



THE

Stan Lee

UNIVERSE

Interviews with and mementos from **"THE MAN"** who changed comics and pop culture



Includes rarities from **THE STAN LEE ARCHIVES!**



edited by
Danny Fingeroth
and
Roy Thomas

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About the material that makes up THE STAN LEE UNIVERSE

Some of this book's contents originally appeared in TwoMorrows' *Write Now!* #18 and *Alter Ego* #74, as well as various other sources. This material has been redesigned and much of it is accompanied by different illustrations than when it first appeared.

Some material is from **Roy Thomas's** personal archives. Some was created especially for this book.

Approximately **one-third** of the material in the **SLU** was found by **Danny Fingeroth** in June 2010 at the **Stan Lee Collection** (aka "**The Stan Lee Archives**") of the **American Heritage Center** at the University of Wyoming in Laramie, and is material that has rarely, if ever, been seen by the general public. The transcriptions—done especially for this book—of audiotapes of 1960s radio programs featuring Stan with other notable personalities, should be of special interest to fans and scholars alike.

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To the memory of Blanche S. Fingeroth, who, above and beyond the call of maternal duty, bought comic books for me, per my detailed written instructions, during those sweltering Julys and Augusts.

And to Stan Lee, who wrote and edited the best of those comics, and continues to amaze to this day.

—DF

*To Stan—
for being an inspiration and often mentor for the past half century:*

—RT

Stan Lee Meets [Castle of] Frankenstein

An early Marvel Age interview with Stan,
conducted by Ted White



This interview first appeared in 1965's *Castle of Frankenstein* #12. Note how it was so early in the Marvel Age that the cover bills it as an "Interview with Marvel Comics." [Castle of Frankenstein and non-Marvel characters ©2011 the copyright holders. Spider-Man ©2011 Marvel Characters, Inc.]

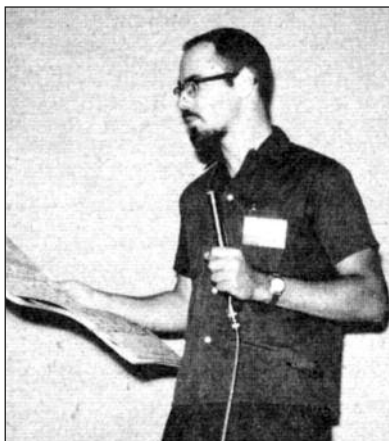
"A Conversation with the Man behind Marvel Comics: Stan Lee," as this piece was called when it first appeared, was one of the earliest Stan interviews of substance ever done. This is only to be expected, since the 1965 interviewer was Ted White, a sophisticated science-fiction and comics fan. Ted's early-1950s one-shot fanzine **The Facts behind Superman** was, as Bill Schelly writes in his 1997 book **The Golden Age of Comic Fandom**, "one of the earliest known attempts to write an authoritative in-depth article about a comic book superhero." In 1960 he wrote the second installment of [the fanzine] **Xero's** innovative "All in Color... for a Dime" series—and in the mid-1960s and after, he was becoming a published science-fiction author (**Phoenix Prime**, et al.) and would soon be the editor of the sf magazine **Amazing**.

Here's what Ted said about the interview in 2007, with several decades' perspective:

"I have very few memories of the actual interview... but looking back on it, and rereading it, I think it went well and opens a window into Stan before he was the darling of the college lecture circuit and a media celebrity in his own right."

—DF & RT

[A version of this interview appeared in **Alter Ego** #74.]



Interviewer Ted White circa 1966, acting as auctioneer at an early comics convention. This photo originally appeared in Larry Ivie's magazine *Monsters and Heroes*, and later in *Alter Ego* #58. [©2011 the respective copyright holders.]

TED WHITE: You've been with Marvel since what...1944?

STAN LEE: I'm pretty rotten at dates. But it's been about 25 years, 27 years ... something like that. [NOTE: Actually, as is now well known, Stan came to work for Timely Comics in 1941. —DF & RT.]

TW: But the new look in Marvel occurred relatively recently. To what do you attribute this?

LEE: Well, I guess it started with the first

TW: What led you to do those? Up until then there had been no superheroes for about five or six years in this company.

LEE: Before I answer... would anybody like a sourball?

TW: Thanks... .

LEE: What color? I seem to have red, yellow, orange... couple of greens.

TW: I feel very strange conducting an interview with a sourball in my mouth.

LEE: Well, I guess we were looking for something to hook some new readers. Also, I think boredom had a little to do with it. We had been turning out books for about 20 years. Same old type all the time... so I figured, let's try something a little more offbeat. Let's try to... I think the big policy was to avoid the clichés. For example, in the **Fantastic Four**, the first cliché was: all superheroes wore costumes [so we didn't use them]. We soon learned that was a mistake because, much as the readers like offbeat things, there are certain basics that we must have, and apparently superhero fans do demand costumes, as we learned in the subsequent mail.

TW: They've been after you to change costumes around ever since.

issue of **Fantastic Four** about five years ago. They were our first real offbeat superheroes. They sort of started the trend.

Tell It To The Doctor

Stan's correspondence with comics fandom pioneer Dr. Jerry G. Bails

by Roy Thomas and Danny Fingerroth

Along with Roy Thomas, **Jerry Bails, Ph.D.** was one of the founders of comics fandom, including, in 1961, founding *Alter Ego* magazine, which was later published by Roy. Jerry also became one of comics' greatest indexers, compiling the first *Who's Who of Comics Creators*. Here, from Roy's archives, are some letters Jerry exchanged with Stan in the early days of Marvel. They're a fascinating glimpse into the thought processes of both men. Sadly, Bails passed away in 2006 at age 73.

MAGAZINE MANAGEMENT COMPANY

655 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK 21, N. Y. • TELEPHONE 8-7900

SEP 1 1961

8/28/61

Dear Jerry:

Enjoyed reading ALTER-EGO and the COMICCOLLECTOR, and got a kick out of your little critique of THE FANTASTIC FOUR, written by Roy Thomas.

Just to correct a few small inaccuracies though, I'm not a "former" editor of *Timely*— I've been editor and art director of that redoubtable institution for the past 21 years, and hope to continue ad infinitum. Also, it is doubtful that Mr. Thomas is the "only person who bought a copy" (although he said that humorously, of course) because judging by early sales reports, I think we have a winner on our hands!

As for the future of the F.F., we WILL have :
COSTUMES
A DIFFERENT TREATMENT (art-wise) OF THE TORCH
ADDITIONAL NEW CHARACTERS IN MONTHS TO COME
(Don't be too surprised to meet Sub-Mariner again, or Captain America! Who knows??)
AND A FEW MORE SURPRISES... so stay with us, pal!

Would be interested in your opinion of another new mag due to go on sale soon— *AMAZING ADULT FANTASY*. We think it's a smash.

Regarding some of the various comments concerning the F.F., we have purposely refrained from letting invisible girl (oops, sorry!) Invisible Girl walk thru walls, and from giving TOO MUCH super powers to our characters, as we feel that effects like those are chiefly of appeal to the YOUNGER readers, and we are trying (perhaps vainly?) to reach a slightly older, more sophisticated group.

Enough for now— keep up the good work.

Regards,



Jerry Bails and Roy Thomas at the Fandom Reunion luncheon, Chicago, 1997. [©2002 Complex City]

Dr. Jerry G. Bails in 1965
[courtesy interfan.org]



August 31, 1961
Dear Mr. Lee: (Aw, that's too formal for someone who has followed your work so closely for 21 years. I'll start this letter again.)
Dear Stan,

(Now that's better.) Thanks very much for your letter. I'm glad you liked ALTER-EGO and the COMICCOLLECTOR. I'm sorry about referring to you as a "former" editor; I was trying to identify you for my readers who had seen Roy Thomas' article on the ALL-WINNERS SQUAD, but I ran out of space at the bottom of the page. (By the way, how many appearances did the SQUAD make? I have only one of their adventures in my collection, but seem to recall a second. I'd pay anything to get a hold of the other issues.)

I'm glad to see that the F.F. will have the changes that you mentioned. Most of my correspondents clamored for these changes even before seeing Roy's review. *Namor*, as friend or foe (or both), will be a welcomed addition.

AMAZING ADULT FANTASY is excellent, and will probably sell well; however, fans are complaining that they can't find your mags at local stands. I don't know much about the distribution of comics, but your comics aren't being circulated among all your potential buyers. I know that for a

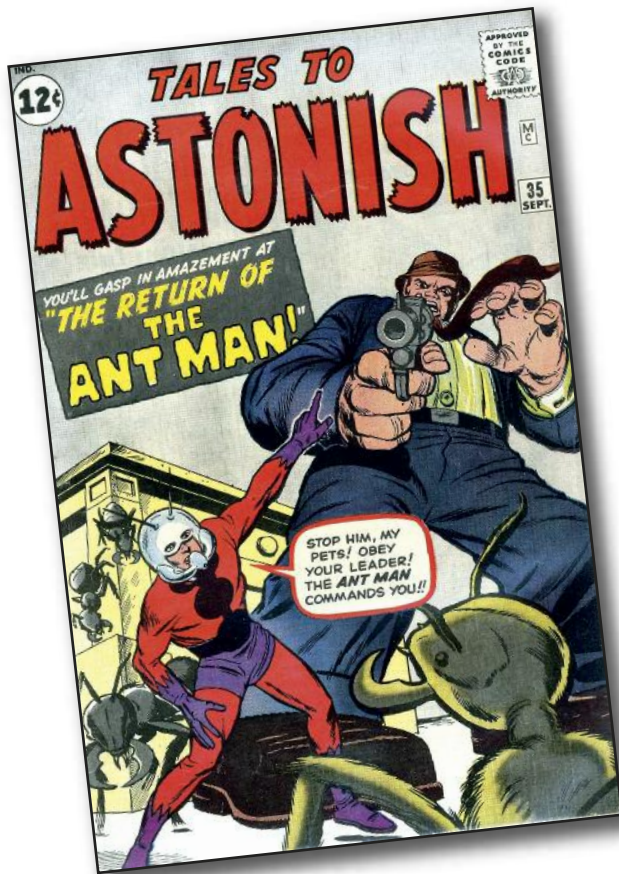
Just before I put the next issue of the COMICCOLLECTOR to bed, I'll write to ask you for news items for "On the Drawing Board." I hope that you will help us out. There are some 500 active fans who will greatly appreciate it. By the way, the COMICCOLLECTOR will go out free to all the names and addresses you might care to supply. Also I'd like to send sample copies of ALTER-EGO to any artists and writers on your staff who would be interested. A card with their names and addresses is all I need.

As a comics collector of long standing and an enthusiastic fan of the current revival of old heroes, I am always looking for rare old comics and original art. It would be a great pleasure and honor to have the original art for the first issue of the FANTASTIC FOUR to mount on the walls of my den. If these original panels are just destroyed (Heaven forbid!) I would happily pay to have them mailed on to me.

Best wishes,

Jerry Bails

P.S. I sincerely hope that you will continue to be the editor of *Timely* (?) comics ad infinitum.



The cover spotlighting the second appearance of the Ant-Man—but his first in costume—from *Tales to Astonish* #35 (September 1962). Pencils by Jack Kirby, inks by Dick Ayers. [©2011 Marvel Characters, Inc.]

From *Fantastic Four* #7 (October 1962), a beautiful Lee-Kirby-Ayers full-page illustration.



Here are some fascinating excerpts from a letter from Stan to Jerry dated January 9, 1963.

FF is easily our favorite book here at the Marvel bullpen. It's my baby and I love it. People have asked for original scripts- actually, we don't even HAVE any. I write the story plot- go over it with Jack- he draws it up based on our hasty conferences- then, with his drawings in front of me, I write the captions and dialogue, usually right on the original art work! It seems to work out well,

As for SPIDER-MAN, I wouldn't be surprised if he turns into a real winner, judging by the mail ~~xxx~~ we're receiving-- tremendous enthusiasm from the readers.

Mail-- that's my biggest problem. I take it too damn seriously- read each and every letter- wish I could answer 'em all- we get over a hundred a day- sometimes over 500!!! (after a long week-end). Can't keep up with it. Fans keep asking for MORE letters pages- wish we didn't have ANY! It's like a tiger by the tail- can't let go-

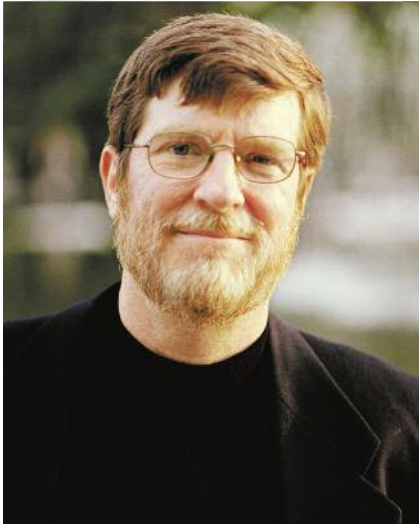
Stan the Man meets Conan (but not the Barbarian), 1968

Interview with Neal Conan, August 12, 1968

Transcribed by Steven Tice

Copyedited by Danny Fingerroth

FROM THE
STAN LEE
ARCHIVES



*Neal Conan is the award-winning host of **Talk of the Nation**, the national news-talk call-in show from National Public Radio News. Beginning his journalism career as a freelance reporter and writer in New York, Conan joined NPR in 1977, specializing in foreign affairs and national security issues.*

You can hear or read a transcript of the 2010 interview at this link:

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=130862700>

But here in these pages, we present Neal Conan and Stan Lee on August 12, 1968...

NEAL CONAN: My name is Neal Conan and I'm in the studio with Stan Lee, the single person most responsible for what many thousands of people call "the Marvel Age of comics." Stan, at this point you're the editor as well as writing several of the magazines yourself, isn't that right?

STAN LEE: That's right, Neal. I think I'd rather you had said millions of people. We tell ourselves we have millions of readers.

NC: What is your circulation?

SL: Actually, it's sixty million a year. Now, I don't know that that's sixty million different people. There may be a couple of repeat sales there, but that's how many magazines we sell, approximately.

NC: Does that make you number one in the field?

SL: Oh, well, we think we'd be number one in the field if we sold two. No, from point of view of quantity, I think there's another company—who shall be nameless, as far as I'm concerned—that sells a few more, but they print a lot more. We sell more of what we print than anybody else.

*The network's **All Things Considered** won numerous awards during Conan's tenure as producer and executive producer, and he has received many personal awards as well. A comics fan, Conan has actually appeared as himself in Marvel's comics over the years.*

In 1968, very early in his career, Conan interviewed Stan Lee on New York's WBAI-FM. An audio copy of the interview was found in Stan's University of Wyoming archives, and we have transcribed and lightly edited it for presentation here.

*When informed of our plans to run the interview, Conan was inspired to again interview Stan, which he did on October 27, 2010 on **Talk of the Nation**. Introducing Stan, and referring to the '68 interview, Conan, tongue placed firmly in cheek, said:*

"Forty-two years ago, a devilishly handsome young man recorded one of his very first interviews with a legend in the comic book business... . In those days, I thought Stan Lee was old. Today, we all know he's immortal."



A Marvel Universe version of Neal Conan has actually appeared in several comics. Here, we see Neal in *Uncanny X-Men* #226 (February 1988) in a story written by Chris Claremont, with art by Marc Silvestri and Dan Green. [©2011 Marvel Characters, Inc.]

Face-to-Face with Wertham's Partner!

FROM THE
STAN LEE
ARCHIVES

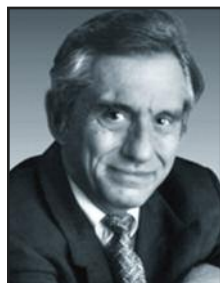
Stan debates Dr. Hilde Mosse on the Barry Farber Show

WOR-AM Radio, November 12, 1968

Transcribed by Steven Tice

Copyedited by Danny Fingeroth

Barry Farber was a prominent local New York late night radio host in 1968, when this program aired. Later, he would become, and remains, a national media figure. In this program, he brought Stan together with **Frederic Wertham's** colleague, **Dr. Hilde Mosse**, a figure as controversial and prominent in American psychotherapy as was Wertham. Although the show, discovered on audiotape in Stan's Wyoming archives, takes place 14 years after the publication of Wertham's anti-comics tome, **Seduction of the Innocent**, for Mosse, the issues are still the same as in the 1950s. Also on the broadcast are animation luminaries **Dennis Marks** and **Barry Yellen**. The transcript has been edited to emphasize the dialogue of the primary "adversaries," Lee and Mosse. Some of Farber's, Marks's, and Yellen's comments have been deleted or shortened due to space limitations, as were commercials and station identifications. Also, while Mosse's syntax may seem a little odd, bear in mind that, as a refugee from Nazi Germany, she spoke in the manner of someone who, while highly intelligent and educated, was not a native English speaker. Hilde Mosse died in 1982, at age 70.



Barry Farber has been a major radio personality for decades, and is still active today.

BARRY FARBER: I'm Barry Farber... Onward now into an argument. Not as big an argument as we would have had a couple years ago, but, who knows, in some aspects maybe a bigger one, about comic books, television cartoons, and movies for children. Hilde Mosse is a child psychiatrist. She's a medical doctor, of course. She's Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at New York Medical College, the School Bureau of Child Guidance. Let me get all the titles straight now so we don't crash on takeoff. You are School Psychiatrist at the Bureau of Child Guidance. Right?



An undated photo of Hilde L. Mosse.

HILDE MOSSE: That's right.
BF: In other words, you are as official a child psychiatrist as one can possibly be. You are just as official as Dr. Frederic Wertham. If he were to walk into this room, neither one of you would salute the other one. You are both equally competent in this argument, right?

HM: Yes, we worked together for years.

BF: Is your attitude the same as his?

HM: Yes, that's right.

BF: I've got to congratulate my assistants because we've got a great broadcast before we even begin. Dr. Wertham is famous for his comments about and, frankly, against most of the literature for children, including cartoons, comic books, and the like. I haven't heard a conciliatory remark from Dr. Wertham in ten years of Wertham-watching. Regardless of what's happened inside the industry, Dr. Wertham seems to

maintain his anxiety and his powers of observation, and, in fact, his opposition to most of what's going on inside comic strips, and comic books, and television cartoons for children.

Barry Yellen is president of Childhood Productions. He has, before the age of 21, directed, produced, or written 582 different plays. Mr. Yellen, right now you are president of Childhood Productions, involved in all sorts of children's—

BY: Children's films, motion pictures, theaters, and television. Primarily theaters.

BF: Stan Lee is with us, and he came in with such a beautiful woman I almost said to myself, "Holy mackerel. I'm not going to tell anybody, because who in the world has a right to walk into the studio with a woman that beautiful?" Well, Stan Lee does, because that's Mrs. Lee. And you know something? I made up my mind not to say a word if you come in with anybody. Before I even saw her, I was looking in the mirror. Look, it's not even a mirror, the glass right here, I could see her coming in and I just made up my mind I wasn't going to say a word, but I have a note in front of me that she's Mrs. Lee. So we're all going to live happily ever after for the duration of the broadcast.

STAN LEE: Hopefully, Barry.

BF: Dennis Marks is a TV writer. The last time Dennis Marks was on these microphones I said, "Let's see, now, you're a TV cartoonist." And I knew good and well that he wasn't a cartoonist. He wrote, he wrote the dialogue.



Here's Stan in the mid-1960s.

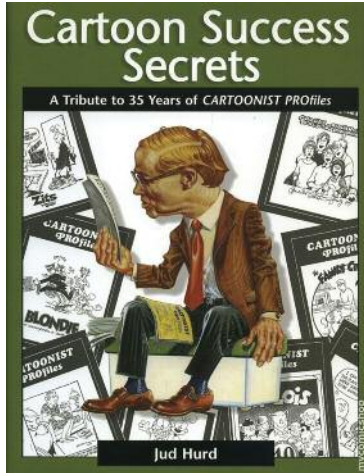


Stan's wife Joan, here in a modeling pose, was with him at the talk show.

Legend meets Legend

Stan Lee interviewed by Jud Hurd
of Cartoonist PROfiles magazine

From *Cartoonist PROfiles* #4, November 1969



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According to *Jud Hurd's* 2004 book, *Cartoon Success Secrets: A Tribute To 35 Years Of Cartoonist Profiles*: "Author Jud Hurd may tell friends that he's been 'in the cartooning business since year one,' but it only seems like it. The venerable cartooning editor actually began in 1925. In 1969, he founded *Cartoonist PROfiles*, which has been providing an insider's perspective on the cartooning industry ever since."

Hurd passed away in 2005, and with his death, the magazine ceased publication.

Stan Lee, the very articulate editor of *Marvel Comics*, is always an articulate man to talk to. *Cartoonist PROfiles* readers can listen in here on a conversation we had with him on a recent afternoon.

Q: Are you anxious to receive scripts or drawings from people who want to get into the comic book field.

A: Not really. If somebody who's absolutely fantastic should be available, we would try to make a spot for him, but we have about all the people we need at the moment. We've been very lucky since you and I talked several years ago. By trying hard for years, and combing the nation, and calling everybody we knew, or ever had known, and trying to develop new talent, we now have reached the point where we have what I think is about the best comic magazine art staff ever assembled. We can always use a good writer, but I'm even reluctant to say that, because our demands are so difficult that even a good writer might not be able to write for us. There's so much else, besides being a good writer, that enters into doing the type of material we need.

Q: In the past, many young artists who first worked for the comic books have later switched over to doing syndicated newspaper comic strips. Does the answer you have just given mean that young people can no longer look forward to this?

A: Well, any answer that I give you is only true for this particular moment in time—now next week we may decide to put out a few new magazines, in which case I'll be looking for people again. I look at the samples of anyone who comes up to



[Cartoonist PROfiles Interview and cover copyright ©2004 Jud Hurd and copyright ©2007 Philip J. Hurd.]

the office, and if the fellow's good and we can't use him, I'll of course take his name anyway because we never know what will develop. Here's one problem that an editor or an art director always has. Suppose somebody came up right now with samples and he's better than the men I have now. Let's say that I don't have a book to accommodate him—the only thing I could do is to fire somebody who's working for me now. Now I would owe that to our company, if this new man is better, to get rid of one of those men now working for me. But, as a human being, how do you react to a situation like this? It's a difficult problem. In the comic magazine field, it seems that we always have too



As a kid, Stan liked to copy the art from comic strips such as Chester Gould's *Dick Tracy*.
[©2011 Tribune Media Services.]

Stan the Rock 'n' Roll Man

Stan's fans include rockers from the 1960s to today

**FROM THE
STAN LEE
ARCHIVES**

While Stan's tastes in pop music run more toward the Sinatra end of the spectrum—or why else would he have nicknamed artist John Romita “Ring-a-Ding,” taken from the title of a Sinatra album?—Lee's Marvel comics have always been of interest to rock 'n' rollers. More than a few of them made a point of meeting The Man over the years, and Stan talked about many of those encounters in the Bullpen Bulletins. In the Stan's Soapbox section of the Bullpen Bulletins for September 1968, Stan closed out by saying:

“And now we've gotta cut out—Country Joe and the Fish just arrived to visit us—and we don't wanna keep 'em out of the water too long!”

Now that may not have been their first visit to the Bullpen, or it may have been a message that was

Stan Lee
Marvel Comics Group
625 Madison Ave.
New York, N.Y.

Country Joe & the Fish
P. O. Box 2233
Berkeley, Calif.
May 19, 1967

Dear Stan,

No doubt you'll be pleased to know that your creations have so entered the consciousness of the generation that they emerge, yes actually emerge, in the folk music of the times. If you listen carefully to this record on your office stereo (every office has an office stereo, in New York, right?) you'll hear and see two actual figments.

Quite naturally we read your comics all the time here instead of working because our beloved leader J.E. Hoover said that our kind always did read comic books.

So we thought after you listened to the record we could make a deal. Here's the deal: you let us join the MMMS for freebies, and we'll let you join the Intergalactic Fish Fan Club for freebies. And then we can trade posters, and then... why the world is the limit. That's our deal, and I sure hope you dig it 'cause we dig you!

peace and joy,

Country Joe & the Fish

CJF/nf

5/26/67

Hi, Piscatorial Pals!

Never mind your record! What I wanna know is-- why types your letters? He, she, or it is great!

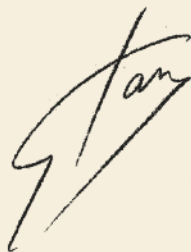
Anyway, we're deliciously delighted that our somewhat forensic fame has reached as far as the hallowed harmonious halls of Berkeley-- and penetrated, how'er insidiously, the liltin' lyrics of thine own rollickin' record!

What I'm trying to say, guys, is-- enjoyed your tintinnabulation' tunes-- got a kick out of our mention-- and am glad to dub thee-- one and all-- Merry Marchers in Perpetuity!

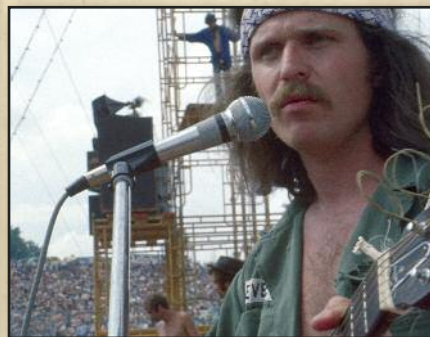
Your membership goodies are herewith dispatched. Any group that can come with a name like Country Joe and the Fish can't be all bad!

Hang loose, gang-- you're our type of heroes.

'Nuff said!



delayed in being published, but in any case, we found, in Stan's Wyoming archives, the 1967 correspondence on this page between Stan and his “Piscatorial Pals.”



Country Joe at Woodstock, 1969. [© 2009 Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc.]

For those of you who weren't around back then, “Country Joe” McDonald is probably best known for leading the crowd at 1969's Woodstock Music Festival

in an off-color cheer, which is featured in the 1970 *Woodstock* movie. But if that's all you know of his and the Fish's music, it's worth checking out what else they've done, as a band and individually. Certainly you might find their song “Superbird” of interest, because it namechecks some Marvel superheroes.

Stan Lee: The Marvel Bard

An interview conducted by Mike Bourne, 1970

This conversation is reprinted from **Changes** magazine for April 15, 1970, and was located for us by **Barry Pearl**, Fearless Front Facer (a '60s Marvel designation of high fan achievement). It is reprinted with permission of Mike Bourne. [The interview also appeared in **Alter Ego** #74.]

Marvel Comics spring from modest Madison Avenue offices randomly decorated by oversize drawings, copy, and other assorted fanciful diversions. In several small cubicles, like freaky monks, a staff of artists variously evoke the next month's adventures in all-brilliant color and style. While in his office, his complete Shakespeare close at hand, editor Stan Lee smiles broadly behind his cigar and beckons me enter his head.

MIKE BOURNE: With which superhero do you personally most identify?

STAN LEE: Probably Homer the Happy Ghost. You know, I honestly don't identify with *any* of them. Or maybe I identify with *all* of them. But I've never thought of it. I've been asked this question before and I never know how to answer it, because I think I identify with whichever one I'm writing at the moment. If I'm writing **Thor**, I'm a Norse god at that moment. If I'm writing **The Hulk**, I have green skin and everyone hates me. And when I stop writing them, they're sort of out of my mind. I'm not identifying with anyone.

MB: You're like an actor when you write.

LEE: Yeah, I think more than anything. In fact, when I was young I thought I would be an actor, and I did act. And when I write now, my wife always makes fun of me. She says: "Stan, what did you say?" I say: "Nothing, I'm writing." She says: "Well, you talk to yourself." And I find very often I'm saying the lines out loud. And I'm acting! You know: "Take that, you rat!"

MB: Asking a writer where he gets his ideas is like asking an actor how he learned all those lines, but Marvel is known as the House of Ideas.

LEE: Only because I originally *said* we were the House of Ideas.

MB: All right, but obviously you have mythological influences. And Jim Steranko's "House of Ravenlock" for **S.H.I.E.L.D.** was very much from the Gothic novel. But what are your primary sources, or your favorite sources for material? Just out of your head, or where?

LEE: Mostly. I think it all has to do with things I read and learned and observed when I was young, because I don't do as much

reading or movie-going or anything now as I would like. I'm so busy writing all the time. But I was a voracious reader when I was a teenager. And actually, I think my biggest influence was Shakespeare, who was my god. I mean, I loved Shakespeare because when he was dramatic; no one was more dramatic than he was. When he was humorous, the humor was so earthy and rich. To me he was the complete writer. I was just telling somebody this morning who was up here to try to do some writing for us to get as close to Shakespeare as possible. Because whatever Shakespeare did, he did it in the extreme. It's almost like the Yiddish theatre. When they act, they act! Or the old silent movies where everything was exaggerated so the audience



The cover of the April 15, 1970, issue of *Changes* tabloid magazine—as preserved by Barry Pearl, FFF. [Art ©2011 Marvel Characters, Inc.; other art ©2011 the respective copyright holders.]

Projects that Weren't

Ideas from comics greats Will Eisner and Richard Corben that never saw print

by Danny Fingeroth

FROM THE
STAN LEE
ARCHIVES

Even top creators have projects that never see the light of day for all sorts of reasons. In Stan's Wyoming archives is some early 1970s correspondence between Stan—by then Marvel's publisher—and two acknowledged comics titans, **Will Eisner** and **Richard Corben**, relating to projects that never got off the ground.

Will Eisner



Will Eisner in the 1960s.

[©2011 Will Eisner Studios]

Will Eisner (1917-2005) was raised in the tenement Bronx of the Great Depression. He was a pioneer in the creation of comics of the "Golden Age" of the 1930s and '40s, achieving immortality with his noir crime-sighting hero, *The Spirit*, the first character to star in a comics insert distributed in newspapers. At one time or another, just

about every comics great of his own and succeeding generations worked with and for Eisner, including Jules Feiffer, Wallace Wood, Jack Kirby, Al Jaffee and Mike Ploog. When *The Spirit* ceased publication in 1952, Eisner devoted himself to producing educational and instructional comics. Then, in 1978, Eisner reinvented himself—and the medium—with his graphic novel, **A Contract with God**. Other notable Eisner graphic novels included **To The Heart of the Storm**, **A Life Force**, and **The Name of the Game**.

In 1973, Eisner, probably at Marvel's request, submitted ideas for a humor magazine. Eisner was no stranger to humor, using it often in *The Spirit* and in his instructional comics work, as well as in publications.

A classic Will Eisner *Spirit* splash—this one from October 2, 1949.

[©2011 Will Eisner Studios]



TO: Stan Lee
Roy Thomas

MEMO

FROM: Will Eisner

RE: Editorial Conference 2/12/73

The following is a general (tentative) plan for issue #1 of the new satire magazine, subject, of course, to second thoughts and quality of submissions.

FEATURES: (4 pages)

Review of the best of the underground-- write to: Print Mint, Rip-off Press, Krupp Comic.

WORST MOVIE^S OF THE SEASON: (4 pages)

Use actual stills if possible. Maybe Gene Shallit to review it. If not him we'll fake a review.

SECRET PAPERS FOR SALE: (2 pages)

Introductory page-- visual showing a display of papers (imagined) and facing it a page showing a Marboro-type advertisement. List a whole set of way-out documents.

PLANNING THE NEXT WAR: (8 pages)

Make this the lead feature. Open with a meeting at the pentagon with general staff.

Things are very slow. We've got to plan a New War. The question of who comes up. The suggestion is two small countries in Africa. They run that through the computers. Plan it all out like Viet Nam. They send "advisors", etc. The "advisors" start calling for money. Russia gets involved. President ecstatic. He would get a third term. In the end, the deal is blown because the two countries have a Pepsi-Cola contract which, if a war starts, will be blown. The Pepsi-Cola people stop it.

Wind up with the general staff trying to think up another country...

THE OCCULT: (4 pages)

A visit to a Sabbat. Photo article, maybe people being changed into another thing. Maybe a Jewish-type mother serving food...als Goodbye Columbus.

Will's Memo about "Editorial Conference 2/12/73" gives his overview of the points discussed on that day. [©2011 the copyright holders.]

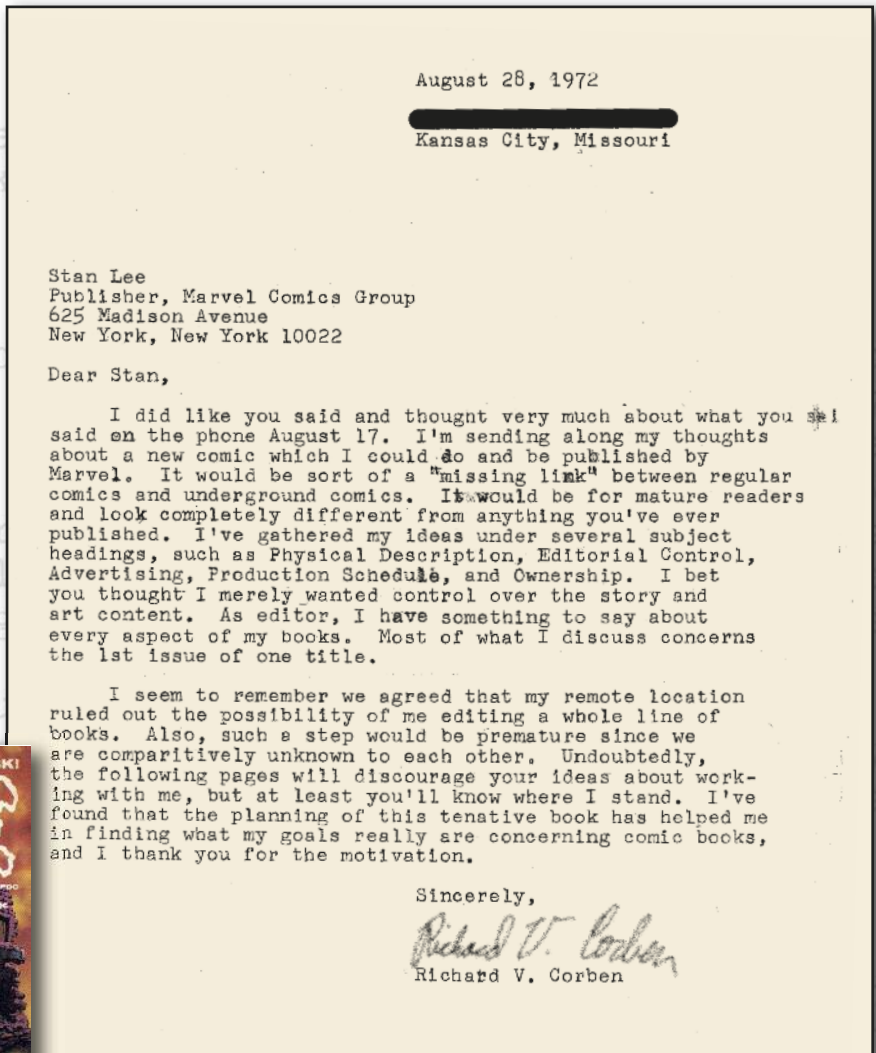
Richard Corben

August 28, 1972

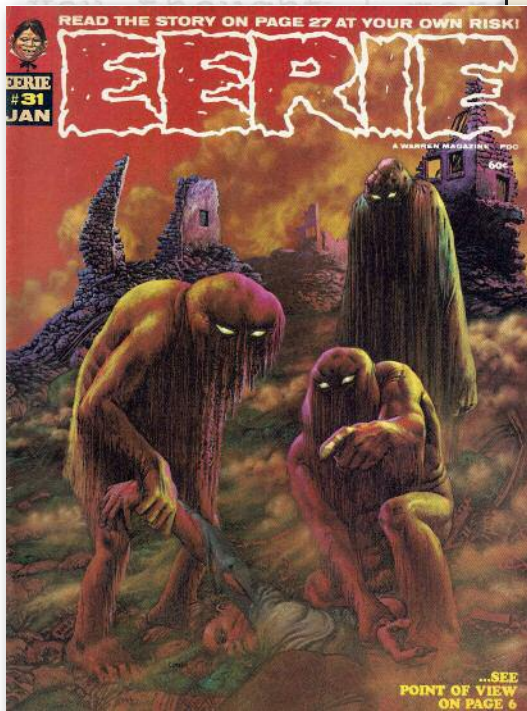


Richard Corben grew up in Kansas City, where he studied at the Kansas City Art Institute. In 1970 he published his own underground comic book, *Fantagor*. Afterwards he worked on the underground magazines *Slow Death* and *Skull*. Also in the '70s, Corben was a regular artist for *Eerie*, *Creepy* and *Vampirella* magazines. He also did groundbreaking work for France's *Métal Hurlant*, known as *Heavy Metal* in the US. Currently Corben draws for Marvel, DC and Dark Horse Comics. In 2005 he worked with Rob Zombie and Steve Niles on the independent comic, *Bigfoot*, for IDW Publishing.

In August 1972, Corben sent a letter and proposal to Stan...



August 28, 1972 cover letter and proposal from Richard Corben, Stan Lee Collection, box #12, folder #1, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.



After the cover letter came the proposal itself...

Richard Corben's eerie cover to January 1971's *Eerie* #31. [©2011 Warren Publishing Co.]

Stan Lee: 1974

Re-presenting a classic conversation with Marvel's master

From *Comics Feature* magazine

Interview conducted by Jay Maeder

Comics Feature was a professional magazine published for several years by the fabled Schuster brothers, Hal and Jack. This is a neglected Stan Lee interview from *CF*, located by Barry Pearl, who contacted interviewer Jay Maeder. It is reprinted by permission, for which we thank Jay profusely. And thanks to Barry for finding it in the first place. [This interview also appeared, in different form, in *Alter Ego* #74.]

—DF & RT

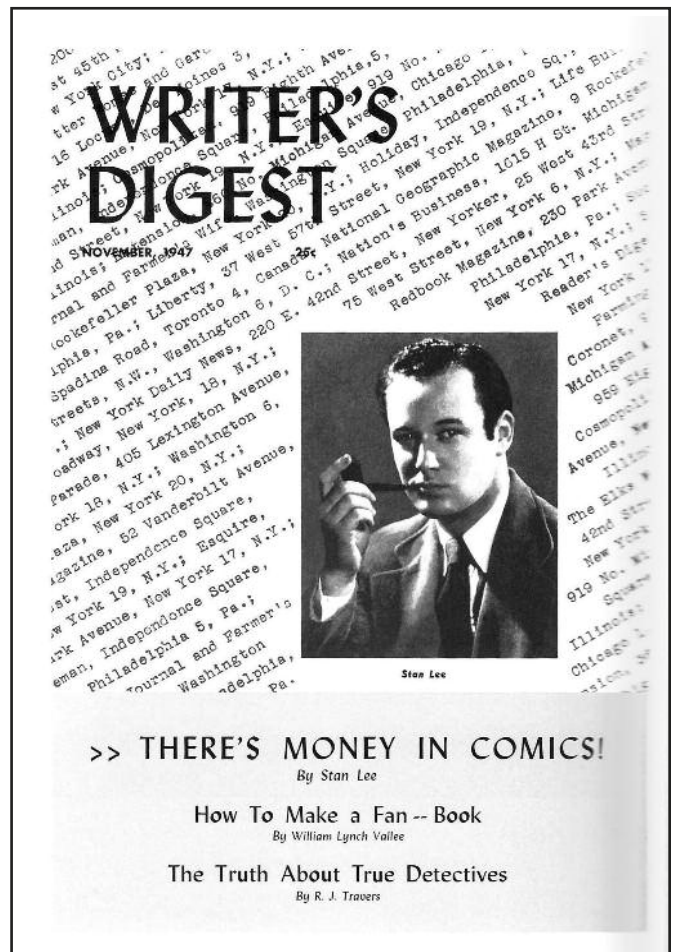
JAY MAEDER: There are probably worse things to be than the wildly celebrated king of the comics. I imagine you rather enjoy being Stan Lee.

STAN LEE: It wasn't always this way, I must admit. In the first fifteen years or so that I was the head writer and editor at Timely and Atlas, I remember, my wife and I would go to cocktail parties and somebody would say, "What do you do?" and I'd say, "Oh, I'm a writer." "Really? What do you write?" And I'd start getting a little nervous and I'd say, "Uh, magazine stories." "Really? What magazine?" And I knew there was no way of avoiding it, and I'd end up saying, "Comic books," and suddenly the person's expression would change... "Oh, isn't that nice," and they'd walk away, you know, looking for some television or radio or novelist celebrity. That's all changed now. I go to places and I'm held up as one of the more interesting celebrities... and people go over to the playwrights, you know, and say "Hey, I want you to meet Stan Lee, he's the head of Marvel Comics, he made up Spider-Man."

And I must say I'm very happy that this has happened. It's like achieving one of my goals, because I remember I wrote an editorial, it must have been a good fifteen years ago, and I said one of our main objectives would be bringing some additional measure of respect to comics, that I would consider myself and our company successful if we found a way before we were through this vale of tears to elevate comics in the minds of the public. So that if somebody said, I write comics, or I draw for comics, people would say, "Hey, really? Tell us about it." And not say, "A grown man like you?" You know what I mean? So from that point of view I'm very happy now.

JM: How did you get where you are?

SL: Sheer accident. I never wanted to be a writer particularly. As a kid I joined the WPA Federal Theatre. I wanted to be an actor. But there wasn't enough money... and I always loved advertising, and the closest I could get to it was, I found a job writing copy for a news service, and then I started writing obituaries for people who were still alive, and I was writing publicity releases



Despite having his picture on the cover of the November 1947 issue of *Writer's Digest*, it wasn't until years later that, as he tells Jay Maeder, people at cocktail parties would start to be interested in what Stan did for a living. [Writer's Digest © 2011 F+W Media, Inc. Article © 2011 the copyright holders.]

for the National Jewish Tuberculosis Hospital in Denver. All of which was pretty depressing. A million things, you know. I was an office boy for a trousers company, I was an usher at the Rivoli Theatre. Anyway, they had a contest at the *Herald-Tribune* [newspaper], an essay contest, which I won three weeks running, and whoever the editor was at the time called me and asked me to stop entering the contest. And he asked me what I intended to be. I was just out of high school, you know, and I said, well, I don't know, an advertising man or an actor or a lawyer or something, and he said why don't you be a writer?

Coincidentally, I learned of a job that was opening up at Timely

THE SILVER SURFER

by

STAN LEE & JACK KIRBY

The Making of an Epic

Page One (Either inside cover type of arrangement or page facing title page)

Illustration : Arm of Galactus or symbol of Life and Death principle which is part of the universe and governs all its inhabitants, both large and small.

Here's the opening page to *The Silver Surfer* graphic novel. As with the rest of the pages from the book in this article, Jack's notes that accompanied the art are reproduced at the top of the page, Stan's typed script is at the bottom. Stan's handwritten notes are in the margins of the photocopies of the pencil art. We also see the lettered and colored pages from the book itself.



SILVER SURFER

PAGE 1

TITLE: THE SILVER SURFER
by
STAN LEE & JACK KIRBY

CAPTION: (At bottom of page)

BEHOLD! The hand of Galactus! BEHOLD! The hand of him who is like unto a God! BEHOLD! The clutch of harnessed power-- about to be released!

Panel descriptions for *Silver Surfer* graphic novel, Stan Lee Collection, box #55, folders 2 & 4, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming. Photocopies of pencil art with balloon placements; script for *Silver Surfer* graphic novel, Stan Lee Collection, box #55, folder #1, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.

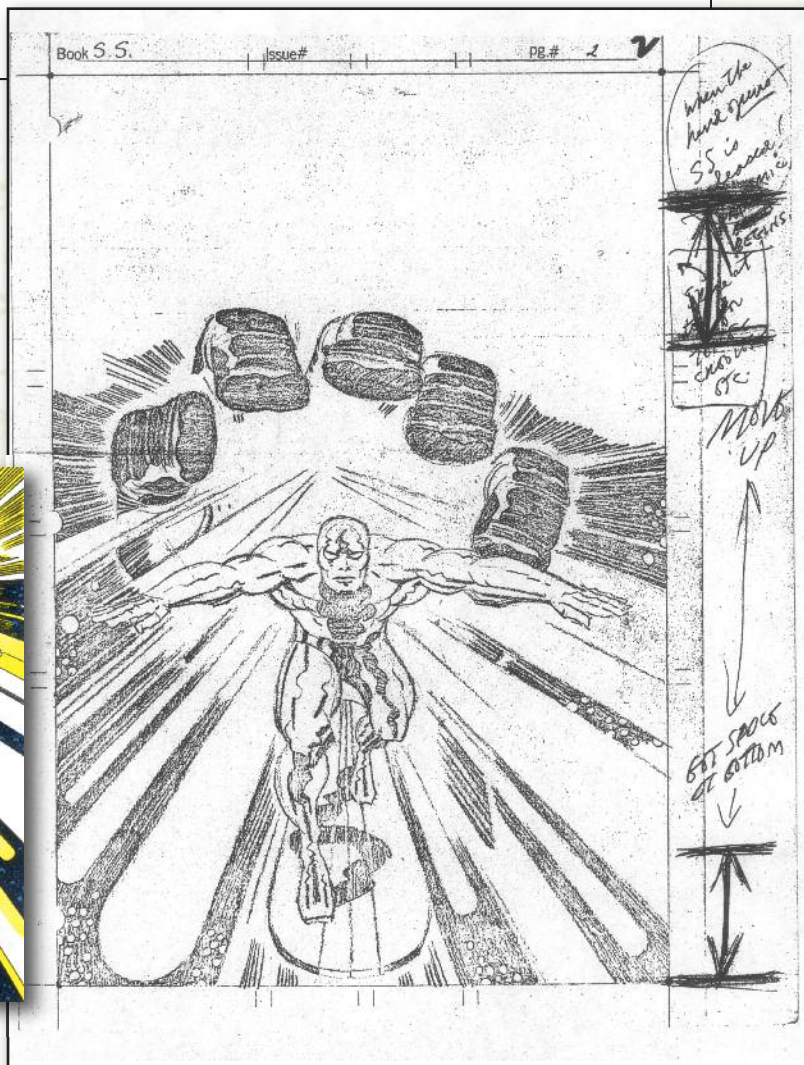
Page two

Lead in---Title---Credits

Silver Surfer is released from the hand of Galactus.

The drama of Life and Death begins--but on a giant scale.

Here's page two of the story. Note how, since Stan, when scripting, decided the title would go on the previous page, the space Jack left for a title was no longer needed, hence the instruction on the art to raise up the section of the page with the Surfer and extend the artwork along the bottom. Note also that the second caption in Stan's script isn't in the finished story. He must have decided that it wasn't necessary, possibly because we don't see Galactus again for another ten pages.



PAGE 2

CAPTION: (ATOP PAGE) Somewhere in the endless cosmos, the hand is opened!
Somewhere in the swirling mists of space, the power is unleashed!

CAPTION: (At bottom of page) That Galactus may live, a world must die!
But who shall find the star-crossed planet?
Who but THE SILVER SURFER!

Silver Age Stan and Jack (or: “Will Success Spoil Spider-Man?”)

FROM THE
STAN LEE
ARCHIVES

Lee & Kirby, March 3, 1967
Interviewed on WBAI radio,
New York, by Mike Hodel

Transcribed by Steven Tice, copyedited by Danny Fingerroth

Mike Hodel briefly hosted a science fiction program on New York’s WBAI radio in the late 1960s, where he interviewed Stan Lee and Jack Kirby (in an episode of the program entitled “Will Success Spoil Spider-Man?”) in 1967. Shortly after this interview, Hodel moved back to his native Los Angeles, where he hosted “Hour 25,” a science fiction program on that city’s KPFK radio from 1972 until his untimely death in 1986. The show continued, often with guest hosts such as Harlan Ellison and J. Michael Straczynski, and, since 2000, “Mike Hodel’s Hour 25,” named in his memory, has continued to be broadcast via the internet at www.hour25online.com.

MIKE HODEL: Who goes around saving maidens, preventing banks from being robbed, and committing deeds of that type, under an alter ego for the name “Peter Parker”? How about “Tony Stark”? Would you believe “Reed Richards”? “Stan Lee?” “Jack Kirby?” Well, except for the last two, they’re all superheroes and they belong in Marvel comics, and they are written and drawn by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby. And Mr. Lee and Mr. Kirby are going to be answering questions about their superheroes. And I guess the first one would be addressed to Stan Lee, and it’s the title of this program. Stan, will success spoil Spider-Man?



Mike Hodel circa 1984.
[©2011 the copyright holders]

STAN LEE: [chuckles] Well, I don’t think anything could spoil old Spidey, as we lovingly call him. Just have to correct one thing you said, though. You said that, except for Stan Lee and Jack Kirby, the others are superheroes. We like to think of ourselves as superheroes, too. I might add also that there are other artists and other writers who do some of the other books, too. Jack and I don’t do them all, although we do the *Fantastic Four* and *Thor*. *Spider-Man* has been a success since he started, and, luckily, I don’t think he’s been spoiled yet, so we just have our fingers crossed.

MH: I ran across Marvel comic books about six or eight months ago, and one of the things that drew me to Marvel comic books, and *Spider-Man* in particular, is a panel that showed Spider-Man swooping down on some bank robbers, and they said, “Whoops, here comes Spider-Man!” And he replies, “Who were you expecting? Vice President Humphrey?” Now, this is not a line you expect to find in a comic book, and it sort of symbolizes your whole approach to the field, which is offbeat and interesting. Was it your idea, Stan? Where did it come from?

SL: Well, I guess, in that sense, in was my idea, since I write

the dialogue. In a nutshell, our theory is—although maybe I shouldn’t give the theory in a nutshell, because then I don’t know what we’ll talk about for the rest of the half hour. But, at any rate, in a nutshell, our theory is that there’s no reason why a comic magazine couldn’t be as realistic and as well-written and drawn as any other type of literature. We try to write these things so that the characters speak the way a character would speak in a well-written movie, well-produced television show, and I think that’s what makes our book seem unique to a person who first picks them up. Nobody expects, as you say, that sort of thing in a comic book. But that’s a shame, because why shouldn’t someone expect reasonable and realistic dialogue in a comic book? Why do people feel that comic books have to be badly written? And we’re trying to engage in a one-company crusade to see to it that they’re not badly written.

MH: Jack, you drew and invented, if I’m not mistaken, Captain America, one of the earliest superheroes, who’s now plying his trade in Marvel comics.

How did Captain America come to be, and does he have any particular relationship to your other superheroes?

JACK KIRBY: I guess Captain America, like all of the characters come to be, because of the fact that there is a need for them. Somebody needed Captain America, just as the public needed Superman. When Superman came on the scene, the public was ready for him, and they took him. And so, from Superman, who didn’t exactly satiate the public’s need for the superhero, so spawned the rest of them.



Stan and Jack at a National Cartoonist Society event in 1966. [©2011 the copyright holders]