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JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR FIFTY-FIVE



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Front cover inks: **PAUL SMITH** (from a Kirby pencil animation presentation for Wonder Woman; see *Kirby Five-Oh!*)
Back cover collage: **JACK KIRBY**
Front cover colors: **TOM ZIUKO**

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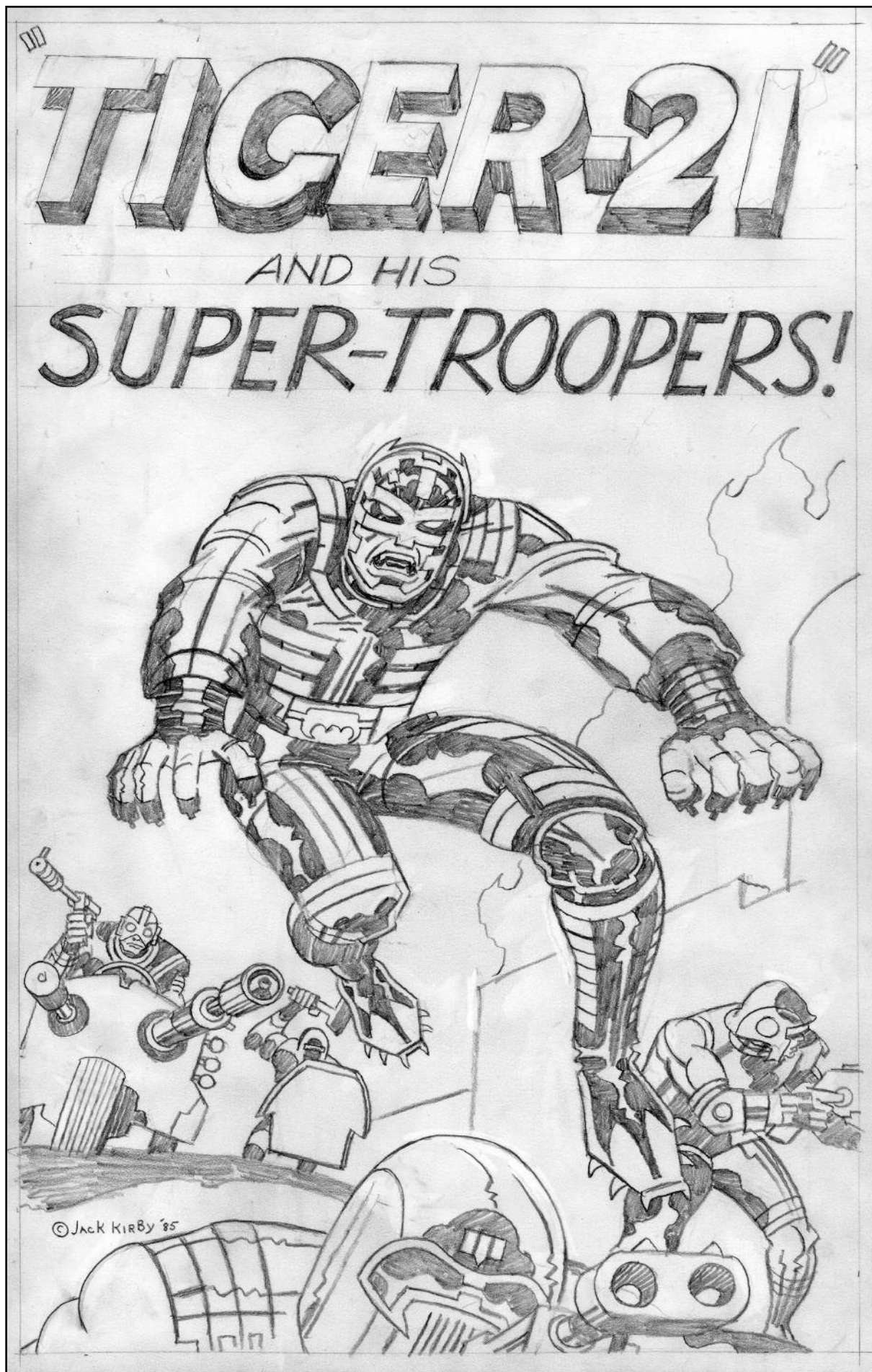


THE NEW

JACK KIRBY

ISSUE #55, FALL 2010

COLLECTOR



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(above) Jack first conceived the "Tiger 21" concept in the 1940s, and was still finding a home for it in Hollywood as late as 1985.

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THE DAY I SPOKE WITH JACK

(right) Kirby poses with a friend at (near as we can tell) an early 1980s convention.

(below and next page) This issue's cover inker, Paul Smith, also did a bang-up job on this full-pager from *Eternals* #2 (August 1976). You can see the pencils from this issue's cover—a Wonder Woman animation concept—on page 155 of *Kirby Five-Oh!*, our special 50th issue of *TJJC*.

Ajax, Spider-Man, Warlock, Thanos TM & ©2010 Marvel Characters, Inc.

by Kenn Thomas, featuring an interview conducted circa November 1976, and originally published in the fanzine *Whizzard* #9 (cover shown on next page, bottom left) ©2010 Kenn Thomas

(Interviewer's 2010 Commentary: Strangely enough, the occasion of reprinting the following exchange with Jack Kirby came at the same time an author with a manuscript about the history of comics in the Midwest asked for an interview about my work on the comics fanzine *Whizzard*, over thirty years ago. Stranger still, an associate professor in Louisiana recently got in touch as well looking to reprint a *Whizzard* interview with Howard Chaykin from the same time period. Haha! Interest in the work I did as a young comics fan decades ago has begun to eclipse interest in the many books I've written since, which I've spent a lot of time promoting on the lecture stump and on radio and TV. That's almost a relief! I remember well the gang at *Whizzard*, though, a comics fanzine produced locally by an old friend named Marty Klug. Klug, Jerry Durrwachter, Ed Mantels-Seeker, and Bill Lewis formed a kind of nucleus of Midwestern comics fandom activism. It had its social expression in a group called Random Fandom, which had collectors of pop culture of all stripes meet regularly on a local college campus. In print, the gang appeared in *Whizzard*,



a zine primarily produced by Klug but with the rest of us anxious to use it as an excuse to pester comics professionals for interviews. This is how I had my one and only direct encounter with Jack Kirby.

The following interview was conducted mostly through the US mails, a method of communication from before the Internet that many people may still remember. Questions were supplied by the Random Fandom gang, as noted. But it did include the follow-up call mentioned in the opening paragraph—the day I spoke with Jack Kirby on the phone. We had a longer conversation than suggested by the intro and some of it is included in the postal Q&A. Unfortunately, the tape did not survive three decades of various moves, marriage, kids and the whole swarm of things that takes over with the onset of later life. I am very happy, however, that this much survives, including the accurate description of my reverent nervousness in talking with Kirby. (Only Bob Dylan has turned me into such soup at a face-to-face. I actually became long-time friends with my other favorite '60s icon, Tim Leary.) Kirby was as affable as he always is described, however, gently encouraging my interest and providing generous response to my fannish questions. That conversation lasted about twenty minutes—much more time than I would think he'd have for the many fans who must have approached him, again affirming the common Kirby encounter experience.

I dropped out of comics heartbroken after Kirby died, but oddly enough did not drop out of the zine world. In the late '80s I started *Steamshovel Press*, one of many zines that had long evolved away from fanboy comics interest. They had names like *Ganymedeian Slime Mold* and *Dharma Combat*, and dealt with just weirdo information, conspiracies, aliens, mind control, stuff that has been amplified to an absurd degree online these days. My specialty became conspiracy theories, what I call *parapolitics*, and I went on to write many books and travel the world lecturing about it. It has only been relatively recently that I've re-incorporated Kirby into my writing, making the case that the various industry abuses he endured, like the deprivation of licensing participation in the Marvel characters he primarily created, constitute "conspiracy as usual" rather than just business as usual as people who defend it might suggest. (My argument for this is set out in a book of mine called *Parapolitics!*, listed at amazon.com) I've even lectured on various parapolitical dimensions of Kirby's career at an event out in the Mojave Desert, at the Integretron, a hallowed space for UFO believers, who have an obvious natural affinity with Kirby. *Whizzard* alum Bill Lewis first brought to me a copy of *TJJC*, reviving my interest, and later I became an on-and-off member of the Internet slugfest known as



Kirby-I. I am very pleased that this early encounter with this great artist and man has lasted long enough to bracket my decades-long admiration and affection for him. If only I could find that tape...)

(When I talked to Jack Kirby in early November I choked. One does not speak to the single most important influence on modern American comic art without being taken somewhat aback. I mean, this was His Kirbiness, the creator of the *Fantastic Four*, *Captain America* and the *New Gods*. This man re-structured comics, gave them a new meaning. His accomplishments are awesome. Wow.

I called Tom Hof, from whom Whizzard acquired Kirby's address for the purpose of an interview, the moment I hung up. I meant to call Marty to tell him to stop sweating over the deadline; Kirby mailed the answers back that morning. But I thought it better to call a fellow Kirby freak until I could speak in something other than monosyllables. He would at least understand.

There he was, Jesus Kirby, telling me about his recent trip to Italy ("I hadn't been there since '44"). There I was, stammering at a half-a-buck a minute.

Kirby finally did send the interview questions, which were missing a page. Mrs. Kirby called Marty later to apologize for misplacing the page. Our esteemed executive editor just added it to the list of delays that were accumulating daily for Whizzard #9.

For the record: Jerry Durrwachter, Thomas Hof, Marty Klug and Kenn Thomas contributed the questions.)

WHIZZARD: Could you tell us a little about how you started your career and how working conditions differed from today?

JACK KIRBY: In the beginning there were artists, inkers and letterers from adjacent fields running about from one newly formed comic publishing house to another. Small packaging firms began to sprout, creating additional jobs and opportunities for production, editorial and administrative types. Jerry Iger and Will Eisner ran one such firm. The rates were poor, but so was a lot of the work. The atmosphere was not unlike a Mom and Pop store with the entire family on the job.

WHIZZARD: To what extent are you committed to Marvel? Could you freelance if you wanted to?

KIRBY: I'm under contract to Marvel and am committed to fulfilling my obligations. When I think of other things, they usually turn out to be cigars.

WHIZZARD: Will you and Stan Lee be collaborating again in the foreseeable future?

KIRBY: That's possible.

WHIZZARD: Stan Lee didn't actually write any of the *Fantastic Four* stories, did he?

KIRBY: You are truly perceptive. However, I consider everyone involved with the success of the Marvel organization as having made a major contribution.

WHIZZARD: Before they died, Charlton had a suit filed against Marvel and DC, in view of the *Superman/Spider-Man* book. Do you see any validity in this?

KIRBY: I know nothing about the suit.

WHIZZARD: How much do you feel the Siegel-Shuster Superman lawsuit has affected the industry? Do you feel this has opened the door for you and others who have created valuable property for the corporate comics?

KIRBY: Yes. But it is the future artist who will derive the most from a more fluid industrial structure.

WHIZZARD: Some critics have stated that your most recent work has little value in consideration of your past accomplishments (the *Fantastic Four*, *New Gods*, etc.). Although your present material is some of the best in the business, this undercurrent of thought reasons, you are capable of incomparably superior work, citing these previous masterworks as proof. How do you answer such charges?

KIRBY: I do my best in the space allotted to me. Give me a hundred pages more, and I'll turn out a product as fully potent and dimensional as good literature demands. Comics is the art of the visual word.



Someday, a writer-artist will use the media to turn out an immortal classic in the tradition of epic novelists.

WHIZZARD: In *Mediascene* #15 it was stated: "Kirby's work naturally has changed over the past five years. He has often eliminated detail, while augmenting the story's internal dynamics." Is this a conscious effort on your part? Can you elaborate or clarify this idea?

KIRBY: That's true. I will gladly eliminate a man's fingernails in order to keep the reader's eye where it belongs—on the center of what's happening. I would rather be a good story-teller than be Leonardo Da Vinci. I would rather be an effective artist than weave pointless flowery phrases. I combine the guts of picture and word and tell you in dramatic fashion what you've seen. It is then that you know what it was all about.

WHIZZARD: Is this apparent artistic decline and replication of plotlines (re: later *Fantastic Four* and *Thor* stories) due to your disenchantment with Marvel or your tiredness with the characters?

KIRBY: All characters are the lifeblood and secret aspirations of the writer-artist. If he tires of them, he destroys his own ego. He bottles up the good and evil within himself and becomes dehumanized. Try to stop fantasizing completely and you'll scare the hell out of yourself.

WHIZZARD: What is the reason behind your infrequent moves from company to company? Is there any chance in the future of you settling with any one company until your retirement from the field? Have you any plans for retirement?

KIRBY: Like anybody else, I've somehow gone for the better deal during my



Steve Steinmetz writes to ask...

You've said several times that when Jack and Roz moved out to Southern California, it was revolutionary. Why? Don't comic book writers and artists live all over the world?

They do now but it was rare then for anyone to work for the New York companies and to not be within commuting distance of Manhattan. This was even true of someone like Joe Sinnott who resided in upstate NY and went into the Marvel office about once every nine years.

There were always exceptions. Dick Sprang, for instance, continued to draw for DC after he moved to Arizona. Pat Boyette did a few jobs for them from Texas. Alex Toth lived up by the Hollywood Bowl next to the Hollywood Freeway. Jim Mooney for some years managed an antiquarian bookstore on Hollywood Boulevard. He had a drawing table there and he'd work on pages for *World's Finest Comics* when he wasn't attending to customers.

But there weren't a lot of exceptions... and most of those guys lived in New York and established themselves as valuable, dependable professionals for years before they relocated elsewhere. I can't think of too many freelancers who started freelancing from afar. Boyette was one but he broke in at Charlton and that was for Dick Giordano, who did a lot of things that other editors never did. Besides, Charlton paid so poorly that Dick couldn't afford to turn down any decent artist for geographic considerations.

Basil Wolverton, I believe, may have actually begun drawing for New York companies from the West Coast and there are probably a few others but I can't think of them. When Russ Manning was

drawing *Tarzan and Magnus, Robot Fighter* for Gold Key,

he once had a quarrel with them over money and decided to see if he could do

better working for DC. He sent off a letter with published samples of his work on those comics... and the

reply he received had him fuming for years after. I never saw it but according to Russ, it basically said, "Your work shows promise.

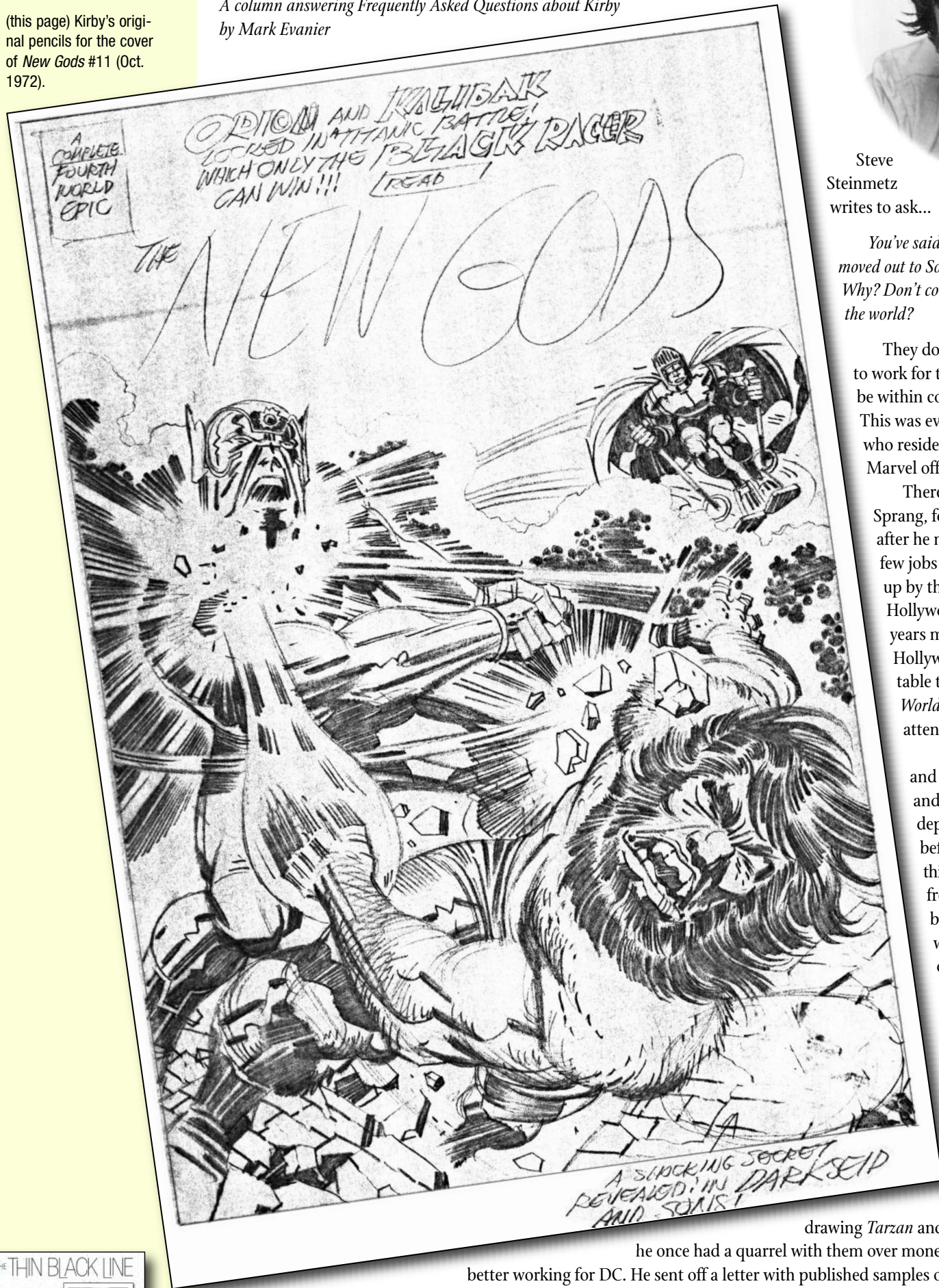
If you decide to relocate in New York, we'll see if we can find some inking for you." (It is worth adding that at the time, Russ's *Tarzan* was one of the best selling comic books being published.)

"If you don't live in New York, you can't work in comics." As a kid living in Los Angeles, I read that so many times in fanzine interviews that I shrugged and thought, "Well, I guess I'll never work in comics." I believed this even though I was aware that Western Publishing Company had a Los Angeles office and that Gold Key comic books were produced out of it. I have no idea why it didn't occur to me to take the bus down to their office in a building on Hollywood Boulevard, directly across from the famed Chinese Theater, and try to sell some scripts. But it didn't.

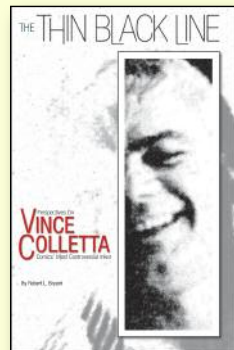
As disclosed in a few columns and articles I've written, the first person I ever met who'd ever written or drawn a comic book was a fellow

(this page) Kirby's original pencils for the cover of *New Gods* #11 (Oct. 1972).

A column answering Frequently Asked Questions about Kirby by Mark Evanier



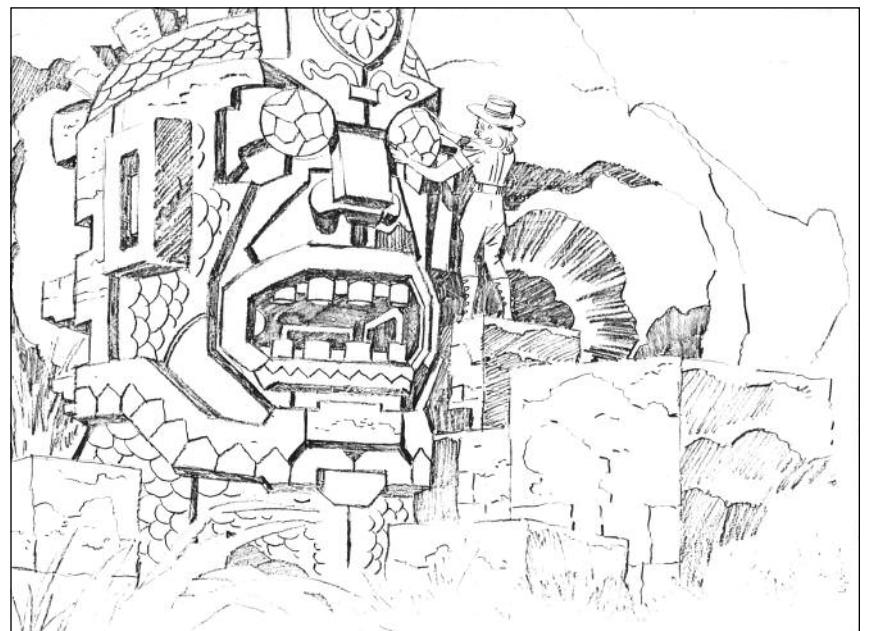
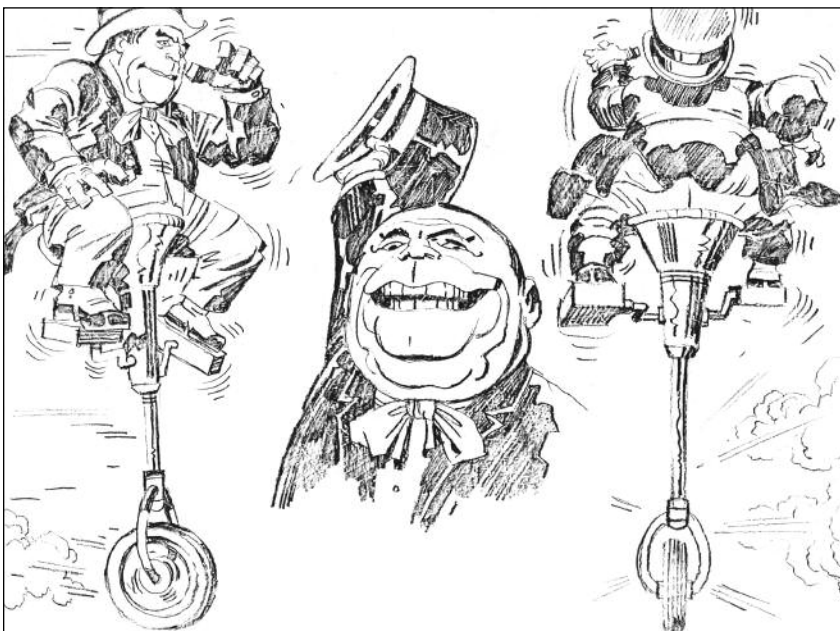
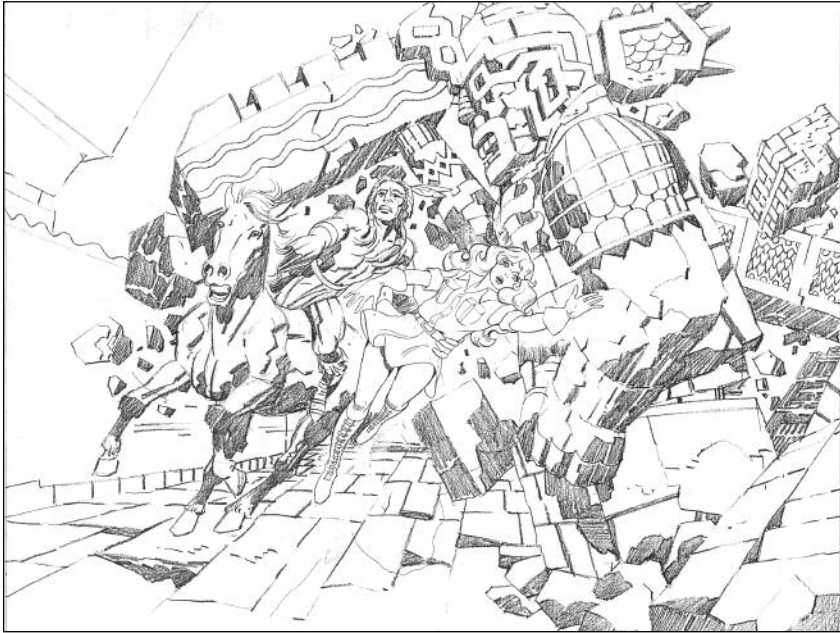
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ROXIE'S RAIDERS!

One of the most promising properties that evolved at Ruby-Spears, other than *Thundarr the Barbarian*, was *Roxie's Raiders*. The concept was developed by Jack Kirby and Steve Gerber (who, of course, also collaborated on *Destroyer Duck*). According to the trading card set *Jack Kirby: The Unpublished Archives* (1994), the series is set in the 1930s, and Roxie is a beautiful spy whose cover is managing a traveling circus. Shown below are Kirby's presentation art for: Roxie in peril

(1—her figure was redrawn by someone other than Kirby), Roxie close-up (2), then sidekicks Buster (3), Big Hands (4), and Toad (5), and a very *Raiders of the Lost Ark* presentation of Roxie. Her kid brother, Tommy, rounds out the supporting cast. The concept showed such promise that a full issue of a *Roxie's Raiders* comic book was penciled by Jack and scripted by Gerber, and we proudly present several pages of that unpublished comic here. More pages are in *TJKC* #30, 47, and *Kirby Five-Oh!*



RETROSPECTIVE

Long before radio shock-jock Howard Stern proclaimed himself to be ‘the King of All Media’, Jack Kirby was already there! He was an ‘in-between’ animator on the Fleischer brothers’ *Popeye* cartoons, a movie serial had been based on his Golden Age Captain America, and then his considerable talents and creative outlook saw lots of exposure in comics, cartoons, magazines, books, and TV and radio interviews. Nowadays, cartoons, movies, movies, and more movies are being ‘green-lighted’ in studios eager to capture box-office gold from his conceptual meanderings.

Let’s first examine how well the celluloid and television set (no pun intended) captured some of ‘the King’s men’.



Dick Purcell as Captain America stalks his foes in this still from the serial. Since it was wartime, it would’ve been a natural to have the Red Skull or Fang (*Captain America Comics* #6) as the chief heavy, but...

(right) Cap got his ‘wings’ on his headpiece only in chapter serial posters like this.

(far right) The one-and-only season of the *Marvel Super-Heroes* show in 1966 was a big ratings hit nationwide.

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REEL 1

CAPTAIN AMERICA (SERIAL, 1944)

This is the Star-Spangled Avenger as you know and love him... if you can get past the fact that Cap (played by Dick Purcell) goes by the alter ego Grant Gardner, carries a gun instead of a shield, lacks a sidekick à la Bucky or the Falcon, fights the supervillain Scarab instead of the Red Skull and Nazis, and pulls cheap stunts to survive cliffhangers such as escaping a doomed truck before it crashes by merely rolling out of the truck’s



cab at the last minute (which, of course, you won’t learn until you see the next exciting chapter). Yes, in other words, related to Kirby’s Cap in name only!

Overall, this Republic Pictures enterprise rates a “meh.” Not the worst serial out there, but definitely not as ballsy sadistic as *The Adventures of Captain Marvel* or as unintentionally hilarious as that campy *The Shadow*, which featured that insipid-voiced villain The Black Tiger. Recommended for Cap completists only!

Mike Aushenker



MARVEL SUPER-HEROES (CARTOON, 1966)

Marvel was only a few years old at the time, and the *MSH* (five of the company’s “biggies”—the de-iced Captain America, Iron Man, Thor, Sub-Mariner, and the Hulk, shown Monday-Friday, respectively) almost promised to leap, jet, and fly out of TV sets in the afternoons following school. Sure, the animation (such as it was—see *TJKC* #41) was incredibly stiff. Figures often just glided from one place to another, but Grantray-Lawrence knew the appeal of their program was in just bringing that comic mag-based power to animated life, and that they did fairly well with scripts taken mostly word-for-word from Stan’s dialogue and Jack’s power-packed artwork.

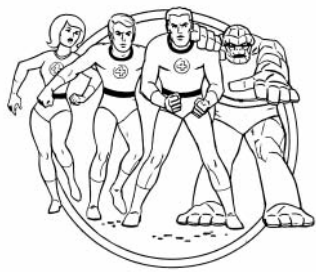
Other animation cels were derived from the wonderful artistry of George Tuska, Gene Colan, Dick Ayers, Joe Sinnott, Don Heck, John Romita, and Steve Ditko.

The music helped make it all work. Soaring and suspenseful, and completely arresting, it was nigh-unto impossible not to get on a personal high after hearing Cap’s, Iron Man’s, or Thor’s themes. Also, the voice talents were perfect. Look closely at one Sub-Mariner episode and you’ll see a truncated version of *FF* #6 with the X-Men (!) teaming up with Subby as the Baxter Building is hurled into space! (The *FF* cartoon series was in negotiation with Hanna-Barbera at the time.) The Grantray-Lawrence group was wise enough to see what the Marvel Bullpen had accomplished and altered little. And that’s why these shows, despite their obvious limitations, hold up well today. And on that subject, I must reiterate what Stan Lee once told me, “They’re the purest adaptations of what we did... in the comics.”

’Nuff Said.

Jerry Boyd

HOLLYWOOD



THE FANTASTIC FOUR (CARTOON, 1967)

Alex Toth did some design work for the original *FF* cartoon in '67. Here's one of his layouts for the show, simplifying the Kirby/Sinnott look.

Superman, Aquaman, the Teen Titans, the JLA, and Marvel sensations Spider-Man, and... the Fantastic Four.

Put together by the expert team that ruled TV animation at the time (Bill Hanna and Joe Barbera), the show did not disappoint. Occasionally, there were original heavies out to bedevil the world's most fabulous foursome, but viewers in the know thrilled to see Blastaar, Dr. Doom, Diablo, the Super Skrull, Klaw, Rama-Tut, the Molecule Man, and other menaces in episodes culled from *FF* #1-63! Bill and Joe were even daring enough to combine *FF* #48-50 into one incredible outing called simply "Galactus!"

Unfortunately, the Black Panther and the Inhumans didn't make the cut, but a certain Prince "Triton" (a Namor look-alike) stood in as the hero from the ocean depths in one episode taken from *FF* #33. (Sub-Mariner was in syndication by then with the *MSH* show.)

This series was gold. Great music, great voice talents (Gerald Mohr as Reed really stood out—that same year, Mr. Mohr was over at CBS-TV doing the voice of Green Lantern, also). Bill Hanna and Joe Barbera followed the *MSH* lead and kept the *FF* cartoons on a level that Jack and Stan could be proud of... and I'm sure they were.

Jerry Boyd

FANTASTIC FOUR (CARTOON, 1978) AND FRED AND BARNEY MEET THE THING (CARTOON, 1979-80)

The former show, lasting an unlucky 13 episodes, was notorious for introducing H.E.R.B.I.E. the robot (supposedly so kids wouldn't try lighting themselves on fire, but later it was revealed that the Human Torch was being saved for a solo cartoon of his own, which never flamed on).

The latter show was infamous for introducing the notion that a teenage Ben Grimm, activating his magical "Thing Ring" by shouting, Shazam-style, "Thing Ring, do your thing," would attract rocks to his corporal self that



A scene from the 1978 *Fantastic Four* cartoon, with Herbie replacing the Torch.

Reviews and analyses written by **MICHAEL AUSHENKER, DWIGHT BOYD, JERRY BOYD, and MICHAEL STEWART** Anecdotal Kirby research by **SCOTT FRESINA, STEVE ROBERTSON, and MICHAEL THIBODEAUX** Additional writings by **DWIGHT BOYD, JERRY BOYD, and MICHAEL STEWART** Produced and directed by **JERRY BOYD**

transformed him into the Thing. But this Thing's tenure wasn't as solid as a rock. The show was re-titled *Fred And Barney Meet The Schmoo* after producers quickly shuffled in Al Capp's gurgling blob.

Both short-lived Saturday morning programs did a pretty good job of bastardizing and cheapening the *FF* mythos. Neither came a Thing Ring's throw to capturing the World's Greatest Comic Magazine as the 1960s Hanna-Barbera *FF* cartoon with its infectiously jazzy theme score. Even as an eager, Marvel-loving kid, watching those Bronze Age *FF* cartoons, you were well aware of all of this... and disappointed!

On the King Cartoon report card, these shows rate an "F, F!"

Michael Aushenker



THE INCREDIBLE HULK (TV SHOW, 1978-1982)

Kirby liked this one and even made a cameo on one episode as a police sketch artist. (Anyone know what happened to that drawing?)

Bill Bixby, a veteran performer, who'd scored on *My Favorite Martian* and *The Courtship of Eddie's Father* years before, made a very good "David" Banner. Champion bodybuilder Lou Ferrigno played the title hero-monster.

Stripped to its barest bones from the Lee-Kirby origin, villains, and the supporting cast, the Hulk was still a solid hit with lots of viewers. The producers obviously had more faith in emulating *The Fugitive*, a huge boob tube hit in the 1960s, than they had in even trying to capture the comic's support system.

Banner ambled from town to town, found jobs, got involved in people's lives, and 'hulked-out' when danger threatened. His chartreuse alter ego ran away (no leaping was allowed in those towns) after the bullies and criminals got theirs. Followed by an investigative reporter, he kept two steps ahead of 'being caught' (again, like the *Fugitive's* private detective pursuer) until the formulaic but likeable program ran out of creative steam. Still, the *Hulk* was popular enough to warrant a few special TV-movie returns in the years to follow.

Let's try not to talk about the one where he met Thor... okay, let's.

This mess was called *The Incredible Hulk Returns* (1988). Anyone expecting the classic *J.I.M.* #112 was out of his tree when this two-hour mishap was broadcast. A scientific acci-

BEHIND THE SCENES

In the always excellent English horror film mag *Little Shoppe of Horrors* (this one being the spotlight on Amicus Pictures: #20, 2008) it was revealed that producer Milton Subotsky had an eye on the *MSH* group before Grantray-Lawrence. The text reads, "Back in the early '60s, for example, he was the first film producer to realize the enormous commercial potential in the Marvel Comics' characters, the Amazing Spider-Man, the Incredible Hulk, and the Fantastic Four, all of which he urged his partner to pursue. Despite expressing tentative interest, (Max) Rosenberg did not go out of his way to discuss the rights with the Marvel Comics Group."

A letter from Subotsky to Rosenberg dated April 27, 1965 is quite revealing. "In order to make the pop comic strip film a really way-out camp picture, it might be an idea to have the script written by Lennie [*sic*] Bruce and the leading character (particularly if it is Spider-Man) played by Bob Dylan... another possible writer might be the guy who writes the *Mad* magazine take-offs, Harvey Kunz [*sic—he meant Kurtzman*]. The *Mad* magazine approach might be the absolutely best one for this film..."

Subotsky later wrote, "I think this is the hottest idea we have had to date and that it is two years ahead of anybody else's thinking."

His business partner Max Rosenberg was the money man of the group and just wasn't interested. The pair went on to make many successful horror films, one of them being the EC Comics-inspired *Tales of the Crypt* in 1972. EC/*Mad* publisher Bill Gaines reportedly wasn't big on it, but it was one of Amicus Pictures' greatest hits.

What if... the team had done a solid live-action version of Jack and Stan's stuff? We can only speculate....

Jerry Boyd

DO DO CONNECTIONS

(Several reels of excitement examining the King's comic work adapted to television and film, overseen by Jerry Boyd and friends)

(right) Rick Veitch did this illustration for an article in *Royal Flush* magazine last year, imagining how Kirby might have drawn Frank Zappa as a New God. Courtesy of Rick Veitch and Royal Flush Magazine (www.royalflushmagazine.com). Be sure to check out Jeff Newell's interview with Ahmet Zappa about the Frank and Jack connection, which you can find at: http://royalflushmagazine.com/2009/10/13/zappa_meets_kirby/
Art ©2010 Rick Veitch.

(Zappa's own song "Valley Girl" reportedly served as inspiration for Kirby's unused newspaper strip of the same name. See page 9 of this issue for a wacky example!)

(below right) Spragg's face made for an impressive Kirby/Ayers cover. This one was done for *Journey into Mystery* #68, 1961.

(bottom right) Paul McCartney had a lot more fun meeting the King than Jack had meeting Wings, if this picture is a true indicator. That was probably because Paul's music wasn't Jack's cup of tea, but that only figures—Jack was of an earlier generation which had different musical tastes. (Like the man said, "timing is everything.") For most of us, the Beatles ruled and Wings' stuff wasn't bad, either.

(below) Bashful Benjamin tries on a Beatle wig! Wonder if John and Paul ever saw this drawing or read *Strange Tales* #130 where Johnny and Ben "met" the Fab Four?



It's not all about television programs and big movies, folks. Kirby's stuff had pop music connections, also...

KIRBY ROCKS!

by Scott Fresina

FRANK ZAPPA

I remember on my numerous visits to Jack's house there were various pictures of Jack with several celebrities hanging on the wall in his study.

There was one with (actor) James Darren (of *Time Tunnel* TV-fame) and the other was Frank Zappa. I asked him about Zappa. I said, "Oh, he's a fan, eh Jack?" And he said, "Oh yeah, yeah... he was a great guy, but I tell you—he brought over some of his music, and the kind-of music he does and the language he uses on his records... it'd have curled your hair..."; then he glanced at me and added with a smile, "...if it wasn't already curled!" (Yeah, I had curly hair then.)

Roz jumped in and explained that Zappa wrote a song based on one of Jack's stories or characters. I found out later that it was a song called "Billy the Mountain."

Billy was a mountain that could kick ass or whatever, I guess! Billy was based on *JIM* #68—the monster was

Spragg, the Living Mountain. And it was one of the lyrics that went, "You don't f*ck with a mountain." Now Jack was shocked at Frank's use of profane language in there but thought Zappa was a real interesting artist. I guess it was through his daughters and granddaughters, Lisa and Tracey in particular, which led to his exposure to rock and roll. That's what I was led to believe.



PAUL MCCARTNEY

The Sherman Brothers and others have talked about this to *Kirby Collector* readers before, but here're a few add-ons not previously printed, I believe.

Jack got an invitation to see Wings at the (L.A.) Forum. He got free tickets, VIP seats, and backstage passes. I believe this was in the late '70s. Jack wasn't a big partygoer or anything—he was always working. So he kind-of discarded it until he found out his daughters were getting really excited about it. "Oh, my God, Dad—this is Paul McCartney and Wings!" That didn't register with Jack. So she (Lisa) said, "He was with the Beatles!" Jack

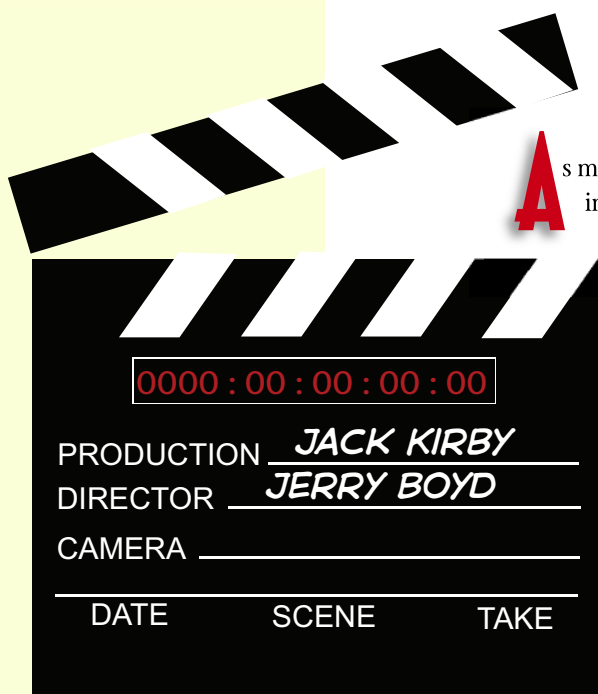


knew who the Beatles were. "Ohhh...." he told me he said.

Kirby liked Big Band stuff. He talked about Tommy Dorsey and all those guys. He brought up Sinatra several times with me;

CASTING CALL AT KINGFILMS PRODUCTIONS

Written and compiled by Jerry Boyd



As more and more of the King's heroes, villains, and supporting stars get made into live-action features, it's nigh-unto-impossible to try not to cast performers into those exciting roles beforehand. Other contributors to this magazine have done something similar to what I'm attempting as the first *FF* movie was making headway, but for the purposes of this article and the issue's subject matter, I decided to leap into the 'casting department' whole-hog. My criteria for matching up Jack's creations and real thespians were fourfold:

(1) The actors and actresses chosen had to *look* like Kirby's delineations. I know I'm not alone among film buffs when I express disdain for actors who look nothing like the graphic expression. Christopher Reeve's success as Clark Kent/Superman was partly because he was immediately identifiable as those two—no extra work had to be done after the costume/make-up was put on.

(2) I cast performers whose main body of work is behind them—there are no 'hot stars', 'flavor-of-the-months,' or 'flash in the pans' here. The reason being is so the readers can agree or disagree with my picks based on similar viewing experiences. (For baby boomers that grew up on these stars, this may prove to be a treat.)

(3) The performers who got the nod were in their heydays as their comic counterparts grew to

greatness in their medium. Or more simply put, '40s stars got contracted to play S&K '40s characters, prominent '50s and '60s TV and movie people got signed up to portray the Marvel crowd, and so on.

(4) I cast stars within their racial parameters as Jack created 'em—no 'ultimates' here. I'm no more interested in seeing a Polynesian actor play Norse god Thor than I am in seeing Keanu Reeves (for example) as the Black Panther. (Will Smith, as a Hollywood rumor had it in '08, playing Captain America, is not a possibility on my humble list.) I set them up as Jack, Joe, and Stan made 'em.

The 'films' and 'TV-shows' with this mostly all-star cast (I threw in a few cult stars just for fun) will never be produced, of course—except perhaps in Valhalla—but since Jack Kirby had an imagination like few others, let's indulge our own imaginations and envision the King in charge of casting and production at his own studio; Kingfilms Productions (a fictional lot thrown together just for this article), and see who might've snared the coveted parts he created from the late '30s to the early '70s....



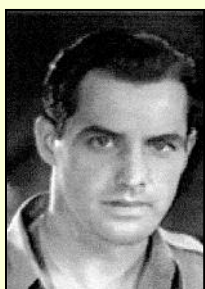
(right) Hey, sweetie, it's a detail of Kirby's pencils from the *Captain America's Bicentennial Battles Treasury Edition*, 1976!

(next page) Courtesy of Heritage Auctions, here's original art to the splash page from *Challengers of the Unknown* #7 (April 1959). Inks by Wallace Wood.

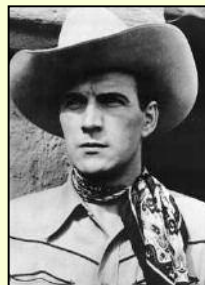
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GOLDEN AGE GRABBERS!



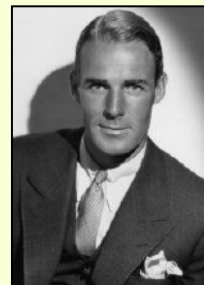
Spy Smasher serial star Kent Richmond is my choice for Kirby and Simon's Manhunter.



Hollywood used to have "hero types." Tall, imposing actors like Tom Tyler (seen here in one of his many westerns) fit that type. He was the first Captain Marvel and later, the Phantom in serials. I see him having no problem portraying Simon & Kirby's Blue Bolt. A panel from *Blue Bolt* #7 is next to Tyler's picture.



Joan Crawford, who began in silent pictures, was one of the greatest of the movie goddesses. With her large, luminous eyes and her fine acting ability, she fits the bill as the Green Sorceress, nemesis of Blue Bolt.



Randolph Scott was a favorite of western and war movie fans during the Big One, and a fave for years afterward, as well. He'd have been a natural to play Captain America. (And Buster Crabbe wouldn't have been bad, either.) Here, a dapper Randy is flanked by panels of Steve Rogers in military dress from *CA Comics* #7.

POST-WAR FAVORITES!



The unpublished cover to *Stuntman* #3 stands beside the dashing Tyrone Power, who starred in *The Mark of Zorro* (1941). Ty would've had no problems switching masks for portraying S&K's Hollywood-based hero.



The '50s saw Flash Gordon, a creation of the '30s, make it to the new medium of television. Steve Holland played that courageous spaceman, and it's a sure bet he'd have had the right stuff for S&K's Fighting American, as well.



I could only match three of the famed Challengers of the Unknown to actors I liked, so... Eric Fleming (of the TV western *Rawhide*) is my pick for Ace Morgan, David Hedison (from *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*) is my Prof. Hale, and Rock Hudson gets the co-starring part of Rocky Davis—and not because of their first names! Rocky could've also been nicely portrayed by either Jack Palance or Anthony Quinn.



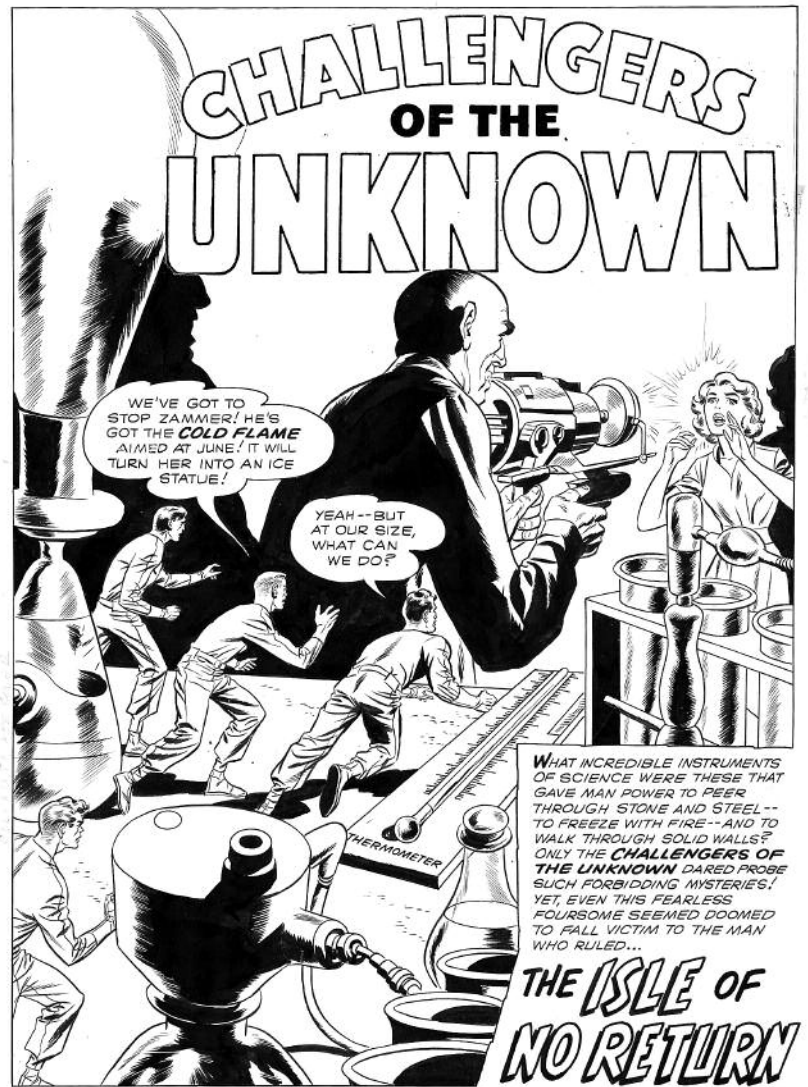
Kerwin Mathews, adventure star of the late '50s and early '60s, thrilled youngsters in *The Seventh Voyage of Sindbad* and other films. Put him in the distinctive green and yellow outfit of the Fly, and the cameras are ready to roll!



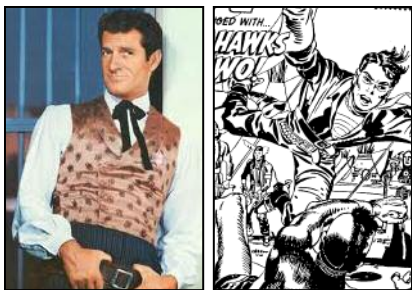
Jay North, TV's *Dennis the Menace*, is my pick for Tommy Troy, the kid who became the Fly. The panel showing Tommy taking charge is from *The Fly* #1.



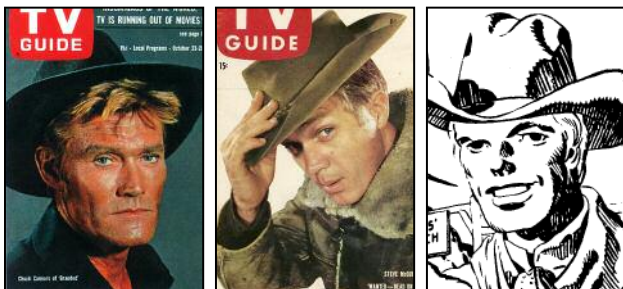
Husky, handsome Roger Smith (husband to the sultry Ann-Margret) showed his easygoing charm and toughness on *77 Sunset Strip*, so I signed him up as Sky Masters. (He could've done Ace Morgan, also.)



WESTERNERS!



Hugh O'Brien was a big star in the '50s, appearing as Wyatt Earp on series television. Strong-jawed and athletic, he's my choice for Bullseye (or the Two-Gun Kid). Here, Bullseye goes into action in this splash from his sixth issue.



It was a tough decision to make—go with Chuck (*The Rifleman*) Connors or Steve (*The Magnificent Seven*) McQueen for Clay Duncan of *Boys' Ranch*, so I showcased both of 'em—but I think Connors would be the best-suited for the role. Beside two of their vintage TV Guides covers is a splash from *BR* #2.



It's not always hard to make a decision—I'll let Clayton Moore (the greatest Lone Ranger ever) switch masks and western apparel and fire off those two same Colts as the Two-Gun Kid.



This is my only posthumous selection—since James Dean died before Jack and Stan's *Rawhide Kid* was 'born.' But the young rebel sensation of the mid-1950s would've been sensational in the part. Dean, who starred as a ranch hand in *Giant*, is shown in a studio portrait from the film next to the cover of *Rawhide Kid* #31.

HOLLYWOOD SEQUELS

We all know how, when Hollywood tries to turn a book into a film, or remake a classic, they *always* have to change things (and usually not for the better). So this issue, we thought it only fitting to take a look at the original 1940s-50s material New York-centric Jack Kirby produced in a variety of genres, and how a much older, more mellow West Coast Kirby handled the same subject matter in the 1970s. (You've got to hand it to DC and Carmine Infantino; they let Jack try every genre he'd ever had success with, from Kid Gangs to Crime, and Romance to War and Mystery, trying to find the record sales Simon & Kirby had in their heyday.) Which is better—the original or the sequel?

(this spread) Ahh, romance! But love is rife with pitfalls, such as the "true life" drama of being a carnival girl(?), in this page from *True Love Problems* #41 (Sept. 1956)—like most 1950s romance stories, this one had a happy ending. Contrast that to Jack's work on the never-published *True Divorce Cases* #1 (circa 1971 and originally produced for DC Comics), where the action—and relationship resolution—reach a decidedly spicier tone.

(pages 60-61) War! And nobody told a war story like Kirby! Whether it's the 1950s (like this unused *Warfront* cover, circa 1957) or the 1970s (*Our Fighting Forces* #152, Dec. 1974), it didn't matter what coast Jack lived on; it's non-stop WWII action all the way!

(pages 62-63) Oooh, spooky! You can see a 1951 full-story example of Kirby's *Black Magic* work elsewhere in this issue, which is much more gripping than this tame cover for *Black Cat Mystic* #58 (Sept. 1956). But when it came to mystery, the mellow vibe of the West Coast didn't dull his ability to create creepy, suspenseful images, such as this page drawn for 1971's *Spirit World* #2 (and finally published in *Weird Mystery Tales* #3, Nov. 1972).

(pages 64-65) Kids; you gotta love 'em. And while Kirby temporarily took the Newsboy Legion out of Suicide Slum in this page from *Star-Spangled Comics* #14 (Nov. 1942), this Kid Gang went all Hollywood high-tech with lots of new "gadgets" in *Superman's Pal Jimmy Olsen* #144 (Dec. 1971). One thing didn't change over the years, however; Scrapper, the character most like Jack as a boy in New York, is still the comic relief.

(pages 66-67) Crime runs rampant in these examples, from the cover of *Headline Comics* #25 (July 1947), and from the unpublished *In The Days Of The Mob* #2 (circa 1971). Both show brutal images and beautiful women, and despite being drawn almost 25 years apart, stylistically they're very similar.

(pages 68-69) If Simon & Kirby ruled the 1940s super-hero genre with Sandman (from *Adventure Comics* #86, May 1943), DC figured they could recapture that popularity by reteaming Joe and Jack for *Sandman* #1 (Winter 1974). This new version of the character sold well initially (possibly due to a longer period on the stands), but the ongoing series only made it six issues (with a seventh shelved and later finally printed in *Best of DC Digest* #22 in 1982).

LOVE | PROBLEMS #41 | CONTENTS PAGE

L. Problems #41 - P.1



Love
PROBLEMS AND ADVICE ILLUSTRATED

In this Issue...

- A GAME OF HEARTS
- ISLAND OF HOPE
- 10 SECONDS TO LOVE
- PLANNING A PARTY
- LOVE AND HATE

Plus...THE REAL LIFE STORY OF A GIRL'S FIGHT TO FULFILL HER DREAMS!



MY NAME IS PEGGY, AND THIS IS THE WAY I'D OFTEN IMAGINED MYSELF TO BE--



A DUTIFUL WIFE -- WITH A HOME TO TAKE CARE OF -- PREPARING DINNER FOR MY HUSBAND --



AND WHEN I'D SEE HIM COMING UP THE WALK, I'D FLY INTO HIS ARMS AND WELCOME HIM WITH A LOVING KISS--



BUT THIS IS HOW I REALLY WAS--A GIRL IN A TRAVELING CARNIVAL--DRESSED IN GARISH COSTUMES--STANDING UNDER GARISH LIGHTS--MY FEET IN THE SAWDUST AND THE VOICE OF THE BARKER HARSH IN MY EARS!





SOMEWHERE IN THE SHIFTING CROWDS WAS THE MAN WHO WOULD OFFER ME ALL I DREAMED OF. BUT CARNY LIFE AND ITS INTRIGUES COUNTERED HAPPINESS WITH HEARTBREAK! THE STORY OF MY STRUGGLE TO GAIN A NEW FUTURE BEGINS ON THE NEXT PAGE -- WAS I WRONG TO CHALLENGE MY FATE?



HERE THEY ARE!
NO SWEAT! NOW,
KEEP THEM ON
THOSE LOVELY
BLUE EYES!

THANK YOU, DON!
YOU'RE VERY
SWEET!



DON COULD NOT PUT A NAME
TO WHAT WAS HAPPENING --
THERE WAS NOTHING FURTHER
SAID. BETWEEN THEM WAS
A SORT OF MEANINGFUL
SILENCE--AND A MEETING
OF THE EYES...



DIDN'T MYRA KNOW? DIDN'T MYRA KNOW
THAT IF ONE REALITY BECAME A HELL FOR
A MAN--HE WOULD DRIFT TO ANOTHER
AS REAL-- AND INVITING--



AND INGRID
WAS REAL
AND UNAFRAID--
AND HER
EMOTIONS--
A MYSTERY!



THAT WAS WHEN MYRA'S VOICE CUT ACROSS
THE SCENE-- LIKE A COLD KNIFE! THE
CONFRONTATION HAD FINALLY COME...

I'M HOME,
DON!



AND, SO IT BEGAN--THE FACING OF AN ISSUE--
THE HARD WAY--WHERE IT IS
MOST DIFFICULT TO RESOLVE--
AMONG SPECTATORS...

I TOLD YOU
I WAS BRINGING
MY BOSS! HE'LL
MAKE A FINE
WITNESS!

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THE SOURCE OF THE FORCE

(left) Obi-Wan Kenobi was, along with Yoda, Luke Skywalker's mentor in the first trilogy.

(center right) The villainous Boba Fett.

(bottom left) Had Hayden Christensen (shown here in his role of Anakin Skywalker) turned in a more complex and compelling performance, the second trilogy may have fared better among reviewers.

(bottom right) Powerful warriors collided in *New Gods* #7 and *The Phantom Menace*. The sinister Sith killer Darth Maul (Ray Park, shown) crossed light sabers with Qui-Gon Jinn (Liam Neeson). And (page 74, top) Izaya revenged himself on Steppenwolf in this 'new' cover for the *New Gods* reprint series.

(next page, top left) Devilance the Pursuer was a one-shot villain from the *Forever People* #11 (detail of Kirby's pencils shown here). He and his powers/abilities were more fascinating than fellow hunter Boba Fett (shown on this page, right), whose origin was shown in the newer Lucas trilogy.

(next page, top right) Darkseid's appeal to an escaping Scott Free was closely matched several years later by the Emperor in *Return of the Jedi*.

(next page, bottom left) The King ended *Mister Miracle* #9 and *New Gods* #11 with declarations of war. Lucas may have done better to have an enraged Darth Vader say his ending lines along the same vein at the end of *Revenge of the Sith* rather than the calm set-up to "A New Hope."

(next page, bottom right) Orion sets the stage for 'Last Battle' at the very end of *New Gods* #11. This stirring pronouncement beat out Vader and the Emperor's quiet overseeing of the Death Star's construction.

All images this page, and the Star Wars logo are TM & ©2010 Lucasfilm. Other images next two pages TM & ©2010 DC Comics.

The second Star Wars trilogy compared to the Fourth World "tapestry issues" by Michael Stewart

We 'Kirby-heads' know the "truth": Jack's cosmic spectacles laid the foundation for Lucas's *Star Wars* years before most wide-eyed filmgoers got hip to it in the summer of '77.

In the very first scene of *Star Wars* ("A New Hope," Ch. IV), the space vessels slicing through the dark void of their galaxy were similar to the gigantic star cruisers of Galactus, the Watcher, the Skrulls, the Colonizers, and so on.

More similarities are needed, though. Some were pointed out in *Kirby Collector* #11, but for my purposes, allow me to review briefly (and add a few things worth noting) before going on to the second Lucas trilogy:

MENTORS: Himon and Metron worked together to bring out the *real* Scott Free, prepping him for his destiny.

MENTORS: Obi-Wan Kenobi and Yoda worked in tandem to bring out the *real* Luke Skywalker, prepping him for his destiny.



MENTORS: Not to be outdone on his side of the galactic equation, Highfather prepped Orion for his destiny.

The Source, Kirby's mysterious foundation for the networking of godly circumstances, powers, and wisdom was explained at times in the tapestry issues with almost-religious reverence, as it was with the Force in the first three films that dealt with the re-emergence of the good Jedis.

THE SOURCE: "The Source! It lives! It burns! When we reach out and touch it—the core of us is magnified! And we tower as tall as Darkseid!" (Himon in *Mister Miracle* #9)

THE FORCE: "The Force is what gives a Jedi Knight his powers. It's an energy field created by all living things. It surrounds us, it penetrates us... it binds the galaxy together." (Obi-Wan Kenobi in "A New Hope")

Luke Skywalker's innate power slowly increases over the course of the first three films (actually the finale, as Lucas tells us) until he is ready to meet the ultimate villain, Darth Vader (his father).

Orion's ready for his final and biggest challenge after only eleven issues (!), his innate power/fury rising and seemingly increasing after conflicts with Brola, the Deep Six, Mantis and his 'bugs', and two city-leveling bouts with Kalibak. After that, he wants to take out his father, Darkseid, the ultimate challenge for men and gods.

Onward, as Stan Lee might say. Obi-Wan tells Yoda that, "That boy is our last hope." "No," Yoda responds. "There is another."

It turns out that the Princess Leia had the Force within her, also. In *Forever People* #4, a mysterious caption the King affixed to the pin-up of Beautiful Dreamer explains to us that she may be the deciding factor in the war of the gods. Talk about women's equality!

Now, we can go on to the second trilogy. Lucas, talented though he is, placed himself in the unusual situation of having to work backwards... or in other words, do three Jack Kirby "tapestry issues" along the lines of "The Pact!" and "Himon!". Audiences going into the theaters knew at least five things had to happen in George Lucas's new series:



- 1) Anakin Skywalker starts off a good Jedi knight who somehow becomes the evil Darth Vader and betrays his fellow Jedis.
- 2) Anakin sires Luke and Leia after marrying royalty.
- 3) Anakin is mentored and groomed for his post by Obi-Wan Kenobi.
- 4) The democratic alliance of planets is replaced by the Empire, led by the calculating and brutal (Emperor-to-be) Palpatine.
- 5) The Rebellion's 'seeds' are created by the crushing nature of the Empire. Freedom fighters will spring up on various planets.

Lucas filled in the rest with somewhat fascinating characters (Qui-Gon Jinn, Darth Maul, Jar-Jar Binks, Mace Windu) and some bores and snores (Darth Maul and Jar-Jar Binks again, depending on your perspective). To many filmgoers, *The Phantom Menace* was just as rousing as "A New Hope," but to many others it was under-acted, underwritten, overblown... and worst of all, predictable.

Kirby's first "tapestry movie" wasn't.

In "The Pact!" we didn't know what to expect! Discounting the announcement that there was a link—"a shattering secret" that bonds together the origins of Orion and Mister Miracle, we were in the dark(-seid) all the way!

Jack didn't rely on things he'd done in previous Fourth World issues for this one, as Lucas

