle thing you started, hovering over Reed, Sue, and Namor—that might give us some kind of ending.

STAN: That's good, Jackson! Sound thinking, as always! *(laughter)* We need to—in addition to the main action—keep some of the stuff the readers are used to: The Yancy Street Gang, some playful fighting between Ben and Johnny....

JACK: Of course. This is the FF's first special issue. Readers will expect some of the same things that they enjoy in the regular issues. And I love the Yancy Street Gang, too! *(laughter)* Okay, let's see what we have so far. Namor declares war on New York—I mean, the world *(laughs)* and... Bill Everett used to do that, remember?

(At this point, Jack opens his sketchbook and quickly brings a few suggestions they've made to penciled life.) I'll start off with Atlantis and his planning session with his commanders; we'll go to the Baxter Building for some of the familiar stuff with Reed and the others.

STAN: And somewhere in all of this, while you're drawing, we'll probably have a recap of Subby's origin. I think this is important because



he's an old character, and this story should explain some of his beginnings in there. Atlantis needs to be explained, also. I think I'll keep that part of it, the way Bill did it in the '40s. It doesn't need changing. Neither does Namor's origin. What do you think?

JACK: Yeah, I agree. It'll take up some of that long page count. From what you told me last week, we're getting new readers all the time. And they should know these things about our characters—and they'll know all about Atlantis when this book is done! *(laughter)*

STAN: Yeah, in fact—they might not want to see Sub-Mariner for years to come after this epic! *(more laughter)* We'll put some short special features in the back and those great pin-ups of yours to fill out the issue.

JACK: Sounds good. *(Jack keeps scribbling; he holds up a drawing of the regal sea lord arriving among his subjects. The drawing has the kind of "pomp and circumstance" Lee loves. And the editor-writer nods happily when he's presented with it.)*

STAN: That's a great starting point, Jack! Thanks, Bill Everett—wherever you are! *(more laughter)*





Bill Everett (left) certainly made Jack and Stan's work a little easier when the planning was being done for *Fantastic Four Annual* #1.

Prince Namor, by the '60s, was part of the early legion of legendary crime fighters that made up the world of Axis-beaters in the 1940s. Namor's contemporaries had been used to sell war bonds and other merchandise, some had gone on to star in movie serials, and many more had disappeared by the decade's end. But Sub-Mariner had a special status all to himself—he had been the first and the most memorable of the aquatic heroes. Because of that, he was ripe for revamping for a more modern age.

"Comics legend" has it that Stan wanted to bring back and redo some of Timely Comics' bigger hero successes. Kirby, always looking to the future, wanted to people their "new New York" with brand-new characters. (The King even did a rough sketch for a new outfit for Captain America.) Over time, both men got what they wanted. Jack got to see and create gods, man-monsters, aliens, mutants, androids, synthozoids, stimuloids, (!) etc., and the Man got to take Ka-Zar, Cap and Bucky, the Human Torch, the Red Skull, and Namor, the Avenging Son into a new era. And they did a lot more together and apart in the '60s besides all that!

In reconstructing Atlantis to suit his and Stan's needs and for the FF's audience, Jack was in his element (no pun intended). His artwork showcased his free rein in incorporating fins, kelp, seashells into armor, weapons, and architecture in undreamed-of ways!

Also, it's highly likely that the King conceived of 'Homo Mermanus' and their history (pages 15-18 in the *Annual*). Jack used the hunter/gatherer parallels to primitive man in an exciting fashion along with their unique adaptations to deep sea living. It was the kind of thing he obviously loved doing, weaving rich back-grounds and backdrops for his legion of characters.

To be fair, the sub-sea kingdom under Everett was beautifully done, as well—but here, Jack was obviously pointing out to Marvel's fans that they were in for multi-layered, imaginative storytelling instead of the run-of-the-mill stuff that had

been done before in super-hero comics.

It was the type of trademark Marvel would make solely theirs in the 1960s—exploding years later with the discovery of the Inhumans and their Great Refuge, the Negative Zone and their fear-some villains, the Kree and their Sentries, and of course Thor and Asgard. This was a kind of beginning for Jack—weaving a tapestry within a tapestry.

To Lee's credit, he approved of Jack's concepts, and enriched them with emotion, suspenseful captions, and magnificent dialogue, never forgetting that a good romantic triangle and the nearness of death (in Sue's case at the story's end) as well as a great sense of humor in good times and bad were as compelling components to solid plotting as high concepts and invention.

The legendary Atlantis, which was supposed to be a highly developed and beautiful continent, supposedly sank beneath the waves during an early cataclysm that predated antiquity. As the stuff of legend, scientific research, and ancient fantasy, it's perfect for comic creators.

Had Jack been assigned to regular co-plotting and art for *Tales to Astonish* when the Sub-Mariner began his stint in the title, it's easy conjecture that Atlantis and its blue-skinned citizens might have been spotlighted in a "Tales of Atlantis" back-up along the lines of the Thunder God's homeland feature.

As it was—whether it was outer space, sub-space (!), on dry land, or under water, Lee and Kirby proved that all of creation could fit into their creation. ★



Attuma, as rendered in pencil by Jack in the fabulous Valentine's Day sketchbook he created for his wife Roz in the mid-1970s.

Attuma TM & ©2010 Marvel Characters, Inc.

TRANSFORMERS



(above) Man into monster—actor Henry Hull became the *Werewolf of London* (1935) in this make-up breakdown.

(bottom left) Bonus! Can you name the issue this Kirby transformation is from?

Going through changes with Kirby and Lee's characters, by Dwight Boyd

I was in that last wave of baby boomers, being born in 1960. Our generation got some of its earliest thrills with the fondly remembered *Shock Theater* television package that was winding its way around the nation.

In my native North Carolina, a local station from the city of Durham sent out such scare fare as *I Was A Teenage Werewolf*, *From Hell It Came*, *Earth vs. The Spider*, and other “shock treatments” from the 1950s (luckily, the show was on Saturday afternoons and we were able to sleep later at nights).

Monsters were fascinating creations to young audiences, and the special effects employed to change a man or woman into a horrible creature were sometimes the most spellbinding parts of the film.

Stan and Jack must have known this. Some of their Atlas monsters were once... human... and the success of drive-in movie demons and television terrors seeped into the Code-approved comics of the time.

Mr. Lee told a reporter for L.A.'s *Peninsula People* (in their July 2008 edition), “I based the Hulk [on the 1931 movie] *Frankenstein*. I always thought the monster was a good guy, and the people chasing him around the hills with torches were idiots.”

Kirby came to a comics store in my area in early 1993 (my brother Jerry transcribed this chat in *Kirby Collector* #38). After the videotaping was done, Mr. and Mrs. Kirby milled about for

a while and took pictures with some of the fans and answered a few more questions.

I took the opportunity to ask the King about those astounding transformations (often drawn in three cinematic-type panels) he often came up with and what was the inspiration.

“Oh, those! Ha-ha!” (I remembered him laughing).

“Were those sequences somewhat... inspired by old monster movies?” I asked.

“Yes, somewhat,” Jack responded. “Y’know, I often worked late in those days... with the *Late, Late Show* to keep me going. Sometimes, they’d have these science-fiction or horror films.... weird changes happening to people!”

We both laughed this time.

“I couldn’t draw a dozen... or twenty panels to show those heroes and villains becoming something different, y’know, but three panels were often good enough.”

I hung on every word of this since it took me two hours to get up the nerve to even ask this great man a question.

Though I read Harvey Comics, and Harvey Comics only, as a small child, when I finally started paying attention to my brother’s Marvel mags, the old movie thrills/chills linked to the physical transformations that Jack brought to Mr. Hyde, the Hulk, the Thing, and others were magical niceties that brought a big smile to my face.

Looking over a “magnificent seven” (a movie that also came out in ’60!), we can examine in this article:

(top) Dr. Calvin Zabo wards off the Cobra’s threat to become Mr. Hyde in *Journey Into Mystery* #105 (June 1964). In a following panel, the Cobra will want to talk things over. Wouldn’t you?

(above) Jack had plenty of occasions to show Banner turning into the Hulk. The glasses would fall, the shirt and shoes would rip, but the pants would just widen! This is Kirby and Ditko magic from *Hulk* #2 (July 1962).



Werewolf of London ©1935 Universal Pictures. All others this article TM & ©2010 Marvel Characters, Inc.





(above) When will those scientists learn? Dr. Duval's flashback from *Journey Into Mystery* #107 (Aug. 1964) depicts (in 6 panels) how the Grey Gargoyle came into being.

(below) The Absorbing Man's switches were

toward the Magician on this *Astonish* #56 cover (June 1964), but he instead shows the growth process, making the entire effort that much more stunning!

(bottom right) Top of the line—this dramatic sequence from *Fantastic Four* #41 (August 1965),

instantaneous. This is a personal favorite of mine—his becoming the “Living Mace” in *JIM* #122 (Nov. '65). The King really got to go all-out visually with this shape-shifting baddie.

(bottom left)

From *JIM* #84 (Sept. 1962) comes this pairing of panels recounting Blake's becoming Mighty Thor. The larger god contrasted with the smaller doctor is impressive even at this early stage.

(right) Kirby could've been content to just have Giant-Man lumber



with Ben Grimm transforming into the Thing, had no equal in '65—or since!

Over at the other comic companies, mild-mannered reporters, socialite playboys, test pilots, scientists, and others just changed into their costumes. With Kirby and Lee's characters, the “mundane” was left to the competition. When their characters went through “changes,” it was an event. ★



What would a Lee & Kirby issue be without the *Fantastic Four* being heavily represented? You won't find out here, as we proudly present a batch of Jack's penciling wizardry from *FF* issues #89-91, complete with Kirby's margin notes.

Characters TM & ©2010 Marvel Characters, Inc.



Fantastic Four
#89, page 10.

Characters TM & ©2010 Marvel Characters, Inc.

I WILL RULE -- MY YEARS UNDERGROUND WILL END

MY FIRST JOB WILL BE TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR KIND -- THE DO-GOOERS --

TORCH MELTS STAFF WHICH
MOLEY IS FORCED TO DROP

AS IT LEAVES HIS HANDS,
STAFF'S POWER BLOWS--AND
ROCKS 1--BACK

NO! YOU CAN'T STOP ME NOW! YOU CAN'T BEAT ME AGAIN!

I'VE WAITED SO LONG... I'VE PLANNED SO WELL! I...

MY STAFF! YOU... YOU'RE MELTING IT!

STOP! THE FORCES IT CONTAINS... IF THEY'RE EXPOSED TO FLAME...

THEY'LL IGNITE! THEY MUSTN'T EXPLODE... THEY MUSTN'T...!

BOOM!

THE PLAN MOLEY RAN INTO THE ARMS OF THE TORCH

YOU'VE... RUINED ME!

YOU'VE RUINED... THE PLAN!

FORGET IT, MAN...!

ONLY MY SUB-TERRANEANS CAN SAVE ME NOW!

NOBODY... NOTHING'S GONNA SAVE YOU NOW!

THERE'S TOO MUCH YOU HAVE TO ANSWER FOR!

STAY WHERE YOU ARE!

YOU'RE FINISHED SCURRYING AROUND LIKE A TWO-LEGGED RAT!

NO! NO! YOU'VE NO RIGHT TO BE SO ANGRY!

ALL I WANTED... WAS JUSTICE! JUSTICE FOR MYSELF... AND MY LOYAL LEGIONS!

IT WAS MANKIND WHO DROVE ME BENEATH THE SURFACE... MANKIND WHO FEARED ME... WHO MADE ME AN OUTCAST!

I JUST WANTED TO WALK ON THE SURFACE AGAIN... TO SEE THE DAWN COME UP... TO FEEL THE WARMTH OF THE SUN...!

YOU CAN'T... CONDEMN ME... FOR THAT!

TORCH THROWS FIREBALL--
MOLEY YELLS IN FRIGHT

ALL I WANTED WAS TO LIVE
BENEATH SUN ONCE MORE--
TOO SEE THE DAWN COME
UP

REED BREATHES-- HE MOVES--
HE MOANS

BEN STOPS--
HANGS HEAD--HIS
JOB IS DONE

SUE AND
REED UNITE



**BUT, NO SOONER HAS ONE
DANGER PASSED, WHEN...**



**WHILE THE SKRULL STAR-
SHIPS REMAIN IN PARKING
ORBIT, THE SLAYER'S PER-
SONAL CRAFT SILENTLY
LANDS UPON TARGET EARTH...**



AND THEN...



**NEXT I CLAIM
THIS
SLAVE!**

MEANWHILE SKRULL
HAS LEFT SHIPS IN
PARKING ORBIT
AND ZOOMS IN ON
EARTH

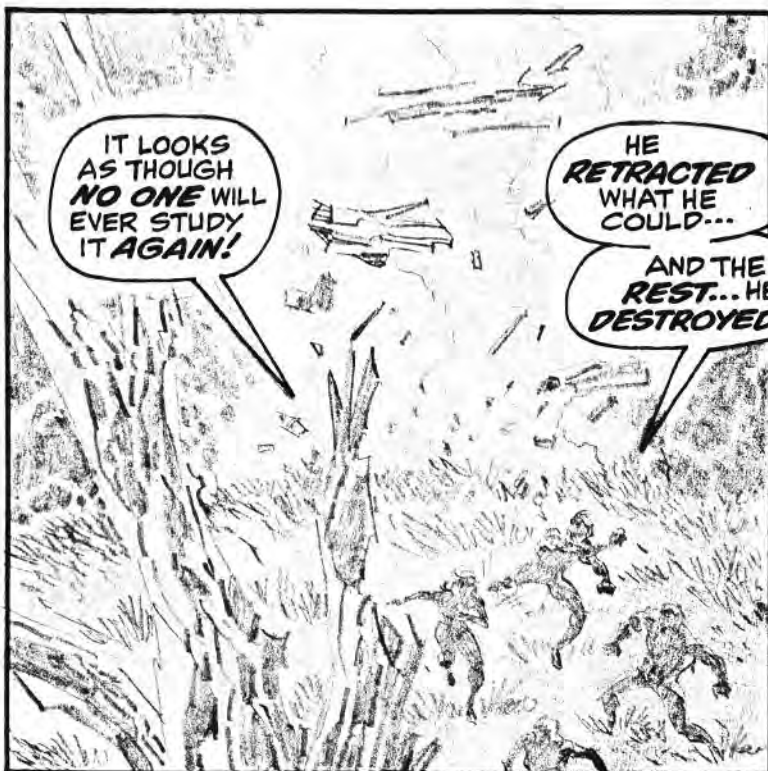
LIKE GUIDED
MISSILE-- SAUCER
LANDS--

EVIL PORTENT FOR BEN
GRIMM EMERGES

MACHINES IN WALLS CRACKLE ENERGY-- HOUSE TILTS DOWN-- REED TELLS-- IT'S THE MOLE-MAN-- HE'S PULLING HOUSE DOWN



JUST RARELY SQUEEZED OUT AS HOUSE SINKS BELOW GROUND



THEN THE FINAL BLAST-- AND ONLY FIERY MARE REMAINS--

WE'LL FIND A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE-- ONE WE CAN ENJOY--

REED HAD A BAND-AID ON HIS FOREHEAD WHEN I LEFT HIM--

BUT I DO HAVE THIS WEAPON-- SEE HOW IT GROWS--

YOU DIDN'T HAVE A SCRATCH



DO I
A
THING
DO
YOU--
OUR
NERVES
ARE
DEAD-
ENED



NOW TO DELIVER YOU TO THE SLAVE PLANET--AND YOUR NEW MASTERS

SKRULL NOW CALLS SHIP ORBITING EARTH-- "HAVE CAPTURED QUARRY!"

LEAVING TO LEAVE EARTH-- NEXT-- THE SLAVE PLANET

HOW DO YOU FEEL SLAVE -- YOU'LL GET USED TO
YOUR NEW STATUS IN TIME -- YOUR NOT ON EARTH NOW



AMAZING -- THIS METAL CAN
HOLD FAST TO A BATTLE
CRUISER

ISNT YOUR HEAR SPOT
IS YOUR TERROR --

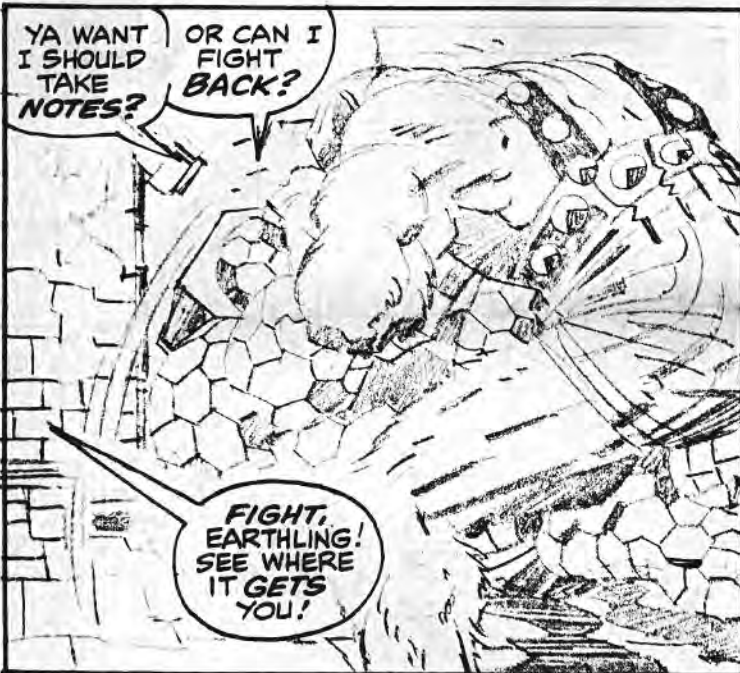
JUNGLE-MAN HAS FEROCIOUS STRENGTH -- NOT EQUAL OF THE
 HIS REFLEXES ARE SHARPER AND HE CAN DO DAMAGE



TAXTOR IS A
 FIGHTING SLAVE
 FROM A JUNGLE
 PLANET...

HE IS ALL MUSCLE,
 SEE?...AND LITTLE
 BRAIN!

NOTHING CAN
 HURT HIM!
 NOTHING CAN
 STOP HIM!



YA WANT
 I SHOULD
 TAKE
 NOTES?

OR CAN I
 FIGHT
 BACK?

FIGHT,
 EARTHLING!
 SEE WHERE
 IT GETS
 YOU!



YEAH! I'LL JUST
 DO THAT LITTLE
 THING...!



IT AIN'T NO GOOD!
 THIS CRUMMY COLLAR
 THEY GOT ON ME IS
 SAPPIN' MY STRENGTH!

I SHOULD'A
 FLATTENED
 THAT CREEP
 WHEN I NAILED
 'IM!

NOW HE'S
 GRABBIN'
 MY PAW WITH
 HIS BLASTED
 TAIL...



...AND AIN'T
 NOTHIN' I CAN
 DO ABOUT IT!

1307 JUNGLE-MAN GRABS HIS
 TAIL

AND FLINGS LEN

7 COWARDLY
 ON HIS BACK

THE MYSTERY OF MARVEL

(this spread) A couple of original paste-ups for Marvel house ads, from *Fantastic Four* #33 (Dec. 1964). Both these ads ran in that same Dec.-dated issue, and both ads show covers for Nov. and Dec. cover-dated comics.

(right) *Marvel Collectors' Item Classics* #3 (June 1966) contained May and June ads. *MCIC* was many fans' first opportunity to read the classic stories reprinted therein.

by Keith Srutowski

Which Marvel Comics character appeared first, Spider-Man or the Mighty Thor? Most people with an interest in comics would probably tell you they both appeared during the same month in issues cover dated August 1962. But I think that answer is incorrect. Why do I say this? Well...

I'm a stickler for details—especially when the details relate to a subject for which I have a great deal of love and respect. In fact I recently starting compiling a chronological listing of all super-hero comics produced by Marvel in the Silver Age. I initially did this for my own information and amusement (and let's face it, only a real comics enthusiast would consider list-making to be an amusement!) but the final product I am producing would make a nice book someday, the gods and Joe Quesada willing.

While compiling this information, however, I couldn't help but notice something odd about the way these comics were cover dated.

Why would an old issue of

Fantastic Four, dated August, run a one-page ad for other Marvel publications, some of which were dated August and some of which were dated July? And why would the checklist in that issue run the same July and August mix of titles? It was mind boggling! (Although, I admit, my mind has always been quite susceptible to boggling.)

The more I researched this the more I saw the same pattern. I now believe that Marvel used two different cover dates for books that were published in the same month. When I came upon this realization I was filled with an incredible sense of excitement and discovery like I haven't felt since I first learned the proper way to pronounce "Sub-Mariner."

I'm not sure why Marvel would engage in such a cover dating practice but the evidence is there that this was the case. Let's go back to that old issue of *Fantastic Four*, in this case *Fantastic Four* #41, dated August 1965. That issue contained an ad for *Spider-Man* #27, *Tales to Astonish* #70 (both also dated August), *Journey into Mystery* #118, and *X-Men* #12 (both dated July). The checklist in that comic references these same issues. This is typical of the editorial content in all Marvels from that time. The same titles appear over and over with a cover date one month earlier than other titles. I consider the later date to be the "true" date as it is the date used on *FF*, the company's flagship title at the time, as well as *Spider-Man*, *Strange Tales*, *Tales of Suspense*, and *Tales to Astonish*. *Journey into Mystery* (later *Thor*), *Avengers*, *X-Men*, *Daredevil*, and *Sgt. Fury* all used the earlier date (as did, I believe, the original six-issue run of the *Hulk*, although this is less easy to prove due to the lack of house ads and checklists at that time). The expansion titles (*Captain America*, *Hulk*, *Iron Man*, *Sub-Mariner*, *Dr. Strange*, *S.H.I.E.L.D.*, *Captain Marvel*, and *Silver Surfer*) all used the later date, as did Marvel's reprint titles.

You say ads and checklists are not enough to prove my theory? Well, hang on there, true believer! There is other evidence as well. August 1963 was the month that featured the cover blurb "The Marvel Comics Group ushers in the Marvel



COVER DATES

Age of Comics!” At least that was the date on the covers of *FF* #17, *Strange Tales* #111, *Tales of Suspense* #44, and *Tales to Astonish* #46. *Journey into Mystery* did its ushering on the cover of #94, dated July. The August issue of *Journey into Mystery* did not mention the Marvel Age on the cover, which leads me to believe it did not come out the same month as those aforementioned issues. December 1964 and January 1965 saw the regular monthly super-hero titles feature a pin-up in each issue, although *Journey into Mystery* had its pin-ups in the issues cover-dated November and December 1964. Once again, I don’t think *Journey into Mystery* got a head start on the other titles, it was just using an earlier cover date. And then there is *Dr. Strange* #178, dated March 1969. That issue guest-starred the Black Knight and was the first part of a story that was continued in *Avengers* #61... dated February 1969. I would hope that Marvel wouldn’t publish Part Two of a story a month before printing Part One. (*Hulk* #113, dated March 1969, contains an ad for both of these issues. See how it all comes together?!)

But perhaps the most telling evidence is that eventually all the titles did match up their cover dates. (And they all used the later date, another reason I consider that to be the “true” date.) This happened in November 1971. Marvel was able to match up the dates by skipping a month for the existing titles that had been using the earlier date. There never was an October 1971 issue of *Thor*, *Avengers*, or *Daredevil* even though all these titles were being published monthly at that time. *Thor* #192, *Avengers* #92, and *Daredevil* #80 were all dated September. *Thor* #193, *Avengers* #93, and *Daredevil* #81, all published the following month, were dated November. (*X-Men* had already been cancelled and then restarted as a reprint title by this point. And *Sgt. Fury*’s publishing history is a bit more complicated with the adjustment apparently occurring during an off month of a brief bi-monthly publishing schedule.)

I think this is important information to consider when one wants to put things into their proper chronological perspective. For example, a recent article in the *Jack Kirby Collector* claimed that September 1963 was Jack Kirby’s most prolific month for published comics. It stated that this was the month that saw publication of *Fantastic Four Annual* #1, *Avengers* #1, and *X-Men* #1. While my research agrees with the September date for *FF Annual* #1, I believe that *Avengers* #1 and *X-Men* #1 actually came out the following month with other October-dated issues. This would include *Fantastic Four* #18, *Spider-Man* #5, *Strange Tales* #113, *Tales of Suspense* #46, and *Tales to Astonish* #48. It would also include *Sgt. Fury* #3 which was cover-dated September.

How significant is all this? That’s for each collector/historian to decide for themselves. (Especially since we all know the date on the cover

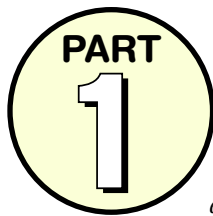
is *never* the date the comic was actually published!) But I personally find this to be a fascinating quirk that sheds new light on what events happened in relation to other events. For example, *Sgt. Fury* #1, cover-dated May 1963, was actually published the same month that *Tales to Astonish* #44 introduced the Wasp (June 1963). And, as I alluded to at the beginning of this article, *Thor*, making his first appearance in *Journey into Mystery* #83 (cover-dated August 1962), was actually introduced one month later than *Spider-Man*, who first appeared in *Amazing Fantasy* #15 (also cover-dated August).

I’m sure there are many comics fans who won’t find this information nearly as exciting as discovering the secret origin of Wolverine, but it is a part of the

history of the medium. I think it’s important that the comics community be aware of its own history and keep records of that history. It is only if we, the comics community, treat our comics with the same respect given to other art forms (movies, books, etc.) that we can expect the non-comics-reading world to start to afford this art form that same respect. But let’s not get me started on that particular soapbox right now! (Perhaps we could save it for a regular feature called Keith’s Kranky Korner. Or Keith’s Kooky Kolumn. How about Keith’s Kan’t Spell Konundrum? Blast this non-alliterative name of mine!) ★



TALKIN' ABOUT THE MOST



Marvel madmen and Marvelites talk Lee and Kirby and '60s Marvel
Compiled by Jerry Boyd

(The following comments were culled mostly by e-mail. Talking points were '60s Marvel in general, your favorite Stan and Jack material, and impressions of the team's 'magic'.)

(right) Here's Dick Ayers' favorite Lee-Kirby-Ayers effort, from *Tales to Astonish* #34.

(bottom) 'Mirthful' Marie Severin is surrounded by some of her unforgettable *Not Brand Echh* takes on the Marvel Super-Heroes in this 2001 self-portrait, which is featured on the cover of the upcoming *Alter Ego* #95, shipping this July from TwoMorrows. It even includes "Rational Comics' Gnatman" (top left).

(right) Thor battles Surtur in one of Jack and Stan's most dramatic three-parters, as shown on this Kirby-Everett masterpiece for *Thor* #176 (May 1970).

(next page, center) John Romita snuck a Kirby cameo into *Captain America* #143 (Nov. 1971), by basing police Sgt. Muldoon's likeness on Jack.

(next page, top) Herb Trimpe impressively penciled this unused *SHIELD* cover back in 1969.

(net page, bottom) Bring on the bad guys—in this case, The Ringmaster and Princess Python! Steve Rude did this commissioned portrait of the Lee-Kirby Circus of Crime members back in 1997.

Characters TM & ©2010 Marvel Characters, Inc.



DICK AYERS

The one (genre) that stands out in my memory of (Stan Lee's and) Jack Kirby's penciled stories I did would be all of the monster stories. One that jumps into my memory is "Monster at My Window."

[*Tales to Astonish* #34, Aug. 1962] Not many months ago the *New Yorker*, on its last page, [featured] a contest cartoon to have a caption sent in to win a prize. A cartoonist chose to

copy the cover Jack penciled and I inked: "Monster at My Window." A fan e-mailed me and called my attention to it. Maybe Marvel got an apology from the *New Yorker*?! I applaud the choice of the cartoonist.

STAN GOLDBERG

In 1949, when I was a very young man, I was very fortunate to get a job at Timely/Marvel Comics working in their bullpen. In two years I ran the coloring department and got to see all the art that came out of Timely. I was always a big fan of the comics. As a boy, my favorites were *Captain America*, *Young Allies*, etc.; needless to say, I loved Jack's work.

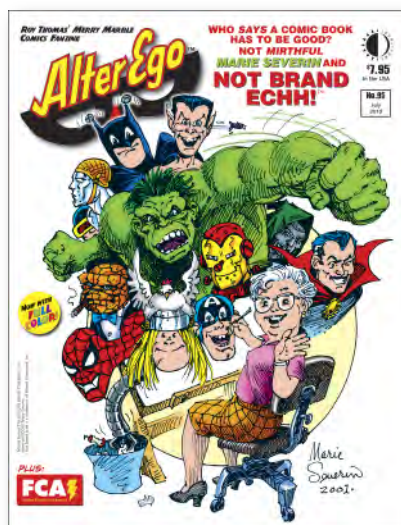
In the late '50s when I went freelance, I met the man. Many times we would meet at Marvel and a bunch of us would go out to lunch. They were fun times and Jack would entertain us with great new ideas for comic books. (Excuse me, graphic novels.) As a colorist, Jack's stories were the most fun to color. When we became friends, he was always good company.

There is not an artist in the business, who, when asked, "Who was their favorite comic book artist?"—they will always tell you it was Jack Kirby. *Long live the King*.

Jack Kirby and Stan Lee were a big part of what this industry has become.

MARIE SEVERIN

I thought they were a dynamic team. They both were very creative and very innovative. It was very fortunate for the public that they did so well because it led to a resurgence in the industry... and the art form. They worked well together. They both had big egos, but they did



fantastic work. I always thought that *Thor*, with their interpretations of mythology and the way they'd (do their) take on the old legends, was incredible. And with the *FF*, they were so innovative with the depths of plots they'd come up with and spiral into.

MICHAEL STEWART TWMORROWS CONTRIBUTOR

Looking back on *Thor* #175-177, one could say; "Odin goes to sleep, Kirby prepares to leave Marvel, and all hell breaks loose."

This 'hell' would include a 'devil' more evil and powerful than Loki, the Executioner, and Ulik combined! Surtur, the flame demon, got Lee and Kirby's 'ultimate menace' treatment and the giant sent sheets of mountain-reducing fire at the outskirts and finally to the spires of Asgard.

Mangog had been on a similar rampage (with the heat turned off) in 1968, but Jack had an affinity for myths and Surt (using the Norwegian pronunciation) was in on Ragnarok. Maybe Jack had thought of this story arc as an 'ending' of the Asgard Marvel wouldn't end in their comic reality. Jack was dreaming of the 'epilogue' (that would be printed over at DC in *New Gods* #1) that would end the lives of the immortals of antiquity and set the stage for his new age... of new gods.



Loki sat on Odin's throne but, in his cowardice, found it convenient to 'escape' to Earth when he learned Surtur was free of his Odin-forged bondage. Thor, Balder, Sif, and friends fought valiantly, only causing the gigantic fire god (the King gave the monster Goliath-like proportions for this endgame) to slow his advance. Loki had even, in his perfidy, jettisoned his stepfather into another dimension (!) to reclaim the throne. Balder went after him, courting certain death, since the space-time continuum was one only the lord of the Aesir could survive. Odin awakens from his Odin-Sleep, restores the godling's youth and strength, and dispatches Surtur back into the bowels of his planet with a

TALKED-ABOUT TEAM IN COMICDOM

mere command! Kirby and Lee do it again.

(You've got to clap after seeing an act like that!) The beaten and burned Asgardian warriors rose... but still found the strength to raise their enchanted weapons and voices in praise to All-Father Odin.

I praise Stan and Jack.

MARY WOLFMAN

The Stan Lee and Jack Kirby comics are still, to my thinking, the best super-hero comics ever done. Together, they broke the stereotype of super-hero comics, added powerful, emotional stories and strong characterization to what had been a medium for 8-12 year olds, experimented with new ideas and ways to tell stories, and introduced readers to a sense of imagination we had never been exposed to in comics before. The sheer number of new ideas and new characters bombarding readers all at once has not been equaled since and probably never will be. Individually, Stan and Jack were both incredible talents. Together they were comic book genius.



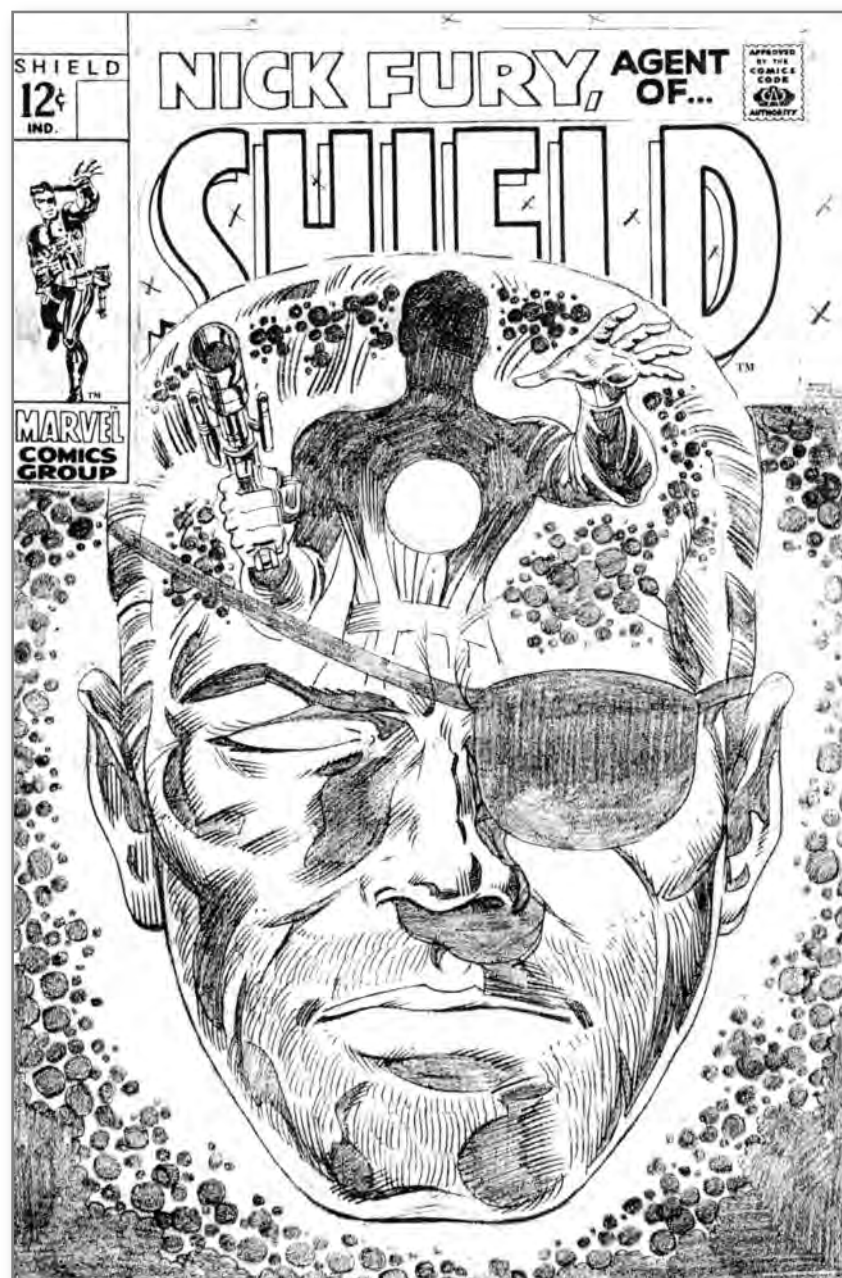
HERB TRIMPE

One of the fun things about Marvel in those beginning and middle years, when most of the Marvel characters became household names, was the option, when drawing a particular Kirby/Lee creation, to add one's own "stamp" to the character. This allowed for a tremendous amount of creative leeway, making, in my opinion, not only the job easier, but more interest generated from the fans. It was exciting to see how each artist visualized the character they were bringing to life. No Kirby/Lee creation lent itself to this in a more dramatic way than

Spider-Man. Steve Ditko, Jack himself, and John Romita presented three of the most distinct versions of the character. Kirby's Spidey, with his blockish Kirby strength, Ditko with his nimble and almost pixie-like, angular Spidey, and Romita with his smooth-as-silk style Spidey effortlessly gliding from building top to lamppost, are images that tend to stick in my mind more than any other character.

Kirby could do more with a seemingly boring six equal-panel page than any artist who ever lived. He never needed to be tricky with his layouts—straightforward, no nonsense, but pure dynamic action spilling outside the confining lines of each panel.

Ditko had a movie director's approach, breaking panels down or blowing them up to fit the situation. His sense of drama and movement were hypnotic.



There was an enchanted quality to his work.

Romita combined the elements of the two artists, while adding his own gift, beautifully executed figures, gracefully and accurately drawn, classically thought out. A brilliant draftsman and excellent story-teller, John gave the strip an authority that carried Spidey to the silver screen.

STEVE RUDE

Over many years, most of us have had the chance to distill what we feel are the best of the Stan and Jack years of the 1960s. Though it isn't hard for me to recite specific examples, as with the 5-issue *Thor* #126-130 saga with Hercules, or such 10-page epics as the Cap WWII story in *Tales of Suspense* #86, their combined succession of achievements lay easily in the hundreds. (The Iron Man story in the same *TOS* issue had an equally powerful tale.)

Perhaps more important is what attributes each of these gents brought to their tales to make them more powerful as a whole, as a unit, and why Marvel's more institutionalized and more powerful competitor at the time, National Periodicals, was unable to adjust to the times as their toehold monopoly began to loosen.

Stan brought flashy relevance and a parable underpinning of story. Jack brought pencil drawings that careened our senses while always maintaining a simple and easy to follow storytelling sense. As much as everyone today claims to revere his art, these two simple factors in Kirby's art seem all but lost to current comic artists.

To me, the legacy of Stan Lee and Jack Kirby will always be the paragon of [the] 1960s.



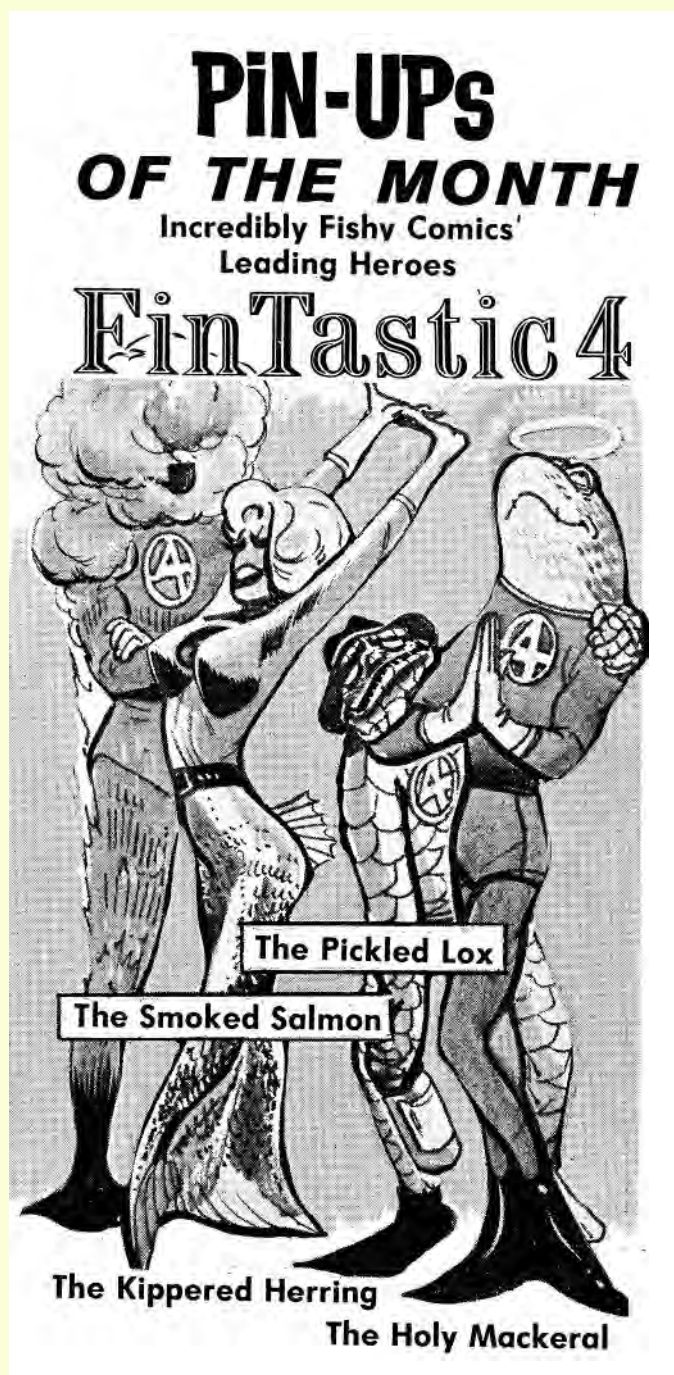
Fantastic Four 4FUN Page

Comments and compilation by Jerry Boyd

You can bet that back in the sixties, the House of Ideas' various competitors were watching their collective blood pressures rise along with the fortunes of Lee and Kirby. Aside from the team's stunningly successful meshes of characterization, inventiveness, action, and the King's ever-improving artwork, the Fantastic Four was a *fun* book.

Hilarious exchanges over who would be the team's leader (FF #23), Ben and Johnny's friendly banter, and the never-ending war (of words) between the Yancy Street Gang and Ben (too many issues to mention!) were guaranteed to break up the tension and leave readers cracking up in delight!

Other 'funny book/magazines' at the time were aware of the FF's winning formula and satirized it, joining in on the excitement created by Jack and Stan. Here are five examples from the late '60s where other creators were funnin' the foursome:



Sick magazine editor/writer Joe Simon and artist Bob Powell probably had a good time lampooning Marvel's penchant for pin-ups as well as the FF in this illo from their fanzine parody in *Sick* #42, 1966.

Sick ©2010 Headline Publications.



The *Inferior Five* was a short-lived DC title that parodied super-heroes and their situations. This panel (from IF #2, 1967) by the team of E. Nelson Bridwell and Mike Sekowsky sent up the FF's origin.

The Inferior Five and Kookie Quartet ©2010 DC Comics.



George Tuska, soon to be a member of the Marvel Bullpen himself, drew a super-hero crossover (!) parody yarn which featured "Mr. Frantic" and the "Thin" (above). Other Kirby creations used in the story were "Quicksliver" and the high-flying "Angle" of the "Sex-Men"! (Kents were a cigarette brand and "a good thing going" was their slogan—also from *Sick* #42.)

Sick ©2010 Headline Publications.



Comics writer George Gladir (Archie, Sabrina, etc.) and John Severin did this hilarious panel for a late '60s *Cracked* magazine. This was taken from the reprinted story in *King-Sized Cracked*, 1979.

Cracked ©2010 Globe Communications Corp.



As the "Kookie Quartet," a more standardized version of the team went into action again in *Inferior Five* #10, Oct. 1968. The art's by Win Mortimer.

The Inferior Five and Kookie Quartet ©2010 DC Comics.

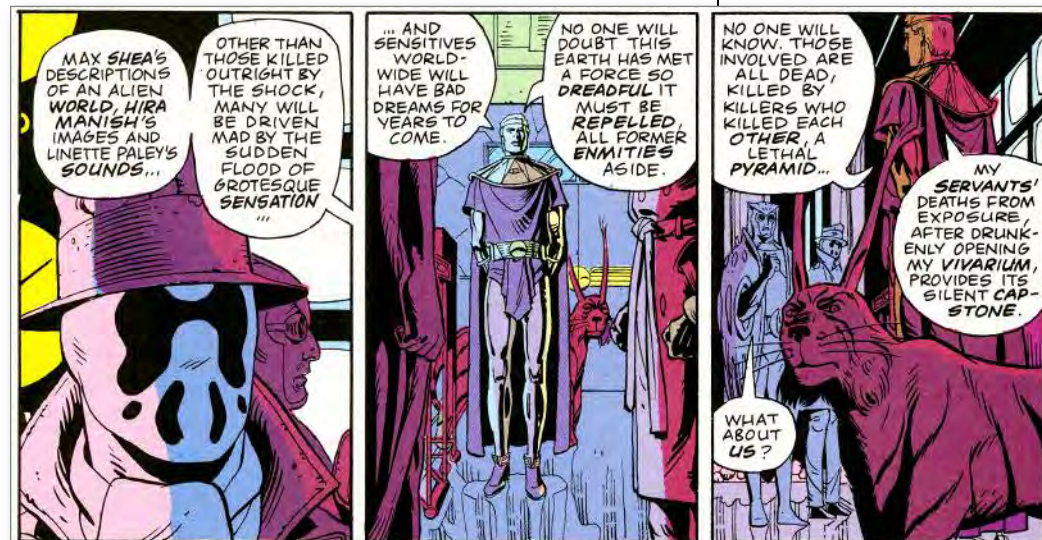
And what would bashful Benjamin J. Grimm say about all this? Probably something like, "Wotta revoltin' development!" ★

PART 2

I LEARNED THE SECRETS OF THE LEE-KIRBY UNIVERSE!

It may have seemed unique at the time, but the ending of *Watchmen* was done by Stan and Jack long before Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons. Ozymandias, of that award-winning and brilliant series, hatched a plan (in comic-time 1985-86) to 'trick the world' into moving away from impending nuclear war with an impending alien invasion. It was a daring stratagem, but Smiley and the King did something akin to it long ago in "Lo-Karr, Bringer of Doom" (*JIM* #75, Dec. 1961). Their scientist-hero came up with the robotic, all-powerful Lo-Karr which fooled the super power nations into putting aside their differences and uniting against the threat from him and his race that would never come from a galaxy beyond.

Alan Moore gave a nod to television's *Outer Limits* episode "The Architects of Fear" (which also followed Lo-Karr, time-wise)



as one of his supporting characters watched the show (this show also had a similar operation in mind), but he could've had a copy of *Journey Into Mystery* #75 laying nearby as well....

- Jerry Boyd

JIM VADEBONCOUER, JR. TWMORROWS CONTRIBUTOR

Look at what they did before (their partnership)... and look at what they did after. The two of them had 'magic' for 4 or 5 years.

ROY THOMAS

I suppose my favorite Lee and Kirby storyline, unsurprising, would be the Galactus trilogy in *Fantastic Four*, which I was privileged to read (and proof) in the original art as it came through. But right up there would be the *Thor* storyline which co-starred Hercules and Pluto. That was, I believe, the highlight of the *Thor* series for all time.

MICHAEL AUSHENKER TWMORROWS CONTRIBUTOR

Can most comic book readers remember the very first time they beheld the power and unbridled imagination of Kirby's art? I can. It was the very first comic book I ever read: *Marvel Double Feature* #10.



With a street date of June 1975, it was the comic I chose off the spinner rack at Irving's Pizza in Canarsie, Brooklyn. I was only 6, so my grandparents bought it for me. I've been reading (and creating) comics ever since.

MDF #10, which featured a Captain America lead story followed by an Iron Man back-up feature, was, in fact, a reprint (the Cap story from *Tales of Suspense* #86, Shellhead from *TOS* #93). No matter. I didn't know the difference. All I knew is what I saw before me, the most captivating images I had ever seen. The

first story, "The Secret!" written by Stan Lee, pitted Cap against the Commies to foil their dreaded Z-Ray. The cover, with some hype type exclaiming "Quite Possibly the Very Greatest ACTION issue of the Year!" must have caught my eye with that Kirby Cap, armed with his shield, slogging his way through a heap of fallen enemy soldiers as the Z-Ray cannon looms in the background. There are sequences of that Kirby story—featuring Cap climbing through a Kirby-

crazy labyrinth of corridors and fighting off an army of jump-suited soldiers—which I have harbored in my mind's eye since childhood. (It was only a few years later that I learned that, in fact, *MDF* #10 was part of a far more insidious plot than anything the Communists, A.I.M., or the Red Skull could dream up. Those Kirby reprints were in fact flooding the stands with Kirby's Marvel work to confuse readers and compete with the recently Marvel-liberated Kirby's output at DC.)

Also memorable about *MDF* #10 was "The Golden Gladiator and the Giant!" by Lee and Gene Colan, which featured Iron Man, at his most iconic-looking, tackling the Titanium Man. Colan's Iron Man: sophisticated, refined, tall, majestic, skeletal, almost robotic. This Bronze Age Iron Man remains the definitive Iron Man for me, more handsome than his clunkier predecessors, meaner, cleaner, and more straightforward than his convoluted descendants.

Can you imagine the pairing of Kirby's Captain America and Colan's Iron Man in that one powerhouse book? That single issue contained a Marvel universe unto itself. Today, we take these characters for granted as "super-heroes," but when you really look at those stories with fresh eyes, what you're actually beholding is some of the most fantastic science-fiction ever conjured up. By the 1960s, Kirby had plucked his dusty World War II character out of the past and placed him in a terrifying, claustrophobic

(left) Ozymandias tells of his plot in these cropped panels from the *Watchmen* series. Jack and Stan's Lo-Karr (above) was the original monster that unified the super powers.

(below) *Marvel Double Feature* #10. With a cover like that, you can believe the blurb!

Watchmen TM & ©2010 DC Comics.
Other characters TM & ©2010 Marvel Characters, Inc.



new context: a dystopian environment of alloys and computers and madmen and drone armies in radiation suits that no longer resembled the Second World War which Cap sprang from... or even '60s America.

LARRY LIEBER

I did think the best comics of the 1960s were the ones Stan and Jack did together. I think the *FF* was a good example. The character development between Reed, Sue, Ben, and Johnny—as well as the interplay between them; *Thor* was another good example of character interplay, also—was exceptional.

In general, the stories they did together were, to my mind, a 'flavor' that Stan developed. There was a Lee style with humor, suspense, and all the things that made a comic satisfying. Jack understood it and went along and added his own thing. It worked beautifully.

There was nothing superfluous. If Stan added an extra balloon or a caption at the bottom, it had meaning. Jack's adding detail to his drawing/concepts came easily.

I think later, people started making their comics more 'books' than comics. They were adding too much, and making them too illustrative, they got away from cartooning and basic storytelling. Guys make comments about 'life' and 'the world' now, and so on. I wanted a happy ending, with the bad guy getting his at the end, etc. That's my humble opinion on it all.

I used to go to a lot of movies. The best movie to me—not necessarily the *greatest* movie or *grandest* movie ever made, but the 'essential' film to see and enjoy—is *North by Northwest*. It has romance, suspense, mystery, danger, and a happy ending. It entertains completely along all those lines.

That's how I felt about Stan and Jack's work. Everything was there and a single comic gave you complete entertainment and complete satisfaction.

DWIGHT BOYD

TWOMORROWS CONTRIBUTOR

When I finally started looking at my brother's super-hero books in the early '70s (after being fixated on the Harvey Comics crew for ten years), I found

that the *FF* stories with Sub-Mariner as the hero/villain excited me most.

Lee and Kirby's retooling of Prince Namor was perfect. He was angry at us surface dwellers often (subtly mirroring the quiet anger of the civil rights groups, the outright fury of the anti-civil rights groups, student activists, war protestors, and their antagonists in the 'establishment').

I read all of Subby's early slugfests with Marvel's first family in *Marvel Collector's Item Classics* and

Marvel's Greatest Comics but the

Avenging Son's finest moment as a supporting star, in my opinion, was in *FF* #33.

There we went 20,000 leagues under the sea and Atlantis and its sandy bottoms

provided the setting for Attuma, one of the best Kirby-Lee heavies to ever bulldoze his way into comic land.

Warlord Krang was the most prominent of Subby's Silver Age enemies, but the barbarian Attuma was huge, physically powerful, and backed up by savage marauders almost as belligerent as he.

The story was wonderful—the *FF* aiding Lady Dorma and her king, though they were unseen by the proud prince. Attuma (or Charlie A. Tuna, as *Not Brand Echh* would cleverly name him one day) was defeated and as the weary foursome floated home, the Torch and the Thing's exit lines (by Lee) left an indelible impression on me.

Johnny: "Hey, Benjy Boy—You think you could beat Subby in a fair fight?"

Ben: "You kiddin', Junior? Just one sweet clobber and I'll be Sweetums the First, king of the whole she-bang!!"

SAL BUSCEMA

The collaboration between Stan Lee and Jack Kirby in the '60s and '70s in my opinion was the beginning of the comic book industry reaching a pinnacle it had never before attained.

Stan's plotting and dialogue coupled with Jack's innovative storytelling was absolutely brilliant. I cite their collaboration on the *Fantastic Four*—especially some of their later books. These were a joy to read and behold! If I sound a little over-enthusiastic, it is because Stan and Jack were two of the giants of the industry. Their work is unique and stands alone. There is probably not a writer or comic book artist who has not been influenced by these two extraordinary talents.

It was my great fortune to be hired by Stan Lee 41 years ago. I've had the pleasure of speaking with Stan from time to time since then. Unfortunately, I never had the pleasure of meeting Jack Kirby—one of the great disappointments of my career.



PART 3

I LEARNED THE SECRETS OF THE LEE-KIRBY UNIVERSE!

Stan made sure that his readers knew of the other Marvels on the racks to be had. In the pre-hero days, copies of *Strange Tales*, *Journey into Mystery*, *Tales to Astonish*, and *Tales of Suspense* occasionally showed up in stories written and/or edited by Mr. Lee.

Comic magazines and comics readers weren't considered to be exactly 'cool' back in the day, but Smiley and the King got one of their coolest (and still hot) young heroes, the Human Torch, to endorse their products by using his interest in super-doer titles to make their stuff, well... cooler.

Johnny perused a Golden Age copy of *Sub-Mariner Comics* in FF #4, he was awestruck by *Hulk* #1 in FF #5, and nostalgically flipped through an old *Captain America* issue in *Strange Tales* #114.

And the rest of his teammates would hit the local candy store (like lots of us) with him in FF #11 to get the latest issue of the *Fantastic Four*! If the world's most fabulous foursome were considered 'cool' by their readers and fans (and they were), then we true believers could proudly hold our heads a little higher as we added the various House of Ideas' titles to our collections.

- Jerry Boyd

STEVE ENGLEHART

I'm voting for *Thor* #136 where Jane Foster failed to become a goddess and got written out of the series. I thought it was a very cool thing to do—to take that character which had been the love interest since the beginning and actually say, "She's not good enough," and... run her out.

And then they brought in Sif in that same issue... the unfortunately named *Sif*. So that's what I'm going with—that's my choice, number 136, *Thor*.

WILLIAM STOUT

Picking one story out of the gazillion that Jack Kirby drew is one helluva challenge. There are overall aspects of Jack's work, his great strengths (in my mind, anyway) that continue to resonate with me. Having ghost-inked an issue of *The Demon* was revelatory, enabling me to see in a very raw state how Jack manipulated the medium to express such grand emotional power. Without giving



away too many of Jack's secrets, I saw that the high action and potent drama were enhanced enormously by the scenes of quiet stillness and contemplative thoughtfulness that preceded those operatic explosions.

There's one story that has stayed with me for decades, though. It's not a super-hero story, even though I love his early Marvel stuff and I'm nuts about his great *Boys' Ranch* work and Jack's pre-Marvel heroes like *The Fly*, the *Challengers of the Unknown*, *Fighting American*, and his stint on "Green Arrow." It was one of the Marvel horror stories. I can't recall its title or the issue number but it was about a crook who steals a horribly brutish mask with which to commit crimes, thinking his true identity won't be able to be discerned by any witnesses. The problem is that after he commits his illegal atrocities in full view of several witnesses, he can't get the mask off; it's permanently adhered to his face.

That opening splash panel with Jack's rendering of the eyeless mask just totally creeped me out. "That visage was so grotesque, yet real enough to be completely believable. That image has stuck with me to this very day.

(William Stout began his professional comics career assisting Russ Manning on the Tarzan of the Apes newspaper strips and Harvey Kurtzman and Will Elder on "Little Annie Fanny" for Playboy. He was also part of the 1970s underground comix scene. He ghost-inked Jack Kirby's pencils in issue #15 of *The Demon* and is especially proud of helping Jack to get well-paying

(previous page) Attuma got beautifully embellished by Terry Austin for the "Black Magic" edition of Kirby's *Heroes and Villains* book, published by Pure Imagination. See Jack's pencils on page 56 of this issue.

(above) 'Our Pal' Sal Buscema got lots of Avengers onto this great cover for an early *Marvelmania Catalog*, circa 1969.

(left) Readers go ga-ga over an issue of *Astonish* from the "X" story in *Tales to Astonish* #20 (June 1961), and Johnny and his teammates promote Marvel mags in FF #5 (July 1962).

Characters TM & ©2010 Marvel Characters, Inc.



TO OUR BELOVED JACK ~ WITH FULL POWER FOR THE NEXT 75 AS WELL! WM STOUT

(top) Bill Stout did this stupendous Hulk drawing for the 1992 Comic-Con program that celebrated the King's 75th birthday.

(right) A perfect Kirby-Sinnott cover for a perfect comic—FF #60 from '67.

(bottom) The Thing (smoking one of the King's famous Roi-Tan cee-gars, maybe?) in pencil from one of Stan's '70s *Origins* books.

(next page) *Sgt. Fury* #13 (Dec. 1964) featured one of Kirby's early attempts at incorporating collage into his comics work. His first try was a little earlier in *Fantastic Four* #24 (March 1964).

(Extra-special thanks to Eric Nolen-Weathington, John Fleskes, and Mell Lazarus for providing contact information for the interview subjects in this article.)

Characters TM & ©2010 Marvel Characters, Inc.

work at Mattel Toys. Bill is well-known for his accurate reconstructions of earth's primeval worlds. His latest book is William Stout—Prehistoric Life Murals from Flesk Publications.)

JOE SINNOTT

Of course there were so many good characters, as you know. I always thought Kirby was at his peak from the late '40s to the '70s (on the *FF*). I always liked inking the Mole Man, the Surfer, and Dr. Doom—the number one villain. He had all those rivets and that great metallic look. I think Darth Vader was patterned after him.

Dr. Doom was the best character they created. I didn't mind him at all. I love Thor a lot, and the Thing.

But I didn't mind him (Doom) at all. Jack never drew Galactus the same way twice! All that paraphernalia, I noticed he was never the same the next time I got around to inking him. But that was Jack. He improved the look, and Stan improved the characters. Jack made sure the characters' looks evolved. That kept it interesting.



JERRY BOYD TWMORROWS CONTRIBUTOR

Lee and Kirby gave us: The Savage Land, stun guns, the Scarlet Witch, stimuloids, Sentinels, Sserpo, and stories with... heart-tugging sentiment.

A posse's been combing the hills for the wanted Rawhide Kid. The Kid escapes the lawmen but runs into the murderous Grissom Gang (or Wolf Waco's men, or some similar type gang—and true outlaws in the traditional Western sense). The gang considers letting the Kid ride with them, believing him to be a murderous, thieving gunnie in the traditional western sense.

Rawhide does consider it. He's weary of bounty hunters, lawmen, and fearful stares from frightened townsfolk. But he's not a "cold-blooded killer like he's been painted up to be" (and neither was Kid Colt, who the Man wrote into similar situations), so he eventually turns on the gang and shoots and fights his way clear with the more determined deputies to safety. Sometimes wounded or out of shells at the story's denouement, the Kid declares meekly, "Looks like you got me, lawmen. I can't fight no more with this wounded shoulder." Some of the peace officers have their six-guns drawn and aimed at the young gunhawk, but his selfless heroism has left its impression. They let him ride off. The receding figure of the legendary gunfighter penciled by Jack, nicely inked by Ayers, works well with Lee's dialogue. "We came looking for an outlaw. Shucks, the Rawhide Kid's no outlaw! That hombre's a man!!" (Or something to that wonderful effect...)

Sacrifice, strength, and sentiment.

Lee and Kirby gave us: Living planets, Pluto of the Netherworld, power coupled with purpose, Professor X, Pildorr the Space Plunderer, the Puppet Master... and 'power trips.'

Marvel characters were awesome to behold (thanks to Jack's visuals) and incredible to hear (Stan's scripting). Examples:

"Never before has one being been as totally SUPREME—as invincibly SUPERIOR—as I!" (Dr. Doom after stealing the Surfer's powers in *FF* #57)

"The human race must not witness what is about to occur!! STAND BACK, my son! I have an awesome feat to perform!" (Odin to Thor, *JIM* #104)

"All my life has been devoted to skill with weapons! I shall toy with this brash commoner for a while, and then dispense of him with a weapon of my own choosing!" (Baron Strucker to a fellow Nazi in *Sgt. Fury* #5)

"My people have bred me only for battle! I am able to withstand the winds of Andromeda... the storms of Saturn... the planet-shaking cataclysms of the Milky Way..."

"And now you're gonna be pulverized by the bone-crushin' Sunday punches of the Hulk!" (Alien to ol' Greenskin and back in *Astonish* #74)

Power trips. 'Nuff Said.

"The Peril and the Power!" (*FF* #60) is this Lee and Kirby fan's single favorite issue of the aptly-acclaimed (by Lee, no less) "World's Greatest Comic Magazine." (And during



the 1960s, it lived up to that banner.) *FF* #60 finished off the most incredible multi-parter the team had ever launched. Villains getting their fiendish claws on a hero's powers were nothing new in comics, but Dr. Doom's stealing of the Silver Surfer's Galactus-given abilities was just... "senses-shattering," as Stan liked to write.

'King' Kirby reached one of his many artistic peaks from 1965 to '67, in my view (1967 being the best), and this 60th issue came with an appropriately outstanding cover, and cameos by the Inhumans, the Black Panther, the Silver Surfer (naturally), and even the Watcher—who was last seen in #50. Everything was masterfully thrown into this one—an impatient Torch and a raging Thing who longed to come to blows with the cosmic-powered Latverian with or without the team, Reed the tactician (feinting, buying time, retreating, and coordinating his teammates' counterattack), Sue's brave gambits, and Reed's flying wing, a scientific wonderment (typical of this brilliant man) designed to save the day. And it did... along with the unseen barrier left by Galactus.

Power, pride, patience, and poise under pressure.

Lee and Kirby gave us: Heartbreaking romance, harrowing incidents, Hogun the Grim, the Hordes of Hydra, honor and nobility, 'Happy' Sam Sawyer, Him, Hank McCoy, and... heroism beyond measure.

In *Captain America* #107, Shakespeare-lover Stan unleashed all of the ghosts that unnerved the tragic Scottish king Macbeth in this tension-packed yarn where all of Steve Rogers' wartime ghosts converged on him. Actually, he'd been unknowingly given 'nightmare pills' by his analyst, the seemingly innocent Dr. Faustus, an aide to foreign agents, bent on seeing the Star-spangled Avenger driven to madness and defeat. The specter of Bucky in his final stand in particular bid fair to push the super-soldier over the edge completely, with the *coup de grace* being Cap's confrontation of his face in a mirror—but finally reflecting his true physical age, battle weariness, and internal torment.

Faustus and his henchman, masked/costumed to appear to be Bucky, shows up to gloat over the broken figure of Rogers (unmasked publicly since he 'retired' near the end of his glorious run in *Suspense*). The doctor's overplayed his hand, but Winghead had caught on anyway. Rogers removes his old man's mask his friends at SHIELD have made for him, and tells Faustus how he's caught on to his trap. After he's leveled his former physician with a single blow, Cap strides away with the face of Bucky Barnes etched in the sky before him. He mutters, "That one was for you—old friend!"

Heads held high through adversity, harassment and suspenseful drama, heroism, hubris, and honor—Jack and Stan gave us all that... and lots more. You could go through the entire alphabet and not run out of examples to show off their achievements. These are just a few, but I'm sure you get the idea.



STAN LEE

I was just about ready to quit at the time we did *Fantastic Four* #1. I figured I'll do this one book and then leave. But when I found out that our sales were that good—you know, when we got our sales figures about three months later—I couldn't believe the figures. So I thought, well, maybe I'll stay a little bit longer.

JACK KIRBY

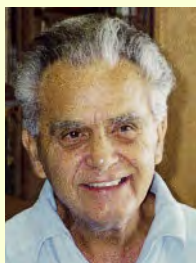
It was a wonderful time for me, because it was easy to create a story in that particular atmosphere. That's probably the formula. The atmosphere around you will supply it. Your generation will get it

from what's popular in your generation. Because, you fellas will interpret it. And whatever comes out of your interpretation, people will get to know the facts about the times that you lived in. Just as Captain America supplied information about those particular times.

All my comics have a basis in reality. I can tell you that the villains were very real. And the heroes were very real. ★

(The Lee and Kirby quotes come from the July 1992 issue of *Comics Scene Spectacular* and special thanks go out to all the participants who added their own 'magic' to this piece.)

THE JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR



The JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR magazine (edited by JOHN MORROW) celebrates the life and career of the "King" of comics through INTERVIEWS WITH KIRBY and his contemporaries, FEATURE ARTICLES, RARE AND UNSEEN KIRBY ART, plus regular columns by MARK EVANIER and

others, and presentation of KIRBY'S UNINKED PENCILS from the 1960s-80s (from photocopies preserved in the KIRBY ARCHIVES). Now in FULL-COLOR, it showcases Kirby's amazing art even better!

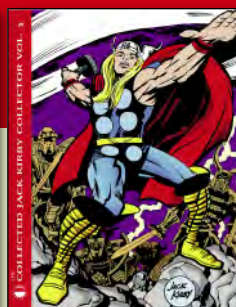
DIGITAL EDITIONS AVAILABLE FOR ONLY \$1.95 - \$4.95

See page 32 for subscription rates!

Go online for an ULTIMATE BUNDLE, with HALF-PRICE issues!



COLLECTED VOL. 2
Reprints JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR #10-12, and a tour of Jack's home!
(160-page trade paperback) \$17.95
ISBN: 9781893905016
Diamond Order Code: MAR042974



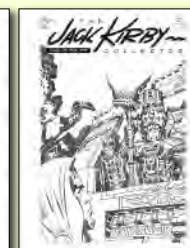
COLLECTED VOL. 3
Reprints JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR #13-15, plus new art!
(176-page trade paperback) \$19.95
ISBN: 9781893905023
Diamond Order Code: APR043058



COLLECTED VOL. 6
Reprints JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR #23-26, plus new art!
(288-page trade paperback) \$29.95
ISBN: 9781605490038
Diamond Order Code: JUN084280



COLLECTED VOL. 7
Reprints JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR #27-30, plus new art!
(288-page trade paperback) \$29.95
ISBN: 9781605490120
Diamond Order Code: DEC084286



KIRBY COLLECTOR #1-5 (80-PAGE DIGITAL EDITION) • ONLY \$3.95 FOR THE SET

Get the first five issues (sold out in print form) as an 80-page digital set! Includes interviews with KIRBY, JOE SIMON, MIKE ROYER, Marvelmania Portfolio articles, Jack's original concept sketches, unused pencil pages, published pages BEFORE they were inked, other rare art, photos and more!



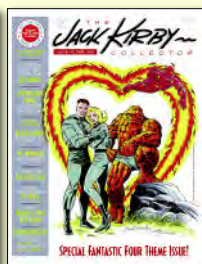
#6: FOURTH WORLD ISSUE
(36 pages) SOLD OUT
(Digital Edition) \$1.95



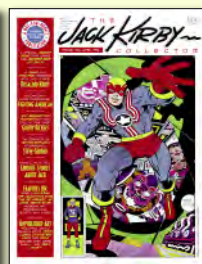
#7: KIRBY'S KID GANGS
(36 pages) SOLD OUT
(Digital Edition) \$1.95



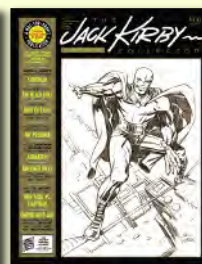
#8: SINNOTT, ROYER, EVANIER
(36 pages) SOLD OUT
(Digital Edition) \$1.95



#9: FANTASTIC FOUR ISSUE
(44 pages) SOLD OUT
(Digital Edition) \$1.95



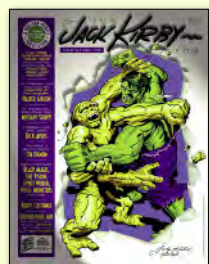
#10: HUMOR ISSUE
(44 pages) SOLD OUT
(Digital Edition) \$1.95



#11: KIRBY IN HOLLYWOOD
(44 pages) SOLD OUT
(Digital Edition) \$1.95



#12: KIRBY INTERNATIONAL
(44 pages) SOLD OUT
(Digital Edition) \$1.95



#13: KIRBY SUPERNATURAL
(52 pages) SOLD OUT
(Digital Edition) \$2.95



#14: THOR ISSUE
(52 pages) SOLD OUT
(Digital Edition) \$2.95



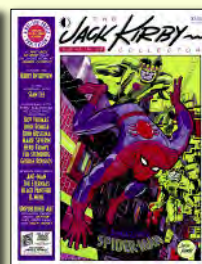
#15: KIRBY'S SCI-FI WORK
(52 pages) SOLD OUT
(Digital Edition) \$2.95



#16: JACK'S TOUGH GUYS
(52 pages) SOLD OUT
(Digital Edition) \$2.95



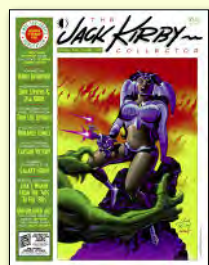
#17: KIRBY AT DC COMICS
(68 pages) SOLD OUT
(Digital Edition) \$2.95



#18: MARVEL BULLPEN ISSUE
(68 pages) SOLD OUT
(Digital Edition) \$2.95



#19: KIRBY "ART" ISSUE
(68 pages) SOLD OUT
(Digital Edition) \$2.95



#20: KIRBY'S WOMEN
(68 pages) SOLD OUT
(Digital Edition) \$2.95



#21: JACK'S WACKIEST WORK
(68 pages) SOLD OUT
(Digital Edition) \$2.95



#22: VILLAINS ISSUE
(68 pages) SOLD OUT
(Digital Edition) \$2.95



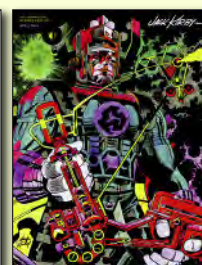
#23: STAN LEE, FF #49 PENCILS
(68 pages) \$5.95
(Digital Edition) \$2.95



#24: GREATEST BATTLES
(68 pages) \$5.95
(Digital Edition) \$2.95



#25: SIMON & KIRBY ISSUE
(100 pages) \$5.95
(Digital Edition) \$3.95



#26: KIRBY'S GODS
(72 pages w/ COLOR) \$5.95
(Digital Edition) \$2.95



KIRBY COLLECTOR #27

THE KIRBY INFLUENCE! Interviews with KIRBY (on his WWII experiences) and ALEX ROSS, KIRBY FAMILY roundtable discussion, All-Star Tribute Panel (featuring NEIL GAIMAN, DAVE GIBBONS, KURT BUSIEK, JEFF SMITH, BARRY WINDSOR-SMITH, MARK WAID, and others), color section, features, art (including uninked pencils), and more! KIRBY/BRUCE TIMM cover!

(84 pages) SOLD OUT
(Digital Edition) \$3.95



KIRBY COLLECTOR #28

THE KIRBY INFLUENCE, PART TWO! Interviews with more pros influenced by Kirby, including Star Wars' MARK HAMILL, JOHN KRICFALUSI, MOEBIUS, GARY GIANNI, GEOFF DARROW, KARL KESEL, and MIKE ALLRED, interviews with Jack's grandkids, a look at the career of inker VINCE COLLETTA, and more! KIRBY/MIKE ALLRED wraparound cover!

(84 pages) SOLD OUT
(Digital Edition) \$3.95



KIRBY COLLECTOR #29

1970s MARVEL COMICS! Interviews with JACK and ROZ KIRBY, KEITH GIFFEN, and RICH BUCKLER, '70s MARVEL COVER GALLERY in pencil, a look inside the 1970s MARVEL BULLPEN, Mike Gartland's A FAILURE TO COMMUNICATE on Jack's layout work, new KIRBY AS A GENRE column, tips for frugal Kirby Collectors, and more! KIRBY/KLAUS JANSON cover!

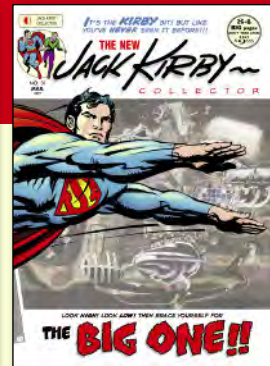
(68 pages) SOLD OUT
(Digital Edition) \$2.95



KIRBY COLLECTOR #30

KIRBY'S TWILIGHT YEARS (1978-94)! Interviews with ALAN MOORE and Kirby Estate co-trustee ROBERT KATZ, comparison of KIRBY'S margin notes to STAN LEE'S words, Jack's 1980s career in-depth, including pencil art from SILVER STAR, CAPTAIN VICTORY, HUNGER DOGS, an animation art portfolio, FF STORYBOARDS, and lots more! KIRBY/PAUL SMITH cover!

(68 pages) \$5.95
(Digital Edition) \$2.95



KIRBY COLLECTOR #31

FIRST TABLOID-SIZE ISSUE! MARK EVANIER's new column, interviews with KURT BUSIEK and JOSÉ LADRONN, NEAL ADAMS on Kirby, Giant-Man overview, Kirby's best 2-page spreads, 2000 Kirby Tribute Panel (MARK EVANIER, GENE COLAN, MARIE SEVERIN, ROY THOMAS, and TRACY & JEREMY KIRBY), huge Kirby pencils! Wraparound KIRBY/ADAMS cover!

(84 tabloid pages) \$9.95
(Digital Edition) \$3.95



KIRBY COLLECTOR #32

KIRBY'S LEAST-KNOWN WORK! MARK EVANIER on the Fourth World, unfinished THE HORDE novel, long-lost KIRBY INTERVIEW from France, update to the KIRBY CHECKLIST, pencil gallery of Kirby's least-known work (including THE PRISONER, BLACK HOLE, IN THE DAYS OF THE MOB, TRUE DIVORCE CASES), westerns, and more! KIRBY/LADRONN cover!

(84 tabloid pages) \$9.95
(Digital Edition) \$3.95



KIRBY COLLECTOR #33

FANTASTIC FOUR ISSUE! Gallery of FF pencils at tabloid size, MARK EVANIER on the FF Cartoon series, interviews with STAN LEE and ERIK LARSEN, JOE SINNOTT salute, the HUMAN TORCH in STRANGE TALES, origins of Kirby Krackle, interviews with nearly EVERY WRITER AND ARTIST who worked on the FF after Kirby, and more! KIRBY/LARSEN and KIRBY/TIMM covers!

(84 tabloid pages) \$9.95
(Digital Edition) \$3.95



KIRBY COLLECTOR #34

FIGHTING AMERICANS! MARK EVANIER on 1960s Marvel inkers, SHIELD, Losers, and Green Arrow overviews, INFANTINO interview on Simon & Kirby, KIRBY interview, Captain America PENCIL ART GALLERY, PHILIPPE DRUILLET interview, JOE SIMON and ALEX TOTTH speak, unseen BIG GAME HUNTER and YOUNG ABEL LINCOLN Kirby concepts! KIRBY and KIRBY/TOTTH covers!

(84 tabloid pages) \$9.95
(Digital Edition) \$3.95



KIRBY COLLECTOR #35

GREAT ESCAPES! MISTER MIRACLE pencil art gallery, MARK EVANIER, MARSHALL ROGERS & MICHAEL CHABON interviews, comparing Kirby and Houdini's backgrounds, analysis of "Himon", 2001 Kirby Tribute Panel (WILL EISNER, JOHN BUSCEMA, JOHN ROMITA, MIKE ROYER, & JOHNNY CARSON) & more! KIRBY/MARSHALL ROGERS and KIRBY/STEVE RUDE covers!

(84 tabloid pages) \$9.95
(Digital Edition) \$3.95



KIRBY COLLECTOR #36

THOR ISSUE! Never-seen KIRBY interview, JOE SINNOTT and JOHN ROMITA JR. on their Thor work, MARK EVANIER, extensive THOR and TALES OF ASGARD coverage, a look at the "real" Norse gods, 40 pages of KIRBY THOR PENCILS, including a Kirby Art Gallery at TABLOID SIZE, with pin-ups, covers, and more! KIRBY covers inked by MIKE ROYER and TREVOR VON EDEN!

(84 tabloid pages) \$9.95
(Digital Edition) \$3.95



KIRBY COLLECTOR #37

"HOW TO DRAW COMICS THE KIRBY WAY!" MIKE ROYER interview on how he inks Jack's work, HUGE GALLERY tracing the evolution of Jack's style, new column on OBSCURE KIRBY WORK, MARK EVANIER, special sections on Jack's TECHNIQUE AND INFLUENCES, comparing STAN LEE'S writing to JACK'S, and more! Two COLOR UNPUBLISHED KIRBY COVERS!

(84 tabloid pages) \$9.95
(Digital Edition) \$3.95



KIRBY COLLECTOR #38

"HOW TO DRAW COMICS THE KIRBY WAY!" PART 2: JOE SINNOTT on how he inks Jack's work, HUGE PENCIL GALLERY, list of the art in the KIRBY ARCHIVES, MARK EVANIER, special sections on Jack's technique and influences, SPEND A DAY WITH KIRBY (with JACK DAVIS, GULACY, HERNANDEZ BROS., and RUDE) and more! Two UNPUBLISHED KIRBY COVERS!

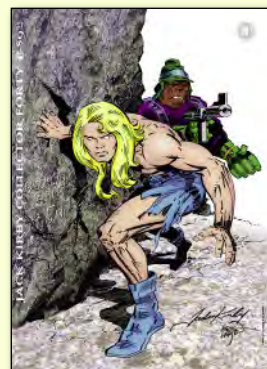
(84 tabloid pages) \$9.95
(Digital Edition) \$3.95



KIRBY COLLECTOR #39

FAN FAVORITES! Covering Kirby's work on HULK, INHUMANS, and SILVER SURFER, TOP PROS pick favorite Kirby covers, Kirby ENTERTAINMENT TONIGHT interview, MARK EVANIER, 2002 Kirby Tribute Panel (DICK AYERS, TODD MCFARLANE, PAUL LEVITZ, HERB TRIMPE), pencil art gallery, and more! Kirby covers inked by MIKE ALLRED and P. CRAIG RUSSELL!

(84 tabloid pages) \$9.95
(Digital Edition) \$3.95



KIRBY COLLECTOR #40

WORLD THAT'S COMING! KAMANDI and OMAC spotlight, 2003 Kirby Tribute Panel (WENDY PINI, MICHAEL CHABON, STAN GOLDBERG, SAL BUSCEMA, LARRY LIEBER, and STAN LEE), P. CRAIG RUSSELL interview, MARK EVANIER, NEW COLUMN analyzing Jack's visual shorthand, pencil art gallery, and more! Kirby covers inked by ERIK LARSEN and REEDMAN!

(84 tabloid pages) \$9.95
(Digital Edition) \$3.95



KIRBY COLLECTOR #41

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!

(84 tabloid pages) \$9.95
(Digital Edition) \$3.95



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!**

(84 tabloid pages) \$9.95
(Digital Edition) \$3.95



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!**

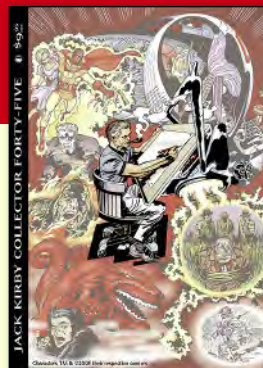
(84 tabloid pages) \$9.95
(Digital Edition) \$3.95



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!**

(84 tabloid pages) \$9.95
(Digital Edition) \$3.95



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!**

(84 tabloid pages) \$9.95
(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!

(84 tabloid pages) \$9.95
(Digital Edition) \$3.95



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!

(84 tabloid pages) **SOLD OUT**
(Digital Edition) \$3.95



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!**

(84 tabloid pages) **SOLD OUT**
(Digital Edition) \$3.95



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!

(84 tabloid pages) \$9.95
(Digital Edition) \$3.95



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!

(84 tabloid pages) \$9.95
(Digital Edition) \$3.95



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!**

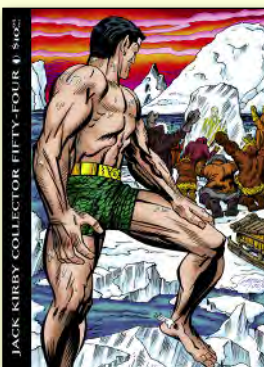
(84 tabloid pages) \$9.95
(Digital Edition) \$3.95



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!**

(84 tabloid pages) \$10.95
(Digital Edition) \$3.95



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, plus Kirby back cover inked by **JOE SINNOTT!**

(84 tabloid pages) \$10.95
(Digital Edition) \$3.95



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!**

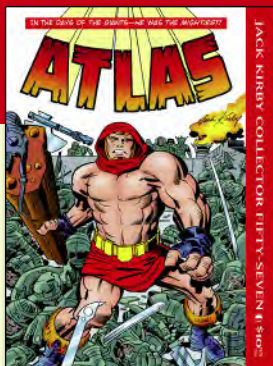
(84 tabloid pages) \$10.95
(Digital Edition) \$3.95



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!**

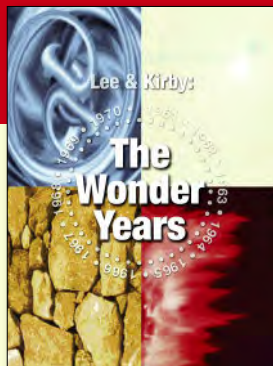
(84 tabloid pages) \$10.95
(Digital Edition) \$3.95



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!

(84 tabloid pages) \$10.95
(Digital Edition) \$3.95



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.

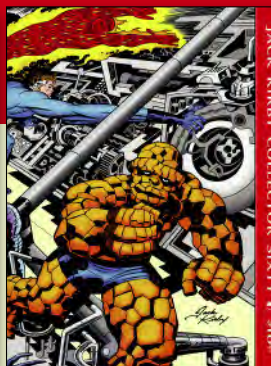
(160-page trade paperback) \$19.95
(Digital Edition) \$7.95
ISBN: 9781605490380
Diamond Order Code: SEP111248



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!

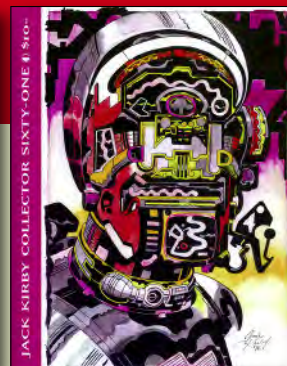
(104 pages with COLOR) \$10.95
(Digital Edition) \$4.95



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!

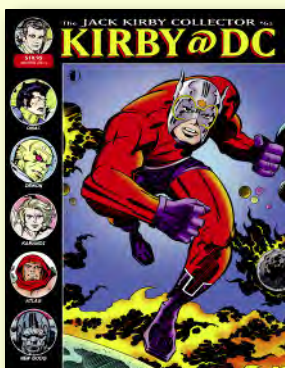
(104 pages with COLOR) \$10.95
(Digital Edition) \$4.95



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!

(100 FULL-COLOR pages) \$10.95
(Digital Edition) \$4.95



KIRBY COLLECTOR #62

KIRBY AT DC! Kirby interview, **MARK EVANIER** and our 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!

(100 FULL-COLOR pages) \$10.95
(Digital Edition) \$4.95



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!

(100 FULL-COLOR pages) \$10.95
(Digital Edition) \$4.95



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!

(100 FULL-COLOR pages) \$10.95
(Digital Edition) \$4.95



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!

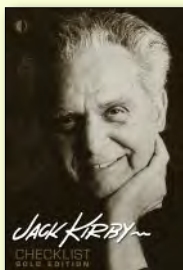
(100 FULL-COLOR pages) \$10.95
(Digital Edition) \$4.95



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** radio interview with Stan, **MARK EVANIER** and our other regular columnists, unseen and unused pencil art from **FANTASTIC FOUR**, 2001, **CAPTAIN VICTORY**, **BRUCE LEE**, & more!

(100 FULL-COLOR pages) \$10.95
(Digital Edition) \$4.95



JACK KIRBY CHECKLIST: GOLD

Lists EVERY KIRBY COMIC, BOOK, UNPUBLISHED WORK and more!

(128-page trade paperback) \$14.95
(Digital Edition) \$5.95
ISBN: 9781605490052
Diamond Order Code: MAR084008



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!

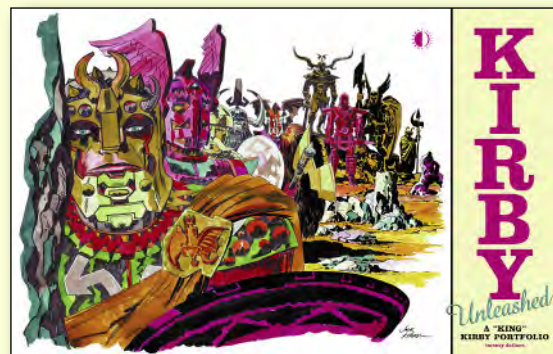
(52-page comic book) \$5.95
(Digital Edition) \$2.95



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!

(160-page trade paperback) \$19.95 • (Digital Edition) \$7.95
ISBN: 9781893905559 • Diamond Order Code: JAN063367

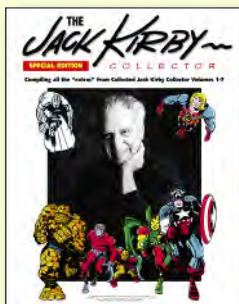


KIRBY UNLEASHED (REMASTERED)

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!

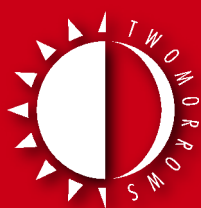
(60-page tabloid with COLOR) SOLD OUT • (Digital Edition) \$5.95

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!

(120-page Digital Edition) \$5.95



TwoMorrows Publishing Update

THE BEST IN COMICS & LEGO® PUBLICATIONS!

SAVE 15% WHEN YOU ORDER ONLINE!

SUMMER & FALL 2015

NOW SHIPPING! 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").

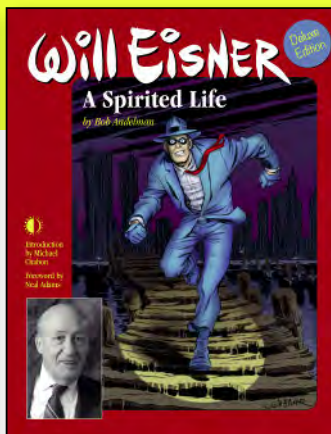
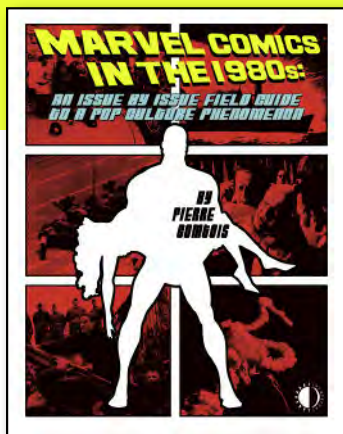
(192-page FULL-COLOR HARDCOVER) \$39.95

(Digital Edition) \$13.95 • ISBN: 9781605490649

GO TO www.twomorrows.com FOR A FREE PREVIEW!



OTHER NEW BOOKS, NOW SHIPPING!



All characters TM & © their respective owners.



TwoMorrows. A New Day For Comics Fans!

TwoMorrows Publishing • 10407 Bedfordtown Drive • Raleigh, NC 27614 USA • 919-449-0344 • FAX: 919-449-0327

E-mail: store@twomorrows.com • Visit us on the Web at www.twomorrows.com

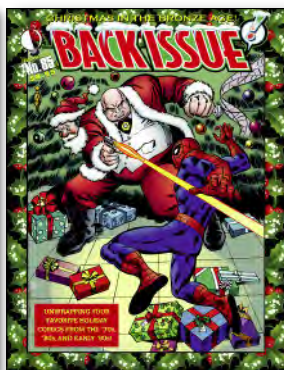




BACK ISSUE #84

"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!**

(84 FULL-COLOR pages) \$8.95
(Digital Edition) \$3.95 • Ships Sept. 2015



BACK ISSUE #85

"Christmas in the Bronze Age!" Go behind the scenes of comics' best holiday tales of the 1970s through the early 1990s! And we revisit Superhero Merchandise Catalogs of the late '70s! Featuring work by **SIMON BISLEY**, **CHRIS CLAREMONT**, **JOSÉ LUIS GARCÍA-LÓPEZ**, **KEITH GIFFEN**, the **KUBERT STUDIO**, **DENNY O'NEIL**, **STEVE PURCELL**, **JOHN ROMITA, JR.**, and more. Cover by **MARIE SEVERIN** and **MIKE ESPOSITO!**

(84 FULL-COLOR pages) \$8.95
(Digital Edition) \$3.95 • Ships Nov. 2015



BACK ISSUE #86

"Marvel Bronze Age Giants and Reprints!" In-depth exploration of Marvel's **GIANT-SIZE** series, plus indexes galore of Marvel reprint titles, Marvel digests and Fireside Books editions, and the last days of the "Old" X-Men! Featuring work by **DAN ADKINS**, **ROSS ANDRU**, **RICH BUCKLER**, **DAVE COCKRUM**, **GERRY CONWAY**, **STEVE GERBER**, **STAN LEE**, **WERNER ROTH**, **ROY THOMAS**, and more. Cover by **JOHN ROMITA, SR.!**

(100 FULL-COLOR pages) \$9.95
(Digital Edition) \$4.95 • Ships Jan. 2016



BACK ISSUE #87

"Batman AND Superman!" Bronze Age World's Finest, Super Sons, Batman/Superman Villain/Partner Swap, Jimmy Olsen and Lois Lane go solo, Superman/Radio Shack giveaways, and JLA #200's "A League Divided" (as a nod to Batman v. Superman)! Featuring work by **BRIAN BOLLAND**, **RICH BUCKLER**, **GERRY CONWAY**, **JACK KIRBY**, **GEORGE PEREZ**, **JIM STARLIN**, and more. Cover by **DICK GIORDANO!**

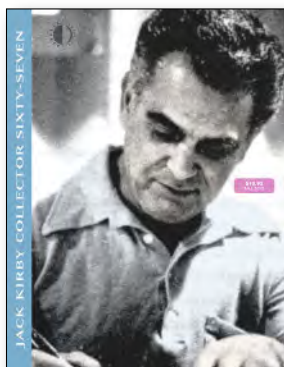
(84 FULL-COLOR pages) \$8.95
(Digital Edition) \$3.95 • Ships March 2016



BACK ISSUE #88

"Comics Magazines of the '70s and '80s!" From Savage Tales to Epic Illustrated, **KIRBY's** "Speak-Out Series," **ESNER's** Spirit magazine, Unpublished **PAUL GULACY**, **MICHAEL USLAN** on the Shadow magazine you didn't see, plus B&Ws from Atlas/Seaboard, Charlton, Skywald, and Warren. Featuring work by **NEAL ADAMS**, **JOHN BOLTON**, **ARCHIE GOODWIN**, **DOUG MOENCH**, **EARL NOREM**, **ROY THOMAS**, and more. Cover by **GRAY MORROW!**

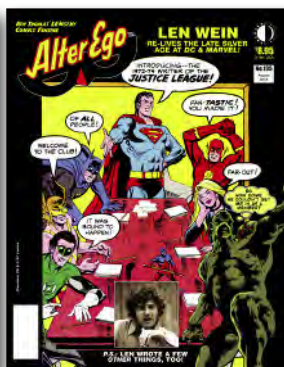
(84 FULL-COLOR pages) \$8.95
(Digital Edition) \$3.95 • Ships April 2016



KIRBY COLLECTOR #67

UP-CLOSE & PERSONAL! Kirby interviews you weren't aware of, photos and recollections from fans who saw him in person, personal anecdotes from Jack's fellow pros, **LEE** and **KIRBY** cameos in comics, **MARK EVANIER** and other regular columnists, and more! Don't let the photo cover fool you; this issue is chockfull of rare Kirby pencil art, from Roz Kirby's private sketchbook, and Jack's most personal comics stories!

(100-page FULL-COLOR mag) \$10.95
(Digital Edition) \$4.95 • Ships Winter 2016



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!**

(84 FULL-COLOR pages) \$8.95
(Digital Edition) \$3.95 • Ships August 2015



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**, **BUCSEMA**, **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!**

(100 FULL-COLOR pages) \$9.95
(Digital Edition) \$4.95 • Ships Oct. 2015



ALTER EGO #137

Incredible interview with **JIM SHOOTER**, which chronicles the first decade of his career (Legion of Super-Heroes, Superman, Supergirl, Captain Action) with art by **CURT SWAN**, **WALLY WOOD**, **GIL KANE**, **GEORGE PAPP**, **JIM MOONEY**, **PETE COSTANZA**, **WIN MORTIMER**, **WAYNE BORING**, **AL PLASTINO**, et al.! Plus **FCA**, **MR. MONSTER**, **BILL SCHELLY**, and more! Cover art by **CURT SWAN!**

(84 FULL-COLOR pages) \$8.95
(Digital Edition) \$3.95 • Ships Dec. 2015



ALTER EGO #138

Science-fiction great (and erstwhile comics writer) **HARLAN ELLISON** talks about Captain Marvel and The Monster Society of Evil! Also, Captain Marvel artist/co-creator **C.C. BECK** writes about the infamous Superman-Captain Marvel lawsuit of the 1940s and '50s in a double-size **FCA** section! Plus two titanic tributes to Golden Age artist **FRED KIDA**, **MR. MONSTER**, **BILL SCHELLY**, and more!

(84 FULL-COLOR pages) \$8.95
(Digital Edition) \$3.95 • Ships Feb. 2016



COMIC BOOK CREATOR #9

JOE STATION on his comics career (from E-MAN, to co-creating The Huntress, and his current stint on the Dick Tracy comic strip), plus we showcase the lost treasure **GODS OF MOUNT OLYMPUS** drawn by Joe! Plus, Part One of our interview with the late **STAN GOLDBERG**, why **JOHN ROMITA, JR.** is the best comic book artist working, we quiz **PABLO MARCOS** about the days of Marvel horror, plus **HEMBECK!**

(84-page FULL-COLOR magazine) \$8.95
(Digital Edition) \$3.95 • Ships Aug. 2015



COMIC BOOK CREATOR #10

The Broadway sci-fi epic **WARP** examined! Interviews with art director **NEAL ADAMS**, director **STUART** (Reanimator) **GORDON**, playwright **LENNY KLEINFELD**, stage manager **DAVID GORDON**, and a look at Warp's 1980s **FIRST COMICS** series! Plus: an interview with **PETER (Hate!) BAGGE**, our **RICH BUCKLER** interview Part One, **GIANT WHAM-O COMICS**, and the conclusion of our **STAN GOLDBERG** interview!

(84-page FULL-COLOR magazine) \$8.95
(Digital Edition) \$3.95 • Ships Nov. 2015



COMIC BOOK CREATOR #11

Retrospective on **GIL KANE**, co-creator of the modern Green Lantern and Atom, and early progenitor of the graphic novel. Kane cover newly-inked by **KLAUS JANSON**, plus remembrances from friends, fans, and collaborators, and a Kane art gallery. Also, our **RICH BUCKLER** interview conclusion, a look at the "greatest zine in the history of mankind," **MINESHIFT**, and Part One of our **ARNOLD DRAKE** interview!

(84-page FULL-COLOR magazine) \$8.95
(Digital Edition) \$3.95 • Ships Jan. 2016



DRAW! #31

How-to demos & interviews with Philadelphia artists **JG JONES** (52, Final Crisis, Wanted, Batman and Robin) and **KHOI PHAM** (The Mighty Avengers, The Astonishing Spider-Man, The Mighty World of Marvel), **JAMAR NICHOLAS** reviews of art supplies, **JERRY ORDDWAY** demos the "ORD-way" or drawing, and Comic Art Bootcamp by **MIKE MANLEY** and **BRET BLEVINS!** JG Jones cover! Mature readers only.

(84-page FULL-COLOR magazine) \$8.95
(Digital Edition) \$3.95 • Summer 2015



DRAW! #32

Super-star DC penciler **HOWARD PORTER** demos his creative process, and **JAMAL IGLE** discusses everything from storyboarding to penciling as he gives a breakdown of his working methods. Plus there's **Crusty Critic JAMAR NICHOLAS** reviewing art supplies, **JERRY ORDDWAY** showing the Ord-Way of doing comics, and Comic Art Bootcamp lessons with **BRET BLEVINS** and **Draw!** editor **MIKE MANLEY!** Mature readers only.

(84-page FULL-COLOR magazine) \$8.95
(Digital Edition) \$3.95 • Ships Fall 2015



[Before letters on #53, at right is a photo I received from Jack's son Neal recently. The inscription on the back reads: "Hanukkah 2009, The Kirbys. L-R: Jeremy, Neal, Connie, Jillian (seated), Crystal, Kaia, Tracy, Hallie (Tracy's daughter), Hannah, Leah, Lisa and Gary Speed." Mazel tov, y'all!

Now, alas, some very sad news. Since last issue, we lost several Kirby-related friends. **George Tuska**, who died in October, is remembered elsewhere this issue. **Shel Dorf** passed away November 3 in his beloved San Diego, where he not only founded Comic-Con, but introduced a lot of local fans to Jack through his conventions and visits to the Kirby home. His encouragement and help with this magazine over the years means a lot to me, and he entrusted me with a huge batch of old Comic-Con photos, which I'll make sure are put to good use and shared with our readers, the way Shel wanted.

Also, **Rick Vitone** passed away late last year. Despite numerous phone conversations with him, and many articles for TJKC, I only got to meet him in person once, after a Chicago Comic-Con in the 1990s; my wife Pam and I spent a delightful afternoon chatting with him at his comic book store. I remember asking him, "Why don't you ever actually go to the Con, since it's right here in town?" His response was, "I do comics all day, every day; why would I want to spend my free time at a comic convention?" But this curmudgeonly answer wasn't really genuine, since Rich was a devoted Kirby fan, especially of Jack's Golden Age work—and he spent much of his free time writing some of our most interesting and informative articles on Kirby's work. It's a big loss, for me, and for Kirby fans everywhere.]



The above graffiti was found by my son Peter on a wall in Newcastle (a big city just north of Sydney, NSW). He says it was "about 2 meters high and looked painted or stencilled." It's lifted directly from the cover of NEW GODS #2 with a bit of Desaad's face still visible to the right. Cool, huh?

Shane Foley, AUSTRALIA

I just wanted to add a few thoughts with regards to the unprinted Kirby FF #102. Thanks to page 9 turning up, it appears most of the original book has been put back in order.

Page 8 is missing panel 5, but I think I have found it "hiding in plain sight." If we look at page 7 of #108, we notice that panels



1, 2, 3 & 6 are by Jack, while 5 & 7 are by John. Panel 4 APPEARS to be by John, because he has reworked Ben's body to remove the long sleeved sweater, but the head of The Thing is CLEARLY Jack's. The motion lines on Johnny were probably added, since the panel of him sitting up was cut, but the "stage direction" works for this being panel 5 of Jack's page 8. The edge of the bed visible at the bottom of the panel matches Jack's bed exactly, while John's bed in panel 5 of #108 is totally different. Maybe someone can add a sweater to Ben, remove the motion lines from Johnny and give him a hospital gown and see what we get?

Also, I have a question about the arrangement of the panels on page 10 of Jack's original version. Do we know for a fact that panel 1 belongs at the top of the page? It seems to make more sense that it is panel 3, since Jack often liked the 2/1/2 layout this new arrangement makes. I know the motion lines on the Fantasticar present a problem, but maybe those were construction lines or something.

Page 12 appears to be reassembled properly in the LOST ADVENTURE, so that just leaves the missing panels for page 20. Let's hope they too turn up some day.

Bart J. Mixon, Burbank, CA

I compared the original art of FANTASTIC FOUR: THE LOST ADVENTURE and the pages presented in TJKC #53. Having page 9 surface makes the puzzle easier, but I do not agree with all the conclusions.

I agree on pages 1-6 and 11-19 (or 20 when we split up one of the pages).

Page 7 in the LOST ADVENTURE is very suspicious. I do not think the lower 3 panels are Kirby (middle panel Janus is definitely not Kirby: look at hair and teeth). The big top panel looks very odd: I think it is a smaller panel which has been enlarged/changed (look again at teeth).

Page 8 is OK and continues nicely into page 9 which is also OK.

To see page 10 in TJKC #53 is strange as in the LOST ADVENTURE it is suggested to

consist of 2 separate (parts of) pages! Is it 1 page or not?

The lower 2 strips fit very nicely with page 11. However the top panel shows the Pogoplane ARRIVING at the professors house, while on page 9 Reed and Sue are already IN the house. This can only happen before pages

8 and 9—I think on the suspicious page 7.

To conclude:

On page 7 we should have the panel with the Pogoplane arriving at the house plus the strange big panel which should be smaller/different. Additionally we are missing panels where Reed and Sue are invited into the house. Why they went to the professor is unclear and this is maybe the reason that it was rejected by Stan Lee.

On page 10 only the 2 lower strips are OK. The top strip is missing (It can not be the Pogoplane arriving at the house).

Ruud Lambert, THE NETHERLANDS

Enjoyed your Stan and Jack issue a great deal and it was nice to see Ger's take on a rarely discussed portion of Jack's career, his Atlas work in 1956 and 1957.

Let me send some corrections and additions to the inker article. I'd be wary of sourcing Wikipedia on comic book entries as they can be notoriously slipshod and occasionally pass on incorrect data from other websites. Here are a few examples:

Re: Chic Stone: Stone came out of the Funnies Inc. shop and his Timely credits listed are likely incorrect and sourced from bad data. The JOKER COMICS credit *may* be correct as there is a single installment of the long-running Eustice Hayseed feature (a L'L ABNER rip-off) signed "Chic" in issue #7 (Feb. 1943). That's it! In the 1950s Chic was still in comics, likely working unsigned, but I did find a signed Atlas story he drew in WILD WESTERN #21

(April 1952) where he drew the ongoing "Red Larrabee, The Gunhawk" feature. Since the feature appeared in a second book and the unsigned artwork in later issues is similar, he may have

even more credits.

Re: Paul Reinman. Reinman did not ink Jack Kirby on YELLOW CLAW. Wiki culled bad data from the GCD before I was able to correct the entry in 2006 (why they continue to list the original incorrect entry under the corrected one is beyond me). To expand on Paul Reinman's early career, trained as a fine artist, he flourished in the early 1950s doing the finest work of his career in the Atlas war books of 1952-53 where he drew stark and brutal depictions of World War II Nazi horrors and Cold War atrocities. Along with pre-code horror, these were just wonderfully rendered using exquisite panel lighting techniques. He never hit this height again. Reinman also drew the syndicated TARZAN strip for a while and his own strip MERRIE CHASE in 1950.

Re: Joe Sinnott. Joe did in fact start out ghosting for Tom Gill in early 1951, penciling all the KENT BLAKE stories in issues 1, 2, 4 & 5. Issue #3 was a reverse where Gill penciled and Sinnott inked! Issue #3 features a solo Sinnott penciled and inked story and this was drawn one week before the APACHE KID #8 story, though both have the same cover date of Aug. 1951.

Re: Frank Giacoia. The story in U.S.A. COMICS #3 was indeed likely penciled by Frank Giacoia. A little background on how this was discovered: After a great deal of detective work on my part consisting of showing Carmine Infantino copies of all 4 Jack Frost stories, the general consensus he gave was that it was issue #3's Jack Frost story that was likely penciled by Giacoia, and inked by Carmine Infantino on their debut in comics. Long miscredited as issue #1, #1 was definitely Charles Nicholas, #2 is still unknown and #4 was likely Pierce Rice and Louis Cazeneuve. They were still teenagers and editor Joe Simon likely thought the work still unfinished, so he had George Klein additionally ink and work over the story after it was turned in, explaining *why* I see Klein's work on this in spite of Carmine identifying it as his inks! Could Carmine be mistaken? It's possible, but the only other suspect is issue #2's story that looks suspiciously like Sam Cooper.

Michael J. Vassallo, Mohegan Lake, NY
(Readers, this letter should show you why, for this issue, I went straight to "Doc V" for the bios in our Inkers Gallery. He knows his stuff!)

A few months ago, a newspaper ad that ran in the LOS ANGELES TIMES for INGLORIOUS BASTERDS had a blurb by Elvis Mitchell that read, "OPERATIC AND INTIMATE. A BUZZY FUSION OF SERGIO LEONE, JACK KIRBY, AND G.W. PABST!"

Fred Janssen, Long Beach, CA

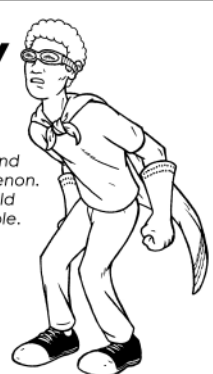
COMIC BOOK FANTHROPOLOGY

By Sean Kleefeld

Comic Book Fanthropology is an inquisitive, insightful, and thought-provoking exploration of the fandom phenomenon. Through his own experience and various profiles, Kleefeld weaves an analysis that is as compelling as it is enjoyable.
—David Gallaher, High Moon

Foreword by Tom Brevoort

Available in paperback & hardcover from
ComicBookFanthropology.com



On page 7 of TJKC #53, it says: GUNSMOKE WESTERN #12 “No One Can Outdraw Him.” That’s wrong: GUNSMOKE started with #32. The issue that is meant here is TWO-GUN WESTERN #12 and the story is called “No Man Can Outdraw Him.”

There’s more: Kirby not only did a 5-page story in KID COLT OUTLAW #86, he also did the covers for #83 and 85. I am sure about this because I have all the old Atlas monster and western books at home.

Rüdiger Schuster, GERMANY

I found Martin Bartolomeo’s article about where Stan and Jack lived particularly interesting. In it, he mentions that the Kirby family did “a lot of moving about, but always within a few blocks of their previous address.” You might wonder why they would bother to move such a short distance, but that was actually a pretty common practice.

My Scottish immigrant great grandparents and their family lived in New York around the same time as the Kirbys, and they too moved frequently. According to my father, there was an oversupply of rental units at the time, and landlords often offered free first and last month’s rent as an incentive. It didn’t take tenants long to figure out that by “moving about” a lot, they could save a bundle. And when you were struggling to support a family, that could make a big difference.

Jim Davidson, Berkeley, CA



I recently filled a gap in my TJKC collection with the purchase of a number of issues during your 50% Off Sale. Something that immediately caught my eye was the question in issue #41 as to whether the cover to a 1972 paperback version of H. G. Wells’ WAR OF THE WORLDS was a Kirby swipe or not. Compare it with the cover of JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA #34 by Mike Sekowsky; it has a very familiar look to it.

Larry Maher, Chester, VA

Congratulations for TJKC #52! I was glad you could finally track down this illustration for your cover. You’ve been searching for it such a long time! Moreover, this New God projected character feels like a Kirby version of Obama to me!

Several points have intrigued me in this issue, the first one being that S&K “Fish in a Barrel” project. Can we hope to read it in TJKC one day?

I was also amused by Jack’s uneasy reaction—typical of a man from his generation—when questioned about sex in the “Train of Thought” interview.

I was a bit puzzled by Steve Englehart’s interview, but his opinion about Jack’s writing, provocative as it was, turned out to be interesting nonetheless. It was risky for you to publish it and you were right to do so (even if, for this foreign reader, Englehart’s points were rather irrelevant).

By the way, what a great team (not to say unlikely!) Kirby formed with my compatriot Maupassant! Thanks for that nice and rare Kirby piece of art!

Thanks also for the rare Jim Bowie story and for the unpublished page 46 of IN THE DAYS OF THE MOB #2! Hope to see more of it!

The highlight of your issue was by far your

excellent work on THOR! I sincerely wish to see this enigma resolved in future issues of TJKC. Hope you’ll find the original art pages that are still missing for you to reconstruct Jack’s original story concerning the origin of Galactus.

Jean Depelley, FRANCE

Most diehard Kirby fans know that there are two versions of the cover to FANTASTIC FOUR #1; the version as originally drawn, and the one which appeared on the printed comic, which had some bystanders altered and a policeman added. However, did you know that there was a THIRD version of the cover which not too many people know about?

The third version, which I refer to as the ‘hybrid’ version, appeared on the reprint of FF #1 which accompanied the GOLDEN BOOK AND RECORD SET back around the mid-1960s, or just after. This version is essentially the ‘missing man’ version with original, unaltered bystanders, but the policeman has been added (redrawn, I think) to make it more like the cover as originally published (although the number, date and price have been omitted). Interestingly, as probably the first facsimile edition ever of this landmark issue, Dick Ayers is credited as the inker of the issue on the back of the record, although his surname is misspelled as “Ayres.”

Thanks for printing my letter in issue #53. I assume that you were merely using it as a springboard to address the point of you often being accused of having an anti-Stan Lee bias, without actually laying the blame at my door for doing so, but for those readers to whom that subtle distinction may not be clear from your response, may I take this opportunity to dispel any uncertainty on the matter.

When I said that your “‘prejudices were showing,” I was referring to your specific prejudices in relation to FF #108 and your obvious preference for Jack’s version of the story over Stan’s. This is clear from your introductory comments in FF: THE LOST ADVENTURE, so I don’t think you’d contest that simple fact. You also said in this intro that the FF “has never reached the heights it attained when Kirby was on it,” which confirms your own pro-Jack Kirby bias. (Hey, it’s no crime—the mag IS called THE JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR after all.) Obviously you mean in regard to artistic achievement (in your opinion), because it’s my understanding that sales went UP after Kirby left the mag. (Apparently the same thing happened with SPIDER-MAN when Ditko jumped ship.)

When I referred to “the sometimes worrying aspect of your magazine—the almost ‘deification’ of Jack as an artist and storyteller BY SOME FANS” (emphasis mine), I think it’s quite clear that I am not accusing YOU of such thinking in this instance. I was, in fact, referring to comments in various letters and some articles which have appeared in the magazine (which reflects most, if not all, shades of thought), and I am smart enough to know that such opinions don’t necessarily reflect those of “the Management.” However, I do find such “Jack could do no wrong” attitudes quite wearying—not to mention misguided—but your magazine would not be doing its job properly if it ignored such (in my opinion) blinkered thinking.

Your speculation on Marvel releasing FF #108 in the same month as NEW GODS #1 as a “smart commercial move” seems to have, at first glance, a certain logic to it, but I’m not convinced that it bears scrutiny. First of all, if it were true, Marvel would have hyped it to the rooftops, but it received no out-of-the-ordinary publicity. Secondly, Kirby’s art was mainly buried inside the book—with a Buscema cover and (mostly) splash page, it would not have been immediately obvious to the casual browser at the spinner

racks that Kirby had any involvement in the issue. Thirdly, as NEW GODS was not the first Kirby title that DC COMICS released (if I remember correctly), it would have been a rather half-hearted, “after-the-horse-had-bolted” attempt to make a dent in DC’s sales. I think it likely that it came about more as a result of practical considerations. They had paid for the art, so rather than let it gather dust in a drawer, use it and get their money’s worth—otherwise Stan would probably just have had Big John Buscema draw the whole issue and avoid what you consider to be “a real mess that, quite frankly, didn’t make much sense.” When you think about it, as Marvel was trying to establish a new guy as the regular artist on the book, there’s a possibility that it could actually have worked against them by reminding readers of what they were missing, so my “we’ve paid for it so use it” idea has more merit than at first you might consider.

Which brings me back to prejudices. I’ll wager that if FF #108 had appeared word-for-word and layout-by-layout the same, but drawn entirely by Big John, then you wouldn’t have had the slightest problem with it. It’s okay... I’ll take a cheque.

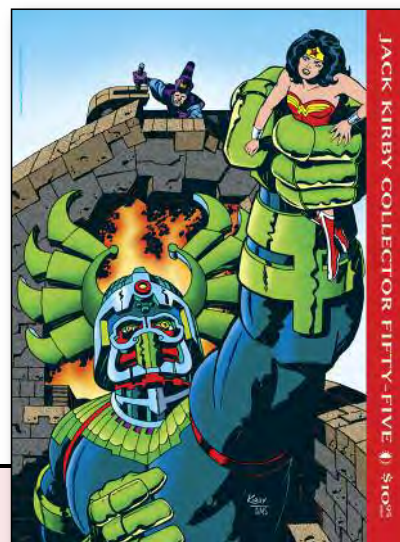
Gordon ‘Kid’ Robson

(Nope, it’d still suck. But I’ll take a check, too!)

I really enjoyed the latest TJKC #53 but was disappointed to see Syd Shores left out of the section “Marvel Age of Inkers.” He definitely deserved to be highlighted with the group you featured. Syd’s inking defined the late 1960s Captain America from TOS #99 through nearly all of the rest of Kirby’s run (CA #100-109). Just as Joe Sinnott was the right inker for the FANTASTIC FOUR, and as was Vince Colletta for THOR, so was Syd’s rendition of Kirby’s CAP. He gave it a unique look that was more realistic than Joe’s inking, yet still bold and exciting. As a comic reader who was buying all of the Lee-Kirby Marvel masterpieces from the mid-to-late ‘60s, I really appreciated Stan’s decision to vary the inkers so that each mag Kirby drew had a distinct look and feel.

Marty Erhart, Austin, TX

(Marty, please see this issue’s Inker’s Gallery.)



NEXT ISSUE: #55 presents “Kirby Goes To Hollywood!” In it, SERGIO ARAGONÉS and MELL LAZARUS recall Kirby’s BOB NEWHART TV show appearance, we compare the three most recent STAR WARS films to Jack’s “The Pact” and “Himon,” Joe Ruby & Ken Spears are interviewed, there’s unknown tidbits about Jack’s encounters with Frank Zappa, Paul McCartney, and... John Lennon (?!), plus Mark Evanier’s regular column, a Kirby pencil art gallery, a Golden Age Kirby story, and a Kirby cover inked by PAUL SMITH! The deadline for contributions is April 30, and it ships in late July!

#54 CREDITS:

John Morrow, Editor/Designer
Lily Morrow, Scanning
Eric Nolen-Weathington, Proofreader
Rand Hoppe, Webmaster
Tom Ziuko, Colorist
Chris Fama, Art Restoration

SPECIAL THANKS TO

ALL OUR CONTRIBUTORS:

Michael Aushenker • Dick Ayers
 Blake Bell • Jerry Boyd
 Dwight Boyd • Tom Brevoort
 RL Bryant, Jr. • Mike Burkey
 Sal Buscema • Dewey Cassell
 Gene Colan • Jean Depelley
 Stephen Drewes
 Steve Englehart • Mark Evanier
 Barry Forshaw • Ron Frenz
 Scott Fresina • Mike Gartland
 Russ Garwood • Glen Gold
 Stan Goldberg • David Hamilton
 Bruce Hannum
 Heritage Auctions • Rand Hoppe
 Mike Kelly • Karl Kesel
 Sean Kleefeld • Robert Knust
 Peter Koch • Stan Lee
 Larry Lieber • Don Mangus
 Frederic Manzano
 Bruce McCorkindale
 Mark McDermott
 Adam McGovern • Will Murray
 Owen O’Leary • John Romita Sr.
 Steve Rude • Ben Samuels
 Tom Scioi • Richard A. Scott
 Marie Severin • Joe Sinnott
 Mark Sinnott • Keith Srutowski
 Michael Stewart • William Stout
 Aaron Sultan • Roy Thomas
 Herb Trimpe • George Tuska
 Jim Vadeboncouer, Jr.
 Dr. Michael J. Vassallo
 Wesley C. Winters, Jr.
 Marv Wolfman • Tom Ziuko
and of course The Kirby Estate

If we’ve forgotten anyone, please let us know!

CONTRIBUTE & GET FREE ISSUES!

The Jack Kirby Collector is a not-for-profit publication, put together with submissions from Jack’s fans around the world. We don’t pay for submissions, but if we print art or articles you submit, we’ll send you a free copy of the issue it appears in. Here’s a tentative list of upcoming themes, but we treat these themes very loosely, so anything you write may fit somewhere. So get writing, and send us copies of your art!

GOT A THEME IDEA? PLEASE WRITE US!

#55: KIRBY GOES TO HOLLYWOOD!

An issue all about Jack’s career in animation and film!

#56: THE IMMORTAL KIRBY!

It’s gods, gods, and more gods, from the Fourth World to Eternals and beyond!

#57: UNFINISHED SAGAS!

All the series, stories, and arcs Jack never got to properly finish.

#58: JACK KIRBY: WRITER!

A look at the good, bad, and ugly of the oft-maligned writing skills of the King. Here’s your chance to weigh in!

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:

Submit artwork as:

- 1) Color or B&W photocopies.
- 2) 300ppi TIFF or JPEG scans

Submit articles as:

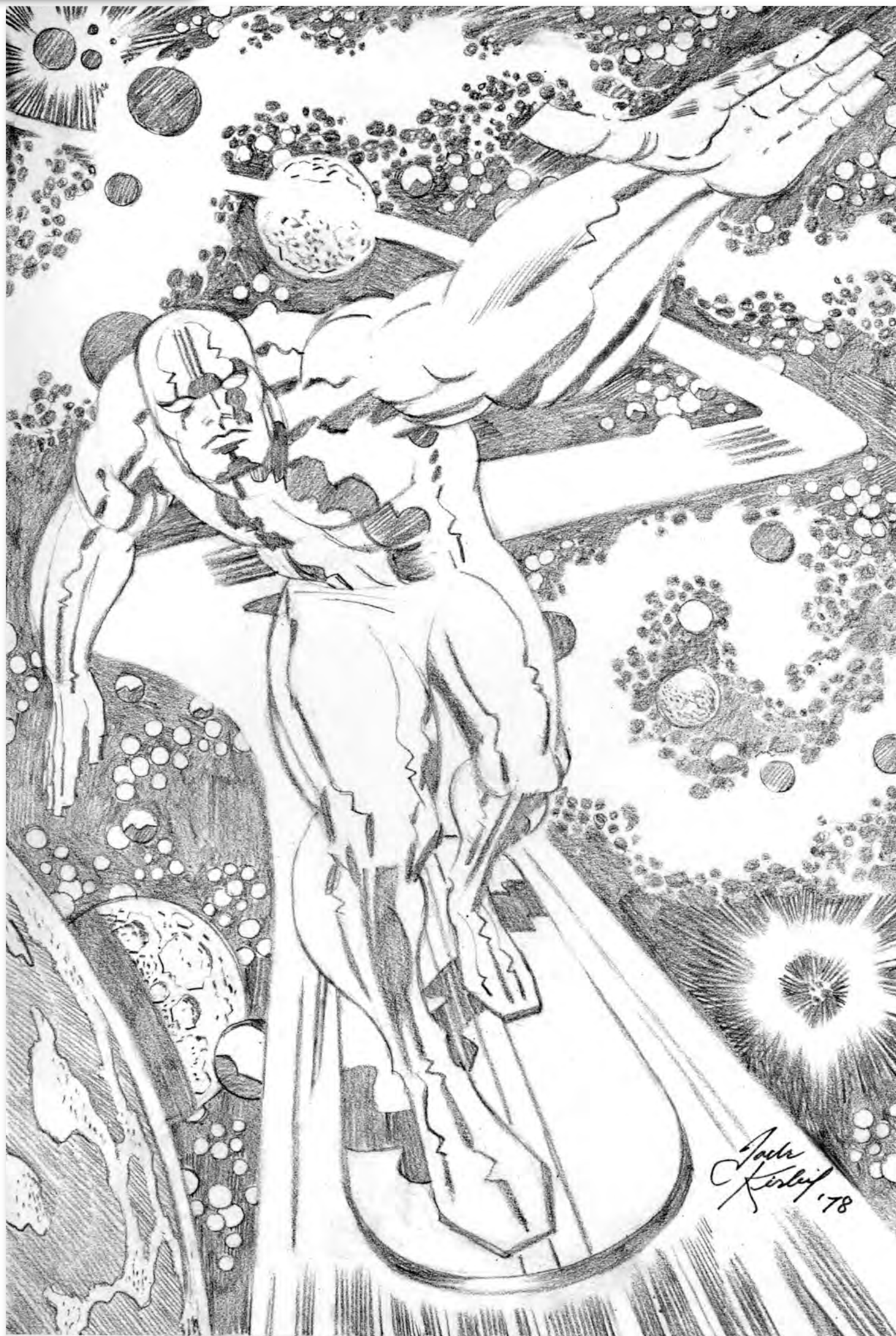
- 1) E-mail: twomorrow@aol.com
- 2) ASCII or RTF text files.
- 3) Typed or laser printed pages.

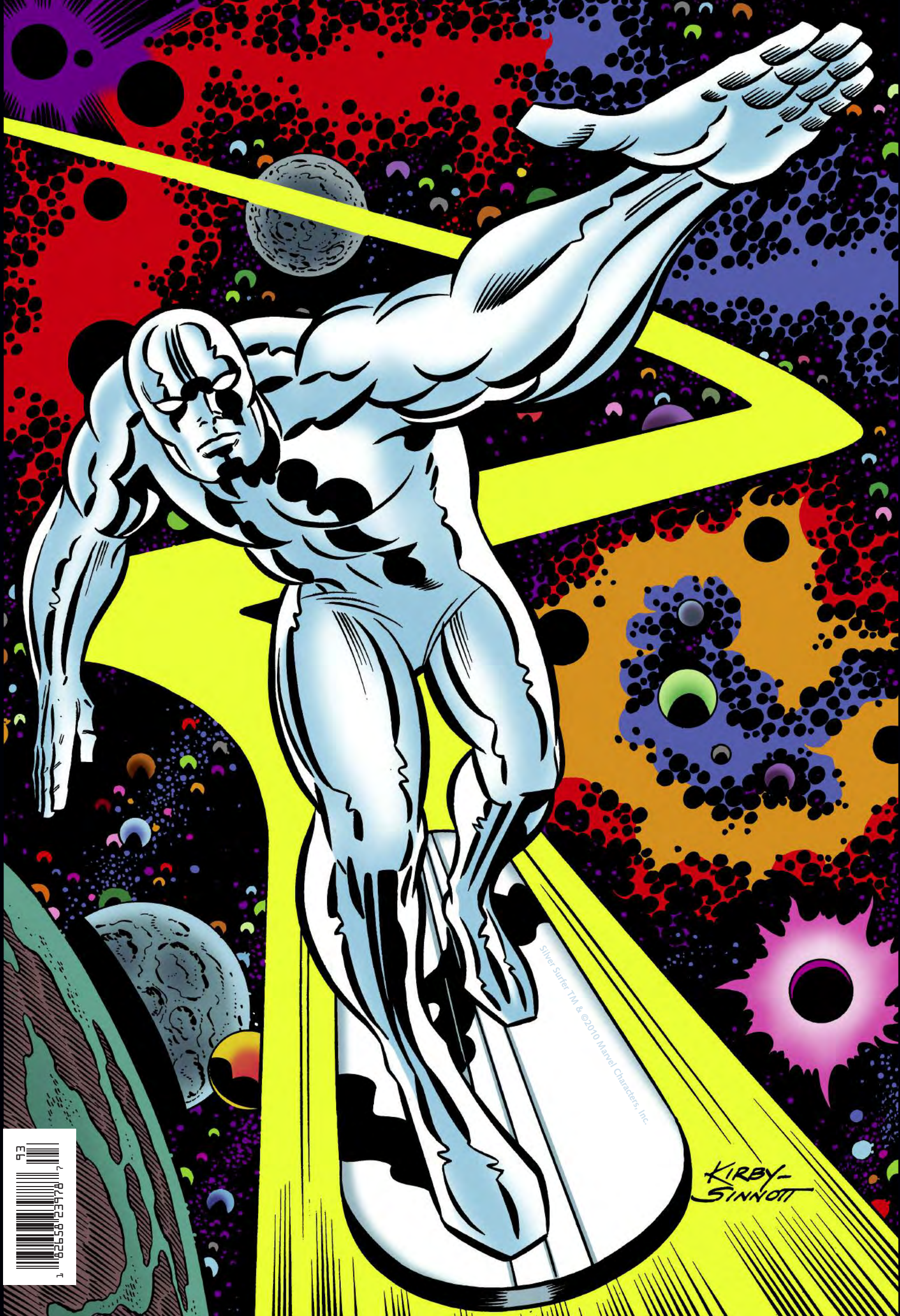
Please include background information whenever possible.

PARTING SHOT

An awesome Silver Surfer drawing by Jack from 1978. This piece first appeared in the *Kirby Masterworks* portfolio from that year, and as then, we'll sign off with the pencil drawing, and the accompanying inked version by Joe Sinnott on this issue's back cover.

Silver Surfer TM & ©2010 Marvel Characters, Inc.





Silver Surfer TM & ©2010 Marvel Characters, Inc.

KIRBY-SINNOTT

