JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR FORTY-FIVE $9.95 IN THE US

CONTENTS

KIRBY'S TIME MACHINE!

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(right) The Losers are about to live up to their name, in these amazing splash page pencils from *Our Fighting Forces* #151 (Oct. 1974). Losers TM & ©2006 DC Comics.

THE NEW JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR

ISSUE #45, WINTER 2006

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OPENING SHOT

by John Morrow, editor of TJKC

Wouldn't you know it? No sooner had *TJKC* #44 hit stores in November, with my announcement that the one-hour documentary *Jack Kirby: Storyteller* would be on the December DVD release of last summer's big-budget *Fantastic 4* movie, did I get the news: Fox had decided to pull it, saving it instead for a future "special edition" of the film on DVD in Spring 2006.

We got the word out as best we could, online and through our Yahoo mailing list. (If you aren't on our mailing list, sign up at *http://groups.yahoo.com/group/twomorrows/* so you can always be apprised of the latest developments at TwoMorrows—we promise we won't overwhelm you with spam.) But undoubtedly some of you went to your stores in early December and plunked down $19.95 for the *F4* DVD, expecting to learn more about Jack's life and career. So now, instead of the general public learning about Kirby, it'll be a more limited release, most likely predominately to the comics shop market (which largely already knows at least a little about Jack's career). Bummer.

KIRBY IS COMING...

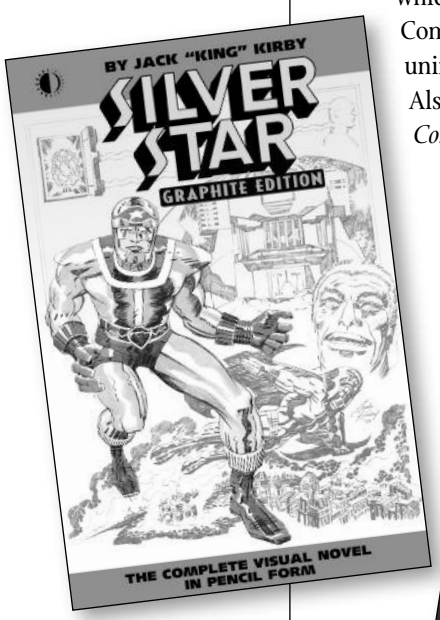
If you're curious to see other video appearances by Jack, he appeared on Bob Newhart's short-lived TV show *Bob* playing himself in "You Can't Win", the 15th episode of the one and only season, which aired January 29, 1993. Jack also played himself in the 1988 documentary *Comic Book Confidential,* and the 1987 direct-to-video documentary *Masters of Comic Book Art.*

We've finally been able to track down the episode of *The Incredible Hulk* TV series where Jack has his uncredited cameo as a police sketch artist. It's from "No Escape", the 19th episode of the second season, which originally aired March 30, 1979. But more bad news; this episode isn't on the recently released *The Incredible Hulk—The Television Series Ultimate Collection* boxed DVD set, so unless you know someone who taped it, you'll have to content yourself with the couple of screen captures we're presenting here, or stay tuned to the Sci-Fi Channel in hopes of catching it in reruns.

However, it's not all bad news on the Kirby front. The "Masters of American Comics" exhibit co-organized by the Hammer Museum and The Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles included Jack Kirby as one of the 15 influential "Masters" in their show that opened November 20 and runs through March 12. On page 76 of this issue, you can see a write-up of the exhibit, which will travel to The Milwaukee Art Museum in Wisconsin from April 27-August 13, and then to New York for a few months.

Also, the United States Postal Service is issuing a set of 20 DC Comics super-hero stamps in late 2006, and included will be a Green Arrow stamp based on the Kirby/Royer drawing from the cover of DC Comics' 2001 *Green Arrow* collection. Apparently there will also be a Marvel set in 2007, so hopefully that'll feature more Kirby images.

Even more Kirby is coming from TwoMorrows in 2006. In March, we're releasing *Silver Star: Graphite Edition,* a 160-page trade paperback which'll feature Jack's entire six-issue *Silver Star* series from Pacific Comics, only this time reproduced mostly from his original, uninked pencils (taken from photocopies in the Kirby Archives). Also, in April, we're proud to present the *Collected Jack Kirby Collector, Volume Five,* the next in our series of trade paperbacks (this one 224 pages), reprinting our now sold-out issues #20-22, plus more than 30 pieces of Kirby art never before published. Both are available for ordering at *www.twomorrows.com* or at your local comics shop through Diamond Comic Distributors' *Previews* catalog.



And if that's not enough, stay tuned for a really special Kirby item we'll be releasing in July, just in time for this year's Comicon International: San Diego. I can't spill the beans just yet, as we're still finalizing some details, but we'll have the full story next issue (or keep your eyes peeled to *www.twomorrows.com* for the earliest official announcement of it).

Marvel's got a second *Marvel Visionaries* volume on Jack in the works (although the Kirby family won't see a dime from it), and I'm sure we'll see more Kirby in DC's *Archives* volumes this year. Add to that three more issues of the *Kirby Collector,* and 2006 is shaping up to be full of square knees, krackle, and the wonderful in-your-face action we've all grown to love by the little tough guy from the Lower East Side. Yes, Kirby Is Coming (as the 1970 DC house ads used to say), and here's hoping he'll keep on for years to come. ★

CHILDHOOD STORIES PART 1:

From a collection of essays entitled "Conversations with Jack." Based upon interviews with Jack Kirby and his family from 1989 to 1992 for the book The Art of Jack Kirby, *by Ray Wyman Jr.*

[Although Jack often publicly claimed that he never wanted to see his old neighborhood again, he spent quite a lot of time ruminating about his life in the Lower East Side. He said some pretty touching things about his father and some surprising things about his "gang." He remembered certain people and what they did (e.g., Leon Klinghoffer). This text never made it into AOJK *for two big reasons—one, Jack and Roz wanted me to focus on the art, not the childhood (they had the impression nobody was interested in this stuff); and two, I was a lesser writer. Had I done what I am doing now, I'm sure I could have made the case. This essay was compiled from interviews that took place between July 24 and October 10, 1989.]*

Everybody has the ability to transcend themselves. You have this ability, only maybe the right moment for you has not come. It may come and maybe what you will do will astound you. Maybe you will reflect on it for the rest of your life and say, "How could I have done that?" But you did. Given the situation, a person can accomplish anything. I've seen it done a hundred times. I've done it myself a hundred times. I've done things that I shouldn't have been able to do. I took on six guys in a fight and I won. I survived the deep freezes in Europe with bullets flying over my head. I got my family out of the Lower East Side. See? When you do this and succeed you do it because you love. I used love in everything I did. I would jump into a wrestling ring with a guy twice my size. Now this guy would fight as matter of fact, but I took it as a matter of love. I was going to get this guy because that is what I wanted to do and I got enjoyment out of it. Well, I couldn't do it today, certainly not at 72, but when I was a younger man I felt that I could tear up the world and get away with it.

My father was Benjamin Kurtzberg. He came from a very well-to-do family in Austria. He was a scrappy guy: he would scrap in the factory; he would scrap in the street, he would knock out any guy looking for trouble. But he was also a very gentle man. He never did much talking but I know that he loved me very much. He carried me around on his shoulders when I was a little boy. Sometimes I would catch him looking out the window and looking at things that I couldn't see. Being a kid, I could never understand it. Mostly, I was glad to be close to my old man. And I was. He really loved me. I think he thought about the life he left behind in Austria. He came from a very wealthy family. They had titles and they all had an ear for customs that went back as far as anybody could remember. He got into scrapes with the locals. I don't remember the details, but one particular thing was a bad situation and my grandfather didn't want him to get killed. People solved their differences with duels. You could use a sword or a pistol, but either way you had to go through with the duel. I think my grandfather had other ideas and he stuffed some money in my father's pocket and shipped him off to America. Back in those days, a buck was a lot of money. This was around 1903.

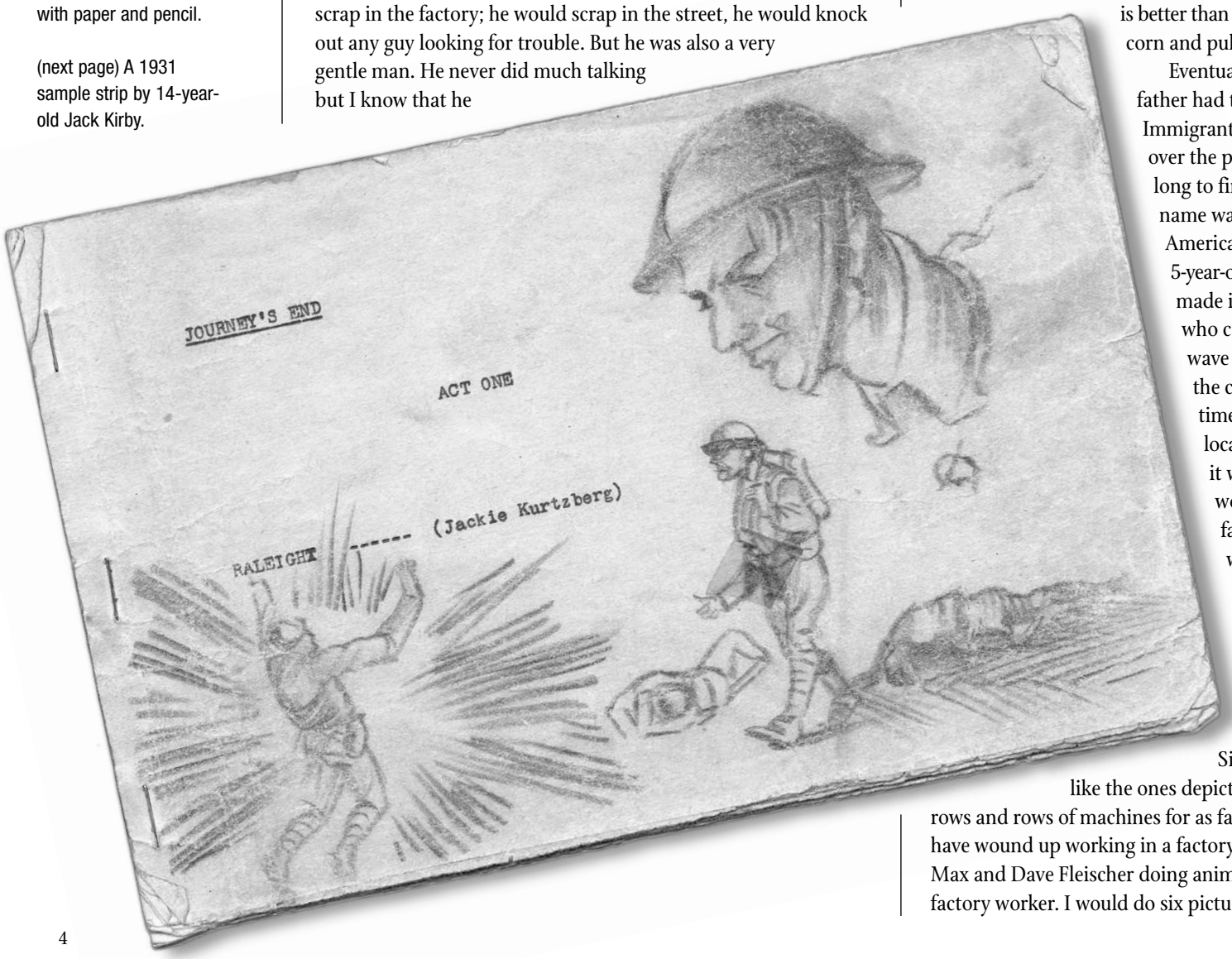
At that time, everybody was coming to America; immigrants from all over coming in from England, France, Ireland, Germany. Nobody knew what an Oriental was; we knew the Orientals around our own particular way, I could go down to Mott Street and see all the Orientals I wanted, but as many of them assimilated into our culture, they dressed like I did. You could shoot crap with them, play ball and do the rest like you did with the Irish, or anybody else. We were all immigrants. I never saw any Oriental in his homeland, but I never saw an Irishman in his homeland or a German in his homeland. Like all immigrants, he came over to make more money. Nobody wanted to be a peasant. In Europe, you had to struggle to make a dollar. You had to struggle to stay in the fields! My father must have been very surprised to see so many people. And the competition was very intense; you had the peasants from Europe and people from all parts of America. Why did Iowans go to New York? They wanted to become tycoons. Of course, some of them, the best thing they ever get is a store. They become store owners and they become proud of that. To them it is better than some guy that's going to shuck corn and pull weeds the rest of his life.

Eventually, the money ran out and my father had to find work and get married. Immigrants were getting married all over the place. So, it didn't take him long to find a wife. My mother, her name was Rose, she had been living in America for several years. She was a 5-year-old girl when she and her sisters made it over. They were the ones who came over with the very first wave of immigrants at the turn of the century. So, she had plenty of time to establish herself into the local community of Austrians and it was natural that somebody would arrange for her and my father to meet. That was the way couples met back then.

Most immigrants wound up working in the factories. It was the same for my family. My mother and father both worked at a textile mill near the docks on the East Side—probably a sweatshop like the ones depicted in the history books. Just rows and rows of machines for as far as the eye can see. I would have wound up working in a factory—in fact, I did. I worked for Max and Dave Fleischer doing animation and I was, essentially, a factory worker. I would do six pictures of a guy taking one step

(below) Here's an interesting curiosity; young Jackie Kurtzberg's tattered, typewritten script for *Journey's End,* a 1929 play written by R.C. Sheriff. Set in World War I, it revolves around a group of British officers fighting on the front lines in France. Jack's high school must've put on a production of the then-popular play, and Jack, with aspirations to become an actor, took on the pivotal role of Raleigh, an optimistic new arrival who is soon transformed by the realities of war. This artifact was sent to me by the Kirby family, and we can assume young Jack managed to see the 1930 film version at least once; he couldn't resist drawing a WWI scene on the front of his script (alas, there aren't any other illos in it). It's an eerie precursor to the war horrors Jack himself would experience during WWII. This likely serves as the first time Jack was given a script to act-out, whether live, or with paper and pencil.

(next page) A 1931 sample strip by 14-year-old Jack Kirby.



THE BLOCK

and I would pass them down to the next guy and he would draw the guy taking another step, and so on. Max and Dave Fleischer had an animation factory and I got out of there fast. The one thing I didn't want to do was end up in a factory like my father.

I lived down in the Lower East Side of New York, 1361 Suffolk Street between Norfolk Street and Stanton Street. And I remember Allen Street where the elevated trains ran. I would stand someplace where I could get a close look at the passengers passing by; it was a wonderful exhilarating experience. Of course the trains would rattle like crazy; rumble and roar like a jet coming down right on top of you. It was all part of the noise of the environment. You wouldn't want to live there.

That's why I tried to find any escape that I could find—anything that was feasible I would do. I would sit up on the roof of the building and look down at everything; I would camp out on the fire escape and read a book; I always had a book. The Sunday comics pages was where I found one of my distractions. A strip would take up a whole page so you could see the drawing very clearly. You could get lost in it and make it your world.

My family couldn't afford to have a nice place, but my mother kept it very clean. I'm talking tenement, so there were very few conveniences. We had a metal barrel right in the middle of the room that was our stove and that had a chimney pipe that went up into the ceiling. And we had a kneading table right behind the stove and the washtub where we took baths and washed our clothes. There wasn't a bathroom; we took turns taking baths in the same room where we prepared our food and the toilet was down the hall; the whole floor used the same toilet. We had one little room with a dining room, if you want to call it that, but it was a little room with two windows and all the women would look out those windows and talk to each other across the street or look up and talk to each other from one floor above. But my mother did what she could and kept the place very clean. She kept the place as clean as a whistle.

I had a brother and he died many years ago. His name was David. He was five years younger, but he was 6'1". I have always tended to be short; it gave me an inferiority complex. So David would take me into the movies. I used to get in on younger prices, so we would say he was my younger brother and then he got in on the younger prices too. He was a big heavy guy. I don't know; something went wrong with his heart and it was at the wrong time. Now I suppose he could have been easily saved today. But at that time, there was nothing anybody could do.

This was a time when there was no penicillin. There was no medical technology to speak of. Anybody with pneumonia was a done man. Winters got real severe and a lot of people passed away. I remember having a lot of sweaters on me, I can tell you. Our idea of preventing disease was to wear four or five sweaters and everything else you could put on. So what did people depend on? God. People performed exorcisms; it was a very real thing to us all. When I was nine years old I got double pneumonia. I was supposed to die. What was going to save me? My mother could not give me up. She called in the rabbis and they all danced around my bed and chanted, "Demon, come out of this boy. What is your name, demon? Tell us your name. Come out of this boy." I just happened to pull out of it because... I don't know the reason. But you had to rely on something, God or at least pure chance.

My mother held much faith in God and on folklore. She was like a lot of women of her time; everybody was superstitious and everybody believed in fables from their homeland. She was also a great storyteller. I got that talent from her and by listening to her every night. There was no television and we had a radio but I enjoyed the stories my mother told me because they were very believable. The radio was theater, people running around making noises and yelling at each other. You couldn't see the action but it was vivid in your mind. It was very good for its time but my mother's stories—the characters were alive and they existed right in front of you. Storytelling can be very personal in that way. The best stories are the ones that can touch you; anytime anybody tells you a good story and it is in person they have a smell, a sound, and they breathe. That is the essence of good storytelling, when it can reach out and touch you. My mother learned storytelling from her mother. Like her mother, and her mother's mother, my mother told me tales about people, God, and the land they lived on. That's the kind of home I grew up in.

And the neighbors were wonderful people, and they were fair people. They were the kind of people who spoke their minds, and despite the fact that they might have an argument with you one day and they would protect you the next. Why? Because you were their neighbor and you lived on that block and you lived in that building and you were part of them. That's the way it was. We all clung together. I remember when my brother was being born—I was about 5 years old—right there in our apartment! Kids weren't born in hospitals, so I stayed with my neighbor. This was during Depression time and people couldn't afford doctors. You could hear everything, every foot fall, every moan. It wasn't easy to deliver a baby. Those kinds of time seem primitive now, but they were the best that you could do then, under the circumstances.

I drew a picture of my neighborhood; I call it "The Block." It is a collage of the images that still fill my head. I am telling you that it is exactly how it was. Wash hanging up on lines that went from one side of the street to another, kids bawling, parents screaming at their kids, women feeling the fruit and vegetables on the cart; any one of them could have been my mother. Boys fighting on the stoop; could be me, could be somebody else. There was the blood drunk, the cop yelling at the woman for throwing garbage out the window, the taxi cabs, kids playing in the street, baseball in all this traffic, and I can tell you, there were horses in the traffic, automobiles, trolley cars, bicycles, dogs, push carts, guys pushing racks of clothes, trash piled up to here—it was a very lively place, but it was a mess. You played handball and by accident somebody would hit the ball and knock a guy's hat off somewhere and the next thing you know you are running the block while this guy is chasing at you, yelling. It was close quarter recreation! You couldn't do anything about it.

Back then New York still had quite a few cobblestone streets; nothing like the smooth roads we have now. And the sidewalks were rough too. To us now they looked like tombstones. When they were chasing my gang, we would go hopping over these tombstones and into the yards. Sometimes we'd use the clotheslines and, of course, if you swung on the clotheslines all of the women would stick their heads out from their apartment windows and curse you, "You, young so-and-so." We would call each other worse. We gave each the kind of names, the stereotype names that you would see in pictures. Like "Mick" and "Spick" and "Fathead" and "Big Ass" and things like that. Sometimes we would call the teachers names. Yes, to their face! They would chase us through the halls. Some guys would do worse. I am not talking about gentlemen. These were rough kids. We would fight in the gym, in the classroom, in the hall—anywhere we had room enough to swing our fists. We would be out in the yard and some guy would pick a fight with another guy. The next thing you would know you would have the whole yard fighting.

Our teacher was the gym teacher. And he was a pretty smart guy. He would give us an hour of basketball before we went up to class—have us exercise and burn off some of the cockiness that comes with youth. And after you shoot basketball for nine months straight you get to be pretty damn good at it. We used to shoot across the court and get it at the ringers. We really enjoyed ourselves. He was one hell of a nice guy. He knew how to treat a guy. Other teachers had to try to imitate him to win our respect or else we would start picking up the tables and chairs.

I would start a fight if I thought there was a problem. I would be scrappy on that account. You wanted to show a guy you are just as big as he is,

INNERVIEW

THE SON ALSO RISES

Jack's son Neal Kirby interviewed
Conducted and transcribed by John Morrow

(Jack and Roz Kirby welcomed their only son Neal into the world in 1948 in Brooklyn, New York. The family moved to Long Island when Neal was only a year or two old, where he was raised among, eventually, three sisters and a host of relatives from the Lower East Side. He left home to attend college in New York in 1966, and followed the family to California after graduation. Now 57 years old—and father of Jack's grandchildren Jeremy, Tracy and Jillian—Neal graciously sat down for this telephone interview, which was conducted on August 10, 2005, and was copyedited by Neal.)

THE JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR: Do you remember your parents telling you what it was like growing up on the Lower East Side of New York?

NEAL KIRBY: My mother never talked much about her childhood at all. My father did, and explained a lot about his childhood; it was rough. When you listen to stories about his childhood, it's like watching the old "Our Gang" comedies; a little bit rougher, of course, but the same kind of thing.

TJKC: Once you moved to Long Island when you were around a year old, did your family stay in that same house until they moved to California in the 1960s?

NEAL: They lived in one house until I was about three, and then they bought a second house about two blocks away, and that's the house I was brought up in, in a town called East Williston. They were there from about 1950, '51 until they moved around the end of 1968, beginning of 1969, when they moved to California.

TJKC: What do you do for a living now?

NEAL: I'm a science teacher. I'll be teaching a little math this year. I teach seventh grade.

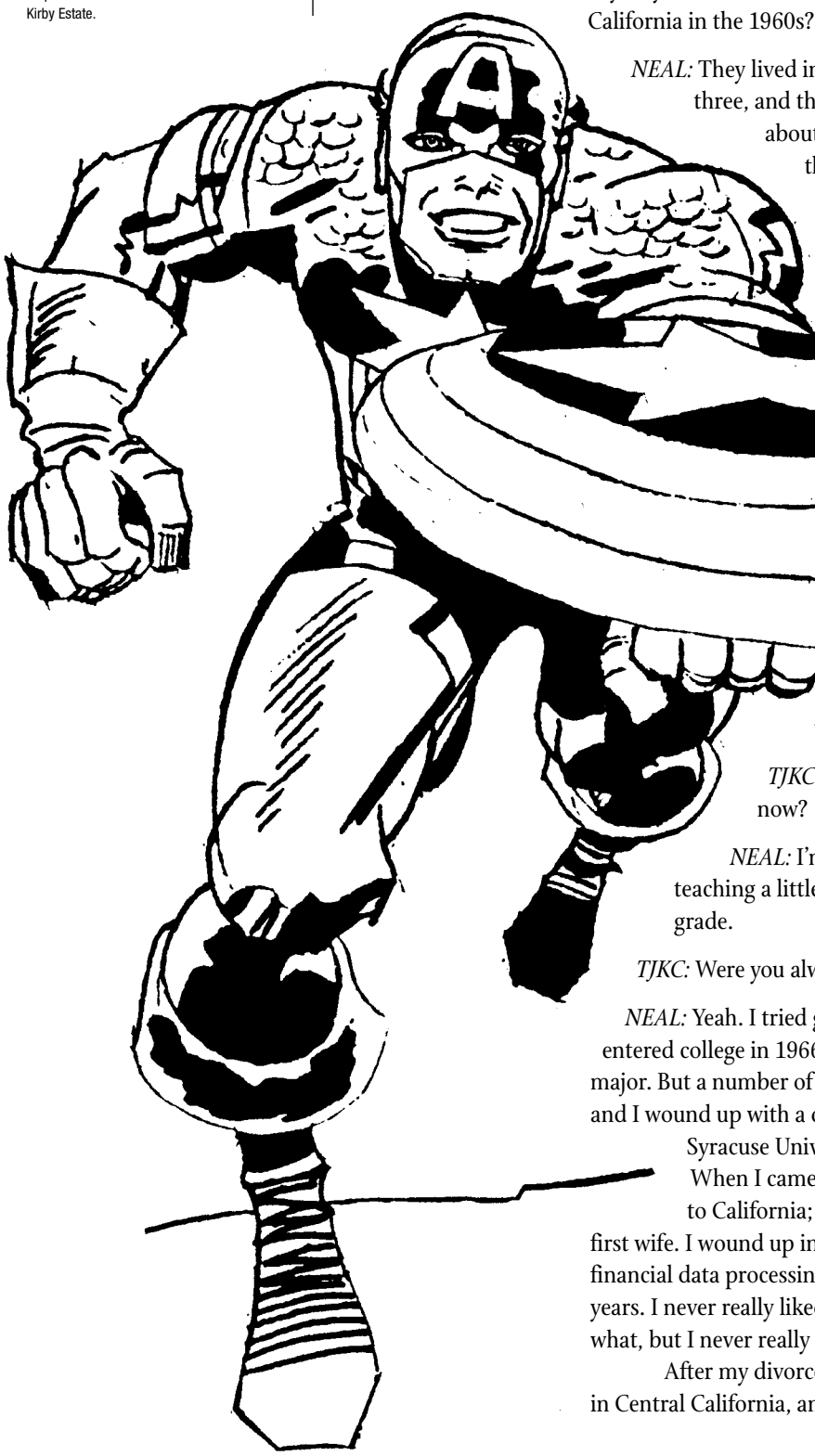
TJKC: Were you always interested in science?

NEAL: Yeah. I tried going that direction when I entered college in 1966; I started out as a zoology major. But a number of things happened in college, and I wound up with a degree in Business from Syracuse University, back in New York. When I came out of college, I moved directly to California; I was married at the time to my first wife. I wound up in banking for twelve years, then financial data processing and marketing for about ten years. I never really liked it; I enjoyed banking somewhat, but I never really enjoyed the corporate life.

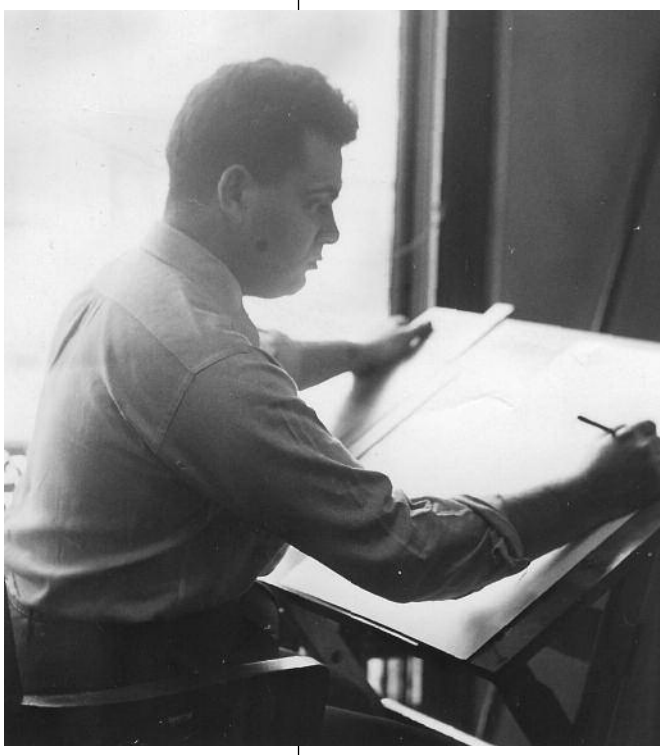
After my divorce around 1989, '90, I was living in Central California, and moved back to Southern

(right) Jack mentions, on page 4 of this issue, how his father used to carry him around on his shoulders when he was little. Here, Jack returns the favor to two-year-old Neal in Fall 1950, during a touching moment on Jones Beach. Our thanks to Neal for sharing the photos shown throughout this interview.

(below) Undated drawing of Captain America, apparently from the early 1970s.



California. I was pretty much flat broke, and I stayed with my parents for a couple of months, and got myself this little studio apartment next to the runway at LAX. I'd reached the point in my life where I literally hated waking up and going to work in the morning. I hated what I was doing, and I had started dating my current wife Connie. I'd also just gotten custody of my son Jeremy, who was going into sixth grade at the time. So Connie said, "What do you really want to do?" and I said, "I always wanted to be a science teacher." So she said, "Why don't you go back to school?" I was in my early forties by this point, but she said she'd watch Jeremy at night. So I went back to school two nights a week; substitute taught during the day and worked a part-time job the other two nights and weekends; and within two years I had two teaching credentials and a Master's Degree in Education. I could not have done any of this without my wife, Connie. She was my support and inspiration. Now I consider myself so lucky; there's so few people who really enjoy what they work at, and I just love going to school every morning. Where else can you get a room full of animals, and microscopes, and telescopes, and everything else you always wanted as a kid, and somebody else is paying for it, and letting you do it? It's incredible.



(above) Jack hard at work in the late 1940s. We adjusted the photo digitally to see what was on his board, but it appears he was just getting started, and the page was blank.

(right) Cover art from *Charlie Chan* #3 (Oct. 1948), which, from the inscription, was either sold or given away in 1968.

(next page, top, clockwise) Jack, Susan, and Neal in March 1949 • Jack and Roz take the kids to the playground in Fall 1950 • Summer 1954, with new addition Barbara • Spring 1952, with Neal at four years old.

(next page, bottom) Perhaps the strip Neal remembers taking into New York was *King Masters,* shown in this inked example. Jack had Frank Giacoia ink the samples of this strip about a jazz trumpet player, but he was never able to sell the concept.

TJKC: As a child, did you inherit any artistic talent? Or were you geared more toward the Sciences and Math?

NEAL: I was always geared more toward the Sciences. My artistic talent stopped at boats and planes; that was about it.

TJKC: Did any of your sisters gravitate toward art?

NEAL: My sister Barbara did. From a drawing standpoint, she has some nice artistic talent. I can write somewhat; my wife says I'm a good writer anyway, though Connie's a much better writer than I. Tracy and Jeremy are both very bright and are also very good writers and very talented. My youngest daughter Jillian is in dance, and writes well, and draws well. She does everything; math and science. I think she probably picked up more of my father than anyone else. She's my daughter from my second marriage; she's ten years old.

TJKC: Your dad read a lot of science-fiction work; was that a common bond, or was that not grounded enough in reality for you?

NEAL: It was a common bond. I remember when I was a kid, he belonged to the Science-Fiction Book Club. Once a month, these hardcover books would come in the mail, and he'd read 'em in, like, twenty minutes or something. I'd read a lot of them, with the old authors like Vonnegutt and those guys. My father also loved history, and had a lot of history books around.

TJKC: A lot of people have asked over the years, when did your dad have time to read? He was glued to the drawing board 16 hours a day, cranking out page after page. When did he sit down and actually read science-fiction books?

NEAL: He did a lot more reading before things got really hot and heavy with Marvel. When that started, even I noticed a lot of his reading tapered off. Starting around 1960, '61, when the *FF* hit, they kept piling on more work. He was working 14, 16, 18 hours a day. At that point he had very little reading time, up until around the early 1980s when he started slowing down.

TJKC: Do you remember seeing him read the newspaper regularly? Did he focus on the headlines, sports, or comics?

NEAL: I rarely saw him read the newspaper; I guess he was one of the first people that depended on the TV for the news. When he was drawing, he always had the TV going. My parents were like most at the time. When *[Walter]* Cronkite came on, life stopped. I was the same way after I went off to college. He was always keenly aware of what was going on, but he wasn't the type to sit there in the morning with his coffee and read the paper.

TJKC: Did your dad read you bedtime stories when you were a kid, or did your mom do that kind of stuff? Who tucked you in at night?

NEAL: We were all very close as a family as children, but I don't remember being read to a lot as a young child. They didn't really do that. They were the kind of parents that were always there for you, but at least in my case—I don't want to speak for my sisters—I can't recall them doing a lot of reading to me. A lot of my reading was solely on my own, because I enjoyed it.

TJKC: How did you view your mom and dad's relationship? Was it the typical *Ozzie and Harriet* kind of marriage? Or was your mom more liberated than a lot of women of the time?

NEAL: They were very, very close. My father was also very protective of my mother. But for the times, I would say my mother was definitely more liberated. My father being my father, he was down there working, doing all this creative stuff. He couldn't run the house; my mother handled a lot of the business transactions and the household finances. My father couldn't screw in a lightbulb. Literally! *[laughter]* He'd try screwing it in, and it wouldn't go, and he'd get frustrated and smash it with his hands. *[laughter]* So we even had to take that privilege away from him. But my mother was a strong woman; she ran the roost, and pretty much controlled everything that was going on in the house. My father had no mind for that stuff; he wouldn't have been able to survive without her.

TJKC: What's the birth order of your siblings?

NEAL: Oldest is my sister Susan; she was born in 1945. She still lives back in New York. I'm second. Then there's my sister Barbara, who's born in 1952. And the youngest is Lisa; she's 13 years younger than I am.

TJKC: What's the earliest memory you have of being aware of what your dad did for a living?

NEAL: It's funny; him being a comic book artist, to me as a boy, was just what he did for a living. There was absolutely nothing special about it. Every two, three, four weeks, he'd go into New York City to bring his work in. I do have recollections back in the 1950s, about occasionally having to drive into Brooklyn for a strip he was working on; it wasn't *Sky Masters.* It wasn't Wally Wood; someone else was doing some inking, and we'd drive into Brooklyn and bring work there. But it just never seemed different to me. Back then, what people did for a living, their incomes, all that kind of stuff was a very private, family matter. You never asked what somebody's father did for a living; that was considered incredibly bad manners back then. I remember once or twice in elementary school I'd mention it, and the teacher would go, "Oh, can your father come in and draw some sketches for the class?" and he'd come to the school and draw some super-heroes up on the blackboard. Also, back then the comic book market was a fairly limited market; it's not like today where you can mention a super-hero, and everybody knows what you're talking about. There were no movie or TV shows; the original black-and-white *Superman* show might've been the only one. So even to my friends, the fact that my father was an artist didn't mean that much.

TJKC: Did you grow up reading comics, or were they not of any real interest to you?

NEAL: I started reading them at the time when the Monster books started coming out, late 1950s, early '60s. Then I got into it a little more, and started reading the older ones my father had in his studio: *Black Magic,* the old western books. I enjoyed the more "sciencey" ones obviously. I always enjoyed reading *Thor* because of the historical and mythological stories involved. If I wasn't teaching science, I'd

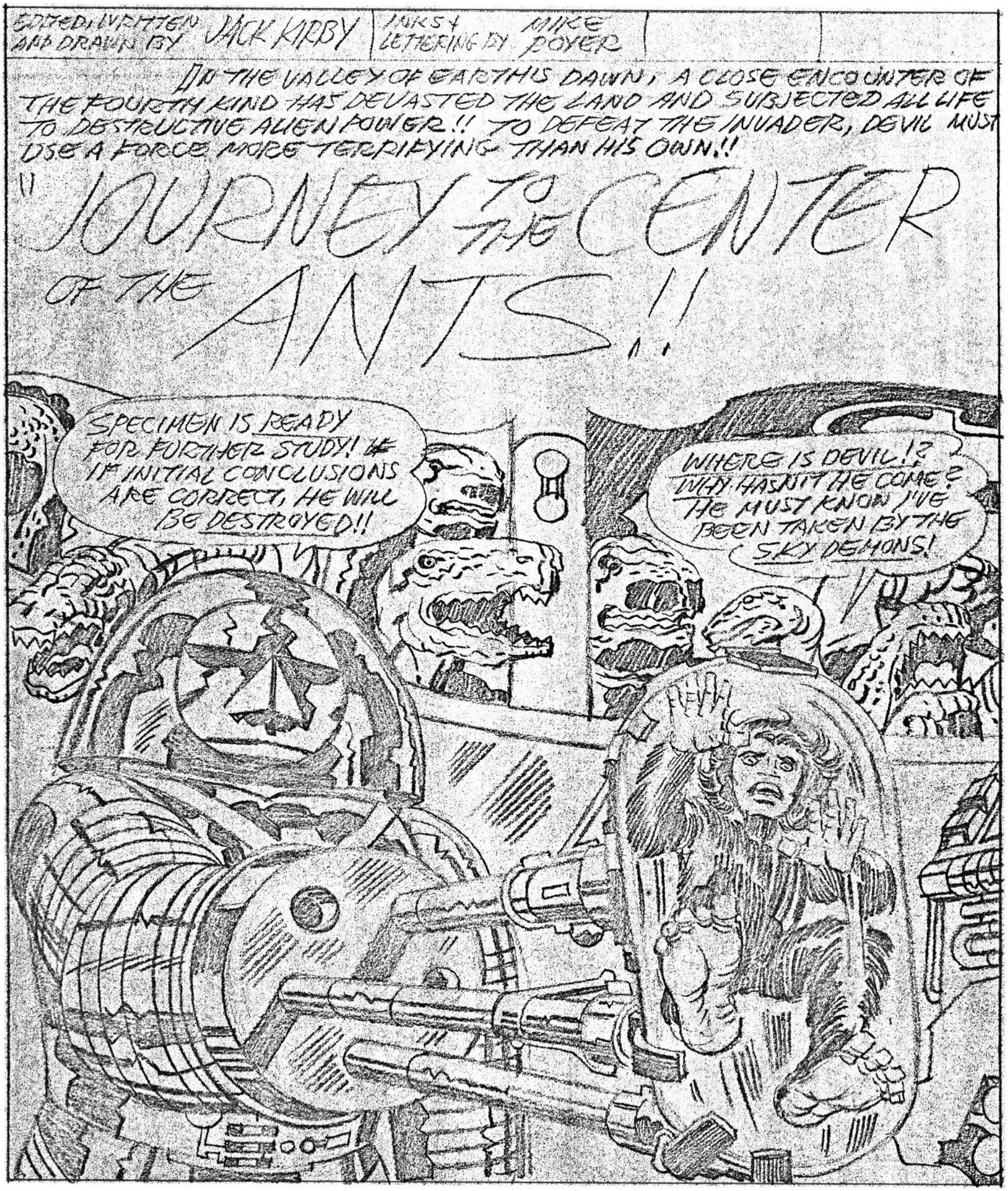
KIRBYVISION: PAST

by Shane Foley

Here's more proof, if any be needed by now, that Jack Kirby was equally at home dramatizing any era of the past or the future. All he needed was a premise with a bit of action or drama and he nailed it every time.

(pages 20-21) ***Devil Dinosaur* #4, page 7 and #5, page 1**
Are these pages from the past or the future? The further back in time one goes the more mysteries there are, so 'Prehistory' was a minefield of fun for Jack. (As long as he wasn't asked to be 'scientifically accurate'.) And as is the case so often in science-fiction work, that prehistory is on a collision course with the far future. Usually alien. Jack visited these scenarios often, such as here.

(pages 22-23) ***Our Fighting Forces* #151, pages 6 & 7**
The pressure is immediately on for the Losers in these pages from Jack's first issue. The top panel of page 6 is a masterpiece of design, beautifully composed and with the grouped enemy virtually faceless in their heavy uniforms. The trees and the foreground helmet stop the eye wandering off the right side of the panel, then assist it down to the Losers in the next panel.



MARK EVANIER

JACK F.A.Q.s

A column answering Frequently Asked Questions about Kirby by Mark Evanier

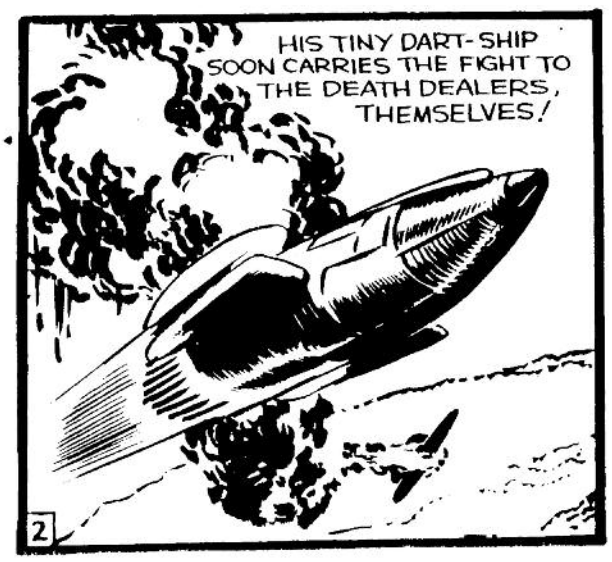
Our first question this issue comes from Patrick Cooper, who seems to have spent much of the last six months typing out Kirby Kwestions to e-mail to me. Not that I'm complaining. Anyway, Patrick asks...

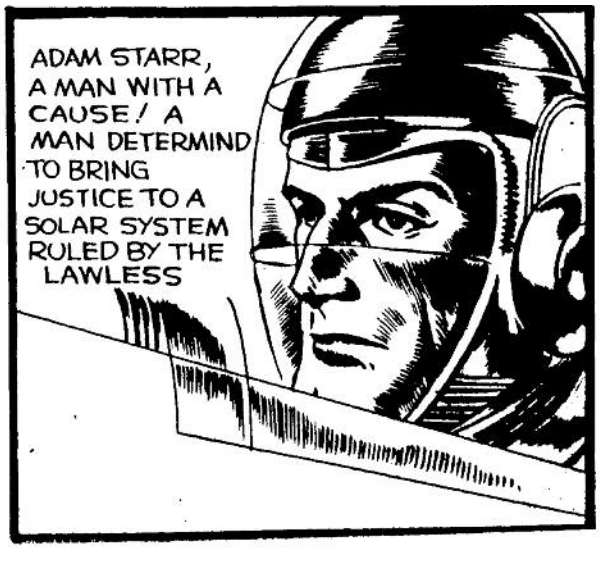
I read on the Internet a theory that Jack Kirby created the DC character Space Ranger and that when he had his fight with editor Jack Schiff, Schiff threw away the work Jack had done on the comic but not the idea. What can you tell me about this theory? Do you think there's anything to it?

Well, I'll tell you what I know and you can decide whatever you want to decide. Not that you wouldn't anyway. Let's start by underscoring that I never heard Jack make any such claim, and that I know of no physical evidence or eyewitness testimony that he ever wrote or drew anything for the strip.

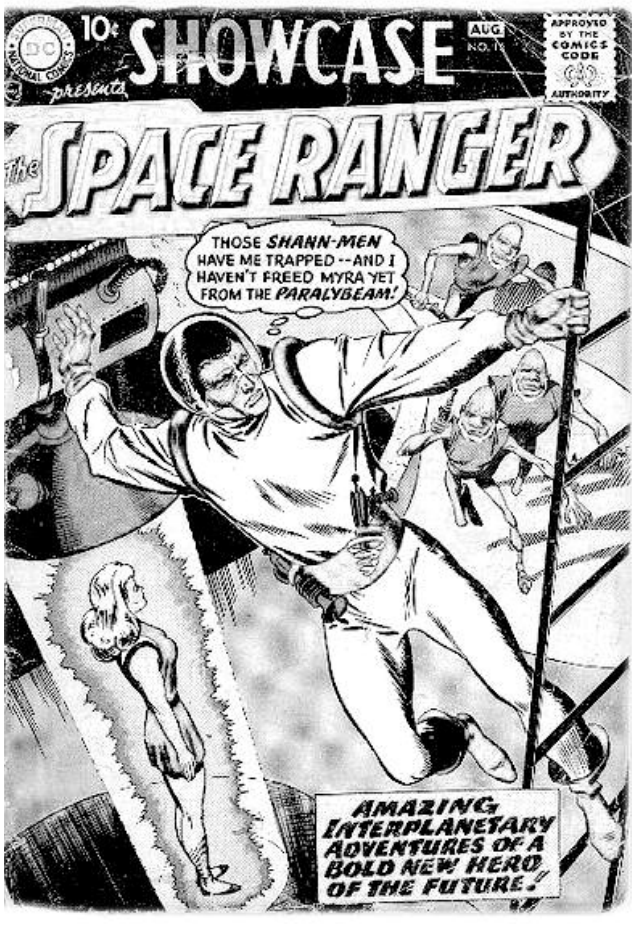
I never even heard Jack say the words "Space Ranger" and wouldn't assume he knew such a feature was ever published. The "case" for his possible involvement, such as it is, is wholly circumstantial and requires a few Hulk-sized leaps of deduction.

As we all know, DC launched its *Showcase* comic in 1956 as a venue to test out new features that might graduate to ongoing books. "Challengers of the Unknown" appeared in issues #6, 7, 11 and 12 before it got its own title.





(below) Adam Starr of the 1930s "Solar Legion" strip does bear a slight resemblance to Space Ranger (shown here on the cover of his debut in *Showcase* #15), but how compelling is the evidence of a Kirby Konnection?



The job of filling *Showcase* rotated between the various DC editors. About the time *Challengers* was spinning off, someone—apparently, editorial director Irwin Donenfeld—suggested they try some space heroes not unlike the popular newspaper strips *Flash Gordon* and *Buck Rogers*. A decision was made that editor Julius Schwartz would develop a strip set in the present-day while his fellow editor Jack Schiff had his freelancers whip up one set in the future. As a result, "Space Ranger" appeared in *Showcase* #15 and 16 and "Adam Strange" ran in #17-19. The latter was edited by Schwartz, written by Gardner Fox and drawn initially by Mike Sekowsky with covers by Gil Kane.

"Space Ranger", meanwhile, was under the editorial supervision of Schiff. The art was done by Bob Brown and the scripts for the *Showcase* issues were reportedly by Edmond Hamilton. Some reports say that Gardner Fox was involved in developing the idea and plotting the first stories, and that Murphy Anderson had a hand in designing Space Ranger's costume. Murphy says he had nothing to do with it, and I'm not sure whether to believe the part about Fox.

So how does Kirby's name even come up in any of this?

Here's how: Space Ranger was a man named Rick Starr, who worked for an interplanetary agency battling space villains. Mr. Starr was aided by an alien sidekick named Cryll.

In his earliest days in comics, Kirby wrote and drew a science-fiction strip called "Solar Legion." It featured a man named Adam Starr, who worked for an interplanetary agency battling space villains. Mr. Starr was aided by an alien sidekick named Dalek.

There were a few plot similarities in the first stories of the two strips, and some people see similarities in some of the designs, particularly the two characters' helmets. But that's pretty much the argument right there. Was it a coincidence or was there some connection?

Those who think it couldn't be mere happenstance point to the fact that Kirby was working for Jack Schiff at the time Space Ranger was born. Our Jack even drew a non-series story that appeared in the back of *Showcase* #15, right after the first "Space Ranger" tale. (I wouldn't take that as proof, by the way, that Kirby was aware of the character. He rarely looked at printed comics unless there was some specific reason, like he was being asked to critique the material or do the following issue. Sometimes, if he took over a book from someone else, he did so without even reading the issue before.)

Advocates of the "Kirby created Space Ranger" conjecture even have an explanation as to why Adam Starr changed his first name: Because down the hall, Julie Schwartz was already working on Adam Strange, and you wouldn't want both your new space heroes to be named Adam now, would you?

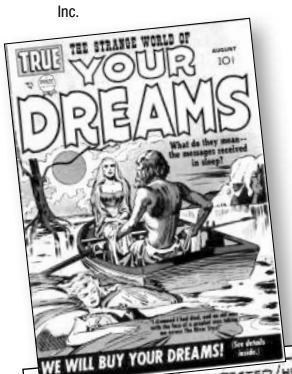
One theorist who wrote me speculated, "As we all know, Kirby had a falling-out with Schiff over their deal on the *Sky Masters* newspaper strip and was barred from working for DC. It would make sense that because of that, Schiff threw out whatever Kirby had done on 'Space Ranger' and reassigned the project." Yes, that might make sense... but only if the time frame was different. At the moment the first "Space Ranger" stories made print, Kirby was still on good terms with Schiff.

KIRBY OBSCURA

BARRY FORSHAW

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

None of the stories discussed have been reprinted; of course, *Black Magic* #9 is a reprint book, and readily available.



Sex. That's the one thing that's missing from the very strange Simon & Kirby Prize comic, *Strange World of Your Dreams.* Of course, despite drawing some of the most eye-opening, stunningly upholstered females in comics (Big Barda, anyone?), Jack Kirby was not as sensuous an artist as, say, Virgil Finlay or Wally Wood. But then it hardly mattered, with either his pre- or post-code work, where the erotic was not center stage. But the absence of sex from *SWOYD* was as ludicrous as it was from the pages of EC's *Psychoanalysis.* One doesn't have to be either a Freudian or a Jungian (and certainly not a member of the Moral Majority) to acknowledge how crucial sexuality is to our emotional equilibrium—but the comics medium could hardly deal with it frankly in a book such as S&K's surreal examination of the world of dreams, that ultimate repository of all our deepest sexual feelings (and EC, a company that had hardly fought shy of sexual elements in its glory days was running scared by the time of the 'New Trend', censorship-conscious *Psychoanalysis*).

Actually, there's one story in the brief, bizarre, six-issue run of *Strange World of Your Dreams* (in issue #1, actually) that shrieks out for an erotic element in its po-faced dream analysis strip, "Send Us Your Dreams"—but fudges the issue completely. Dr. Richard Temple, a Mort Meskin-drawn character sitting behind a globe of the world (essential for all dream analysts, of course), introduces the curious case of Julie Pendleton. Kirby now takes over to give us Julie's tale in the first person. She's dreaming that she's riding a bike in an evening gown (!) before performing acrobatic stunts on the machine, to the bemusement of guffawing crowds (the crowds are drawn in a caricatured style that suggests Kirby might have been the heir apparent of the great English illustrator, William Hogarth). But then things turn even odder—and in a page reproduced here, Kirby, (in his most grotesque manner) has Julie suddenly dressed in an ill-fitting old-fashioned bathing suit, then pushed by a friend into a mud puddle. Then (if all of this weren't enough) she becomes obese, and finally ends up running down a rubbery street, being pelted by stones. What's up? Dr. Temple points out that her problem is not (as one might have supposed) sexual anxiety (being laughed at by crowds in your bathing suit, indeed!)—but something more

However alarmingly it may be reported in America, you mustn't think that London has, in recent months, been a place of fear. Certainly, for a while, we were all a touch apprehensive when using public transport for fear of backpack bombs that had our number, but the Blitz spirit quickly kicked in, and we carry on as normal. With the word 'terror' on the news day in and day out, this *TJKC* London Correspondent has been thinking how that very word once held a delicious tingle of anticipation—when it appeared on the front cover of comic books, in a now-distant era. These days, the horror comics could barely compete with the real-life fears of the 21st Century world we all tread warily in, but to open those pages again is a nostalgic reminder of a simpler world.

Which brings us to Jack Kirby's generally restrained (but suitably grotesque) forays into the horror comic—particularly as our publisher is making available some vintage Kirby horror material in these very pages. *Black Magic* is, of course, the Simon/Kirby horror title from their Prize days—and those who have put together a full set of those books will tell you what an uphill struggle it is. Many of these comics are very elusive (as indeed are the very collectable British shilling runs of the title at 68 pages, including a rare, chunky, cardboard cover annual that also ran some of Stan Lee's

innocent: the worries over her appearance are down to injured vanity, no less; over a comforting pipe in the last column (another essential prop for dream analysts), Temple assures us that a little humility would do us all no harm.

Actually, the ludicrousness of all this doesn't matter a damn: we can enjoy Kirby giving full rein to that brilliant surrealist streak of his, in an all-too-brief experiment that went out of business as quickly as EC's *Psychoanalysis.* Ironically, the New Puritans are arguing that a liberal attitude to

sex is now a Bad Thing—perhaps Simon & Kirby, chafing at the bit of censorship in their dream book, drew the comic that encapsulates this new orthodoxy.

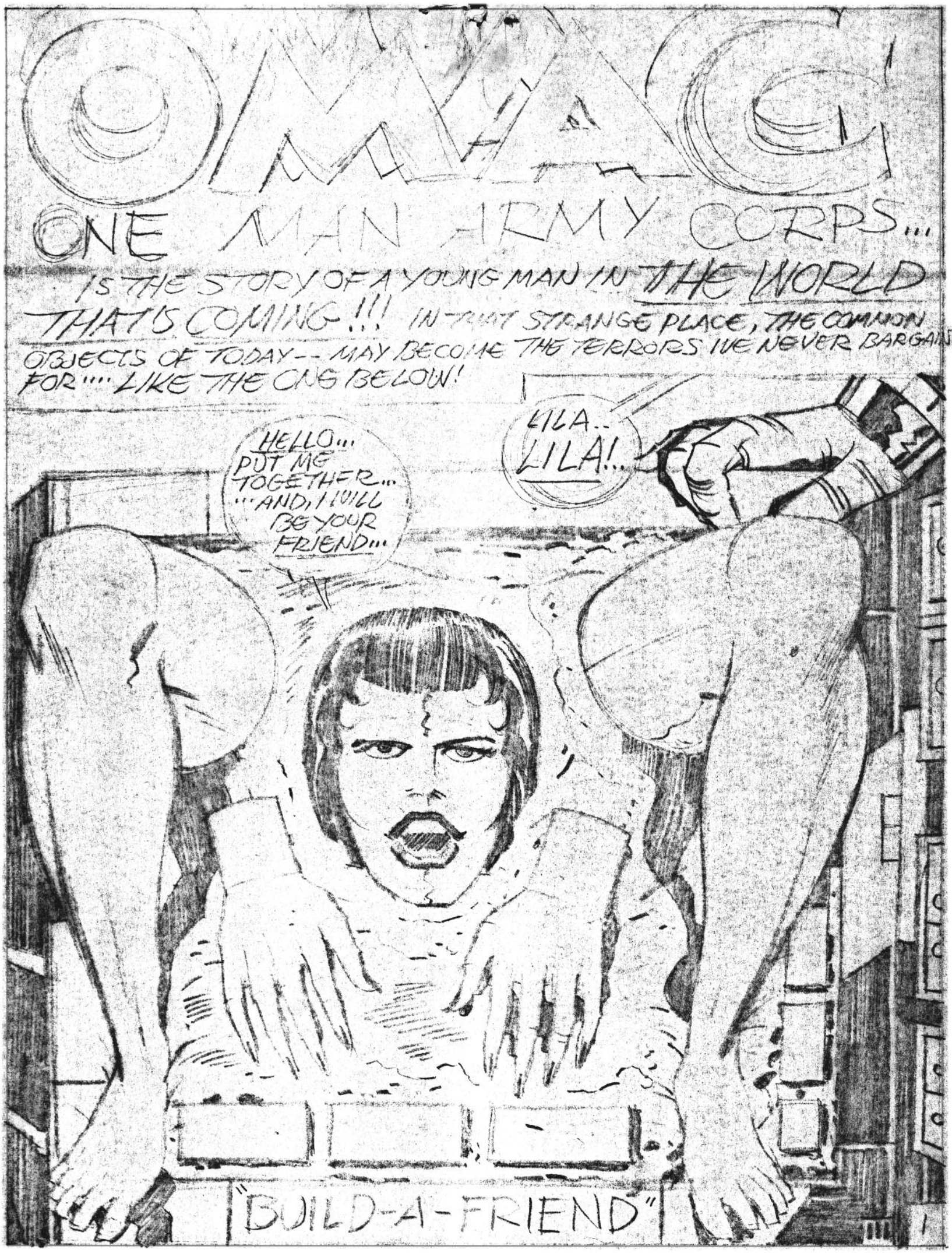
GALLERY 2

KIRBYVISION: FUTURE

by Shane Foley

(pages 38-39) ***OMAC* #1, page 1 and #3, page 1**

What can you say about a page like the first one of *OMAC* #1? I'm surprised DC's editorial supervisors didn't ask Jack for a slightly different take on it. But then the image appeared on the cover too, so they obviously thought it was fine. Me? I still can't think of anything to say. I don't even know if I like it!! The first page of issue #3 is different. I'm convinced that right up through the '70s Jack was avidly reading about the possibilities that technology would open up to humankind. The final product may eventually look different but, as here at the start of #3, many of his predicted ideas are not far from the mark at all.



DENNIS O'NEIL INTERVIEW

(below) Splash page pencils from *Justice Inc.* #3 (Sept. 1975). Although Denny O'Neil wrote the script for Jack, Kirby hand-lettered the captions and balloons on his art for #2 and #3, but not on #4 (see #4 pencils in our Gallery this issue).

(next page) Page 11 pencils from *Justice Inc.* #2 (July 1975). Jack was great at evoking the 1930s period of the strip.

Interviewed by Douglas Toole

*(Plenty of comics have been set during the past, but DC seemed to have a serious interest in it in the mid-1970s. In the spring of 1975 alone, DC launched two series set during prehistoric times (*Tor *and* Kong the Untamed*), three set during medieval times (*Beowulf, Claw the Unconquered, *and* Stalker*), and one set during the 1930s.* Justice, Inc. *was based on a series of pulp magazines published between 1939 and 1942. In the pulps, explorer and adventurer Richard Benson was so traumatized by the murder of his wife and daughter that his hair and skin turned ghostly pale and his facial muscles were paralyzed. While hunting their killers, he learned that his facial features could be molded like clay. By using makeup, wigs and contact lenses, he became a master of disguise. Armed with his four-shot, .22-caliber pistol "Mike" and his throwing knife "Ike," Benson renamed himself "The Avenger" and began a war against crime. Several of the pulp stories were reprinted in paperback form in the 1970s, and DC published a bi-monthly comic version of* Justice, Inc. *starting in May of 1975. Dennis O'Neil wrote and edited the comic version. The first issue featured art from Al McWilliams, but the other three issues published by DC were drawn by Jack Kirby. Dennis O'Neil is a longtime writer and editor of comics, as well as being a novelist and an occasional writing instructor at the School of Visual Arts in New York City. Two of his most recent works are the novelization of the* Batman Begins *movie, and* Hero's Quest, *a novel featuring Green Lantern. This interview was conducted by telephone on March 20, 2005, and was copy-edited by Mr. O'Neil.)*

THE JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR: You were the writer and editor of *The Shadow* and *Justice Inc.* What was your interest in pulp novels back in 1975 and bringing them to comic book form?
DENNIS O'NEIL: Comics are the direct descendants of the pulps. It was just taking the form back to an earlier incarnation. And both *The Shadow* and *Justice Inc. [The Avenger]* were very visual concepts. I thought they would adapt themselves well. So we did *The Shadow* partially because he was a character that I thought still had some *cache*, although I don't know if that would still be true now. But the old pulp magazine stories had been reprinted in different formats. And my first exposure to the character was from the old radio show, which starred Orson Wells and other people later. And that was still fairly fresh in people's memory. So he seemed like a natural one to revive, and I think the perception was that it was going to be a big success. So it was natural to see what else was there that was similar that we might be able to adapt.

TJKC: Was it difficult getting the rights to those characters?
O'NEIL: I don't recall. I would suspect not. Editing was a very compartmentalized discipline back then. I mean, I didn't see sales figures. I had virtually no interaction with the business side at all. So I never knew. I would say that I wanted to do something and I was told I could or could not do it after some time had passed. What the intermediate steps were, I had no idea.

TJKC: But you were sure you wanted to write both *The Shadow* and *Justice Inc.?*
O'NEIL: Back then, DC was experimenting with the writer/editor position. I don't think it ever really works very well, but I was a reasonably good candidate for that, having had some editorial experience and—at that point—a pretty decent resume as a writer. So again, I don't know how much discussion there was about it. I said I wanted to do it, and it was probably assumed I would do both things. I have a lot of regrets about that, because I think I really slighted the editor end of it. That's the danger. It's very useful to have another pair of eyes. I prefer to have an editor, unless it's a bad editor, in which case I'd rather do it myself.

TJKC: As the editor of *Justice, Inc.,* how did you end up with Al McWilliams on the first issue?
O'NEIL: I have no idea. Probably maybe Carmine Infantino put out the word that we needed an artist, and I guess Al was available.

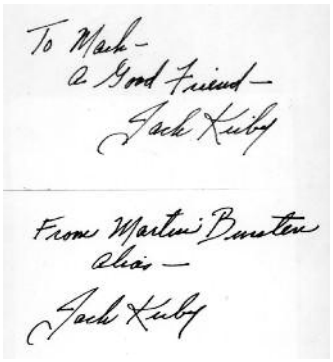
TJKC: Do you remember why you switched artists and went to Jack Kirby after the first issue?
O'NEIL: I don't remember. I would suspect it was because Al was no longer available and Jack was always prolific. I was extraordinarily lucky to have an opportunity to work with him, albeit a very short opportunity. I would love to say that I planned and schemed and managed to get him,

THE DOCTOR IS INTO KIRBY

(below) Mark's first page of Kirby original art, from *Jimmy Olsen* #135 (Jan. 1971).

(next page, center) Mark's original Merry Marvel Marching Society membership card.

(next page, bottom) On his first visit, Mark rummages through the piles of art Jack finally got back from Marvel Comics.



(above) Mark once asked Jack if the "Martin Bursten" credited story in Timely's *Red Raven* #1 was in fact a tongue-in-cheek pseudonym used by Jack. He said, "Yes, it was" and smiled when Mark asked him for the autograph you see here.

Kirby Award winner Dr. Mark Miller interviewed by John Morrow

[Editor's Note: Dr. Mark Miller, M.D., is a longtime friend of the Kirby family, and of this magazine's editor. Born in 1954, he grew up in Texas, but moved to Portland, Oregon after medical school, where after years in private practice, he now spends a good deal of his time teaching medicine. Early-on, just after TJKC *was launched, I received my first correspondence from Mark, who had organized a letter-writing campaign to persuade Marvel Comics to give Jack Kirby a co-creator credit on comics featuring his characters. When you read this interview—conducted on February 3, 2006— you'll learn a few other reasons why Mark received a Jack Kirby Award at the 2004 Comic-Con International: San Diego.]*

THE JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR: Did you grow up reading Kirby's comics?

MARK MILLER: Yes, I quite literally grew up with Jack's stories and art. I can honestly say that reading those comics while I was in elementary school helped to fuel my passion for science, literature and art. I still have most of the comics that I read as a child, from my very first purchases—*Fantastic Four* #5 and the *Incredible Hulk* #2—right up to end of Jack's run at DC and his last Marvel books.

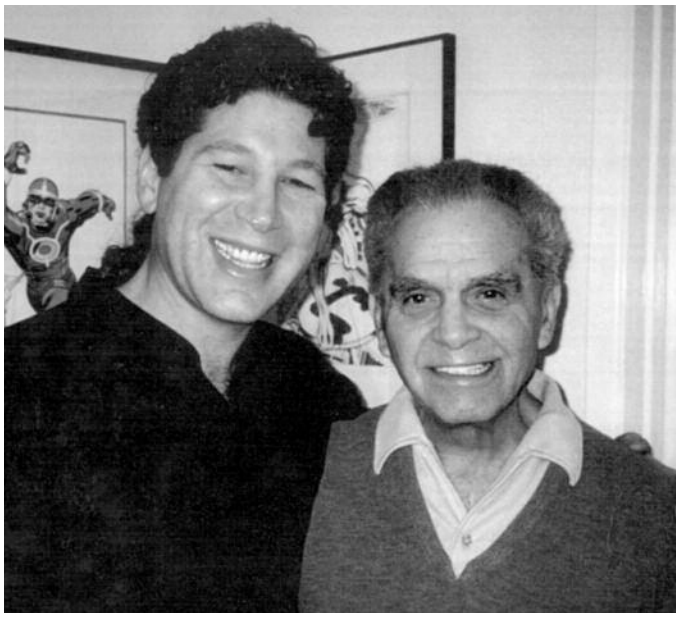
I'd buy all of the Marvels that I could find first and then pick out the other comics with the most interesting covers from DC and the smaller publishers. It was obvious to me then that the Marvel titles were much more interesting then the competition. And it was also obvious that Jack's storytelling style, his unique take on anatomy and movement and his amazing perspectives made for the best stories of all. Of course I can't say that I ever analyzed any of that back then. The comics with Jack's work in them were just the most fun! My brother Keith, who is three years younger then I, quite literally learned to read with those early comic books.

TJKC: Did you have any fellow comic collecting friends back then?

MARK: I think that I knew two other comic book fans before 1966, when I attended the initial meeting of the Houston Comic Collectors Association and I discovered local fandom for the first time. Here were 20 or so collectors, some of whom were my parent's age. And everyone there knew about Jack Kirby!

TJKC: What do you recall about comic collecting back then?

MARK: Well, back in 1966 my father had given me the Jules Feiffer book on comic book superheroes which was my first glimpse of a Captain America and a Human Torch and a Sub-Mariner that existed before the ones that I was familiar with. At



these monthly meetings of the HCCA there might be examples of early Timely and DC comics as well as Marvel comics that I wanted in order to fill the gaps in my collection. All of the books that I would like to have owned exceeded my allowance by a great deal. Things haven't changed that much since then. In 1967, the club put on the first HoustonCon and I believe that it was one of the very first comic conventions ever held. My brother and I got there when the doors opened and stayed until they swept us out. Until I left for college, I attended most of the conventions that were held each year in Houston and Dallas and Oklahoma City. It was a bit of a circuit and it was a lot of fun to go to those conventions and see so many familiar faces. That was well before the first *Overstreet Price Guide* came out and collecting had a great deal of innocence about it. I still have the first *Overstreet Guide* that I bought from Bob when he was selling them out of a cardboard box. Everything really changed on the heels of that guide.

TJKC: Did you ever see Jack at any of these conventions?

MARK: No, it was often rumored that the "King" was going to be the surprise guest but that never happened.

TJKC: Was there much original comic art at those early cons?

MARK: I don't recall that being a big item until the very late '80s or early '90s. Of course there were pages of original art both from comics and comic strips at the earlier conventions but the appreciation of comic book art was nothing like it is today. I saw my first piece of original art done by Jack at a convention in 1972 and I swiftly traded for it. I still have that page up on the wall; a photo-montage page from *Jimmy Olsen* that has Superman explaining the importance of the Project unlocking the secrets of DNA. I have a room in which Jack's artwork lines the walls and I keep some of my other collectibles.

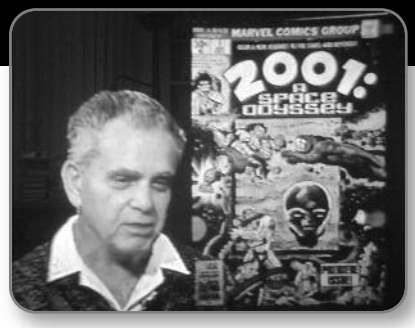
TJKC: What's your favorite piece of artwork in your collection?

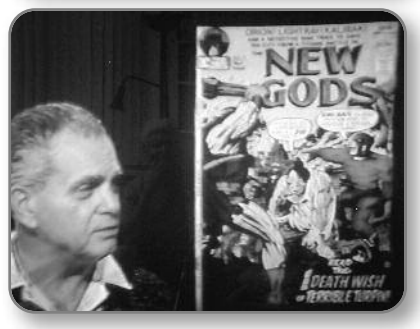
MARK: Well, I'd have to say that it may be Jack's personal collection of *Captain America* #1-10 that is in a bound volume in which Jack drew 4 pieces of art on the two frontis pages and two end pages.

TJKC: Did you purchase that volume directly from Jack and Roz?

MARK: No, I saw this book at either my first or second visit to the house, and at first I felt that it might sound unkind of me to even ask if it was for sale. I believe that Mike Thibodeaux let me know that it would be all right to bring up the subject. As it turned out they were flattered that I would ask, but said that they would prefer to keep it. Roz did say that she would call me if they were ever going to sell any of the bound volumes that they had in their bookcase. Some years later, perhaps a year or two after Jack passed away, I received a catalogue for a Sotheby's Comic Book and Comic Art Auction and there was the book. Shortly thereafter, Roz called me because she had recalled our earlier conversation.

A BATTLE WITH THE CAMERA





The Jack Kirby Interview, by Ray Zone

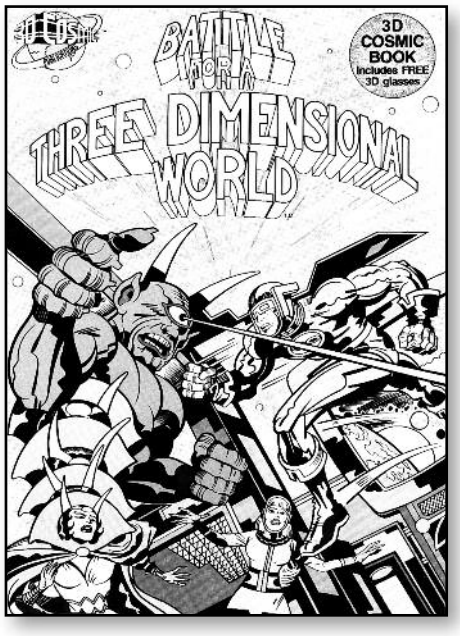
(Editor's Note: From 1982 to 1987 Ray Zone produced 30 half-hour episodes of a public access television program called The Zone Show. *This program was a talk show for artists that dealt with popular culture and the fine arts. Some of the comic book personalities who appeared on* The Zone Show *included Robert Williams, Valentino, Deni Loubert, Big Daddy Roth and Jack Kirby. The programs were taped in Santa Monica, California inside a tiny TV studio at the Group W Cable network. On October 10, 1984, Zone interviewed Jack Kirby at the Group W studio using a blue screen background to chroma-key in comic book covers behind Jack as the interview progressed. The entire program ran twenty-eight minutes and fifty seconds and was aired November 21, 1984 on the Group W public access cable channel that spanned the entire Los Angeles area from the San Fernando Valley to San Pedro. This was the only cablecast of the program that was made. The following is a transcription of the Jack Kirby interview, formatted in Q&A style, from* The Zone Show.*)*

RAY ZONE: Comic books are one of the truly unique American art forms like rock 'n' roll and the automobile. They are a very challenging art form and they embody the mythology of the present day. My special guest is Jack Kirby, who has created more comic book characters and innovations in the medium than any other artist/writer. His creations include the Incredible Hulk, Captain America, Fantastic Four, the New Gods, the Forever People and countless others.
Welcome to the show, Jack.
JACK KIRBY: It's my pleasure to be here.

ZONE: What inspired you as a kid, as a child, to first become an artist?
KIRBY: My mother.

ZONE: How was that?

(above) Poster art for *Battle For A 3-D World.*
(right) Ray Zone introduces Jack on *The Zone Show*, surrounded by screen shots from the broadcast. ©2006 Ray Zone.



(next page, top) Sample panels from *Battle For A Three Dimensional World* (1982, cover shown above), which teamed Jack with Ray Zone.

(next page, bottom) Unused art from *Battle For A Three Dimensional World.*

KIRBY: Well, evidently I probably share your own father's experience. It used to be traditional for your mother to roll you out of bed and say, "Go get a job." And I did that.

ZONE: That was it?
KIRBY: That was it. I got a job at the Fleischer studios as an "in-betweener" on *Popeye.* I began to animate Popeye. I was one among many people who were doing it and rather a youngster at the time.

ZONE: Were pulp magazines and writers like H.G. Wells an influence on your imagination?
KIRBY: Yes, they were. I became an avid reader. Initially, I was born in a very limited area and I think that generates a kind of a curiosity on your part to look for the things that are outside your own atmosphere. That's what I did. I began to look for all the things that I didn't know about. I think that was also generated by my mother.

I was an avid moviegoer. I knew that the pictures had to come from somewhere, had to be made somewhere. I didn't know how the pictures were done and of course that aroused my curiosity. I began to love movies as avidly as any movie fan would. Of course, perhaps, that generated my decision to basically tell a story just like the movies did, like the pulp magazines did, like the basic novel does. Except in my case it ended up by my telling visual stories.

ZONE: As a creator of comic books, you have a lot more control over the medium than, say, with a movie.
KIRBY: I had complete control. I asked for it. I got it. And I deliberately took it because I felt it was my responsibility. My job was to sell a magazine. And I did that job, initially, as an individualist. Because that's what I am, I felt the responsibility should be all mine. I took that responsibility and I still do.

ZONE: What was your first work in the comic book field?
KIRBY: My first work in the field was with Bert Whitman. Comics in the beginning were rather chaotic. Small companies were springing up everywhere and the fellows who worked for them would go from one company to another, I remember that. And that's how we all got to know each other.

I met people and it became a wonderful experience. I was a poor boy and I began to meet people who were in the middle class. I met my partner that way. And I found out that there were people living in upstate New York, in Syracuse, in Binghamton, and in Troy and Ithaca and places like that. Of course, it was galvanizing to me. I just followed it like somebody in a trance.

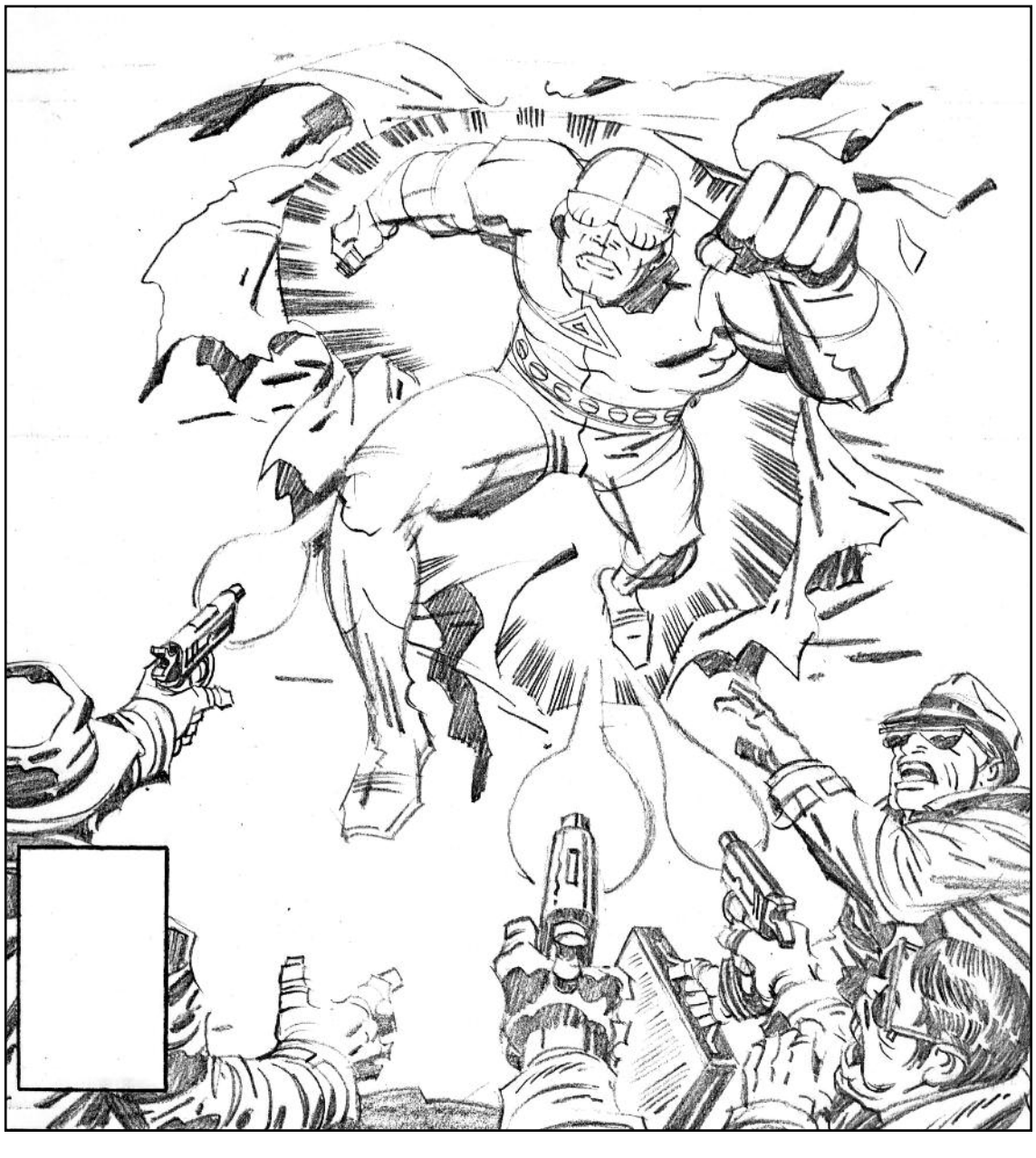
ZONE: Tell me how you got started with Joe Simon, your partner for so many years.
KIRBY: It was the fact that he came from such a very different area. He was bigger than me. He dressed differently than me. In fact I would go home to my folks and say, "Well, you ought to see his father's suit. See? And it's my bet that his father was a politician." And of course he wasn't. Only the politicians around my way dressed like that.

Joe Simon himself is six-foot-three and a very prolific guy. He graduated from Syracuse College. He had been a sports writer. And he had met all the boxers that I loved so I had an affinity toward Joe. We shared a lot of common interests.

ZONE: You guys worked together on the creation of Captain America.
KIRBY: Yes, we did and we created a lot of firsts. We worked as partners for about twenty years.

ZONE: How did your partnership work? I know you primarily did penciling of comics at this time but you wrote them and inked them as well.
KIRBY: I wrote them. I inked them. Joe was more or less the business part of the association. The publishers would respect him. Joe is a big guy. They wouldn't look at me. That was fine with me

(above) Jack drew another 3-D character (which only saw print in 2-D) for the cover of *Marvel Premiere* #35 (April 1977). Inks by John Verpoorten. Jack would draw the character once more for the cover of *What If?* #9 (June 1978).

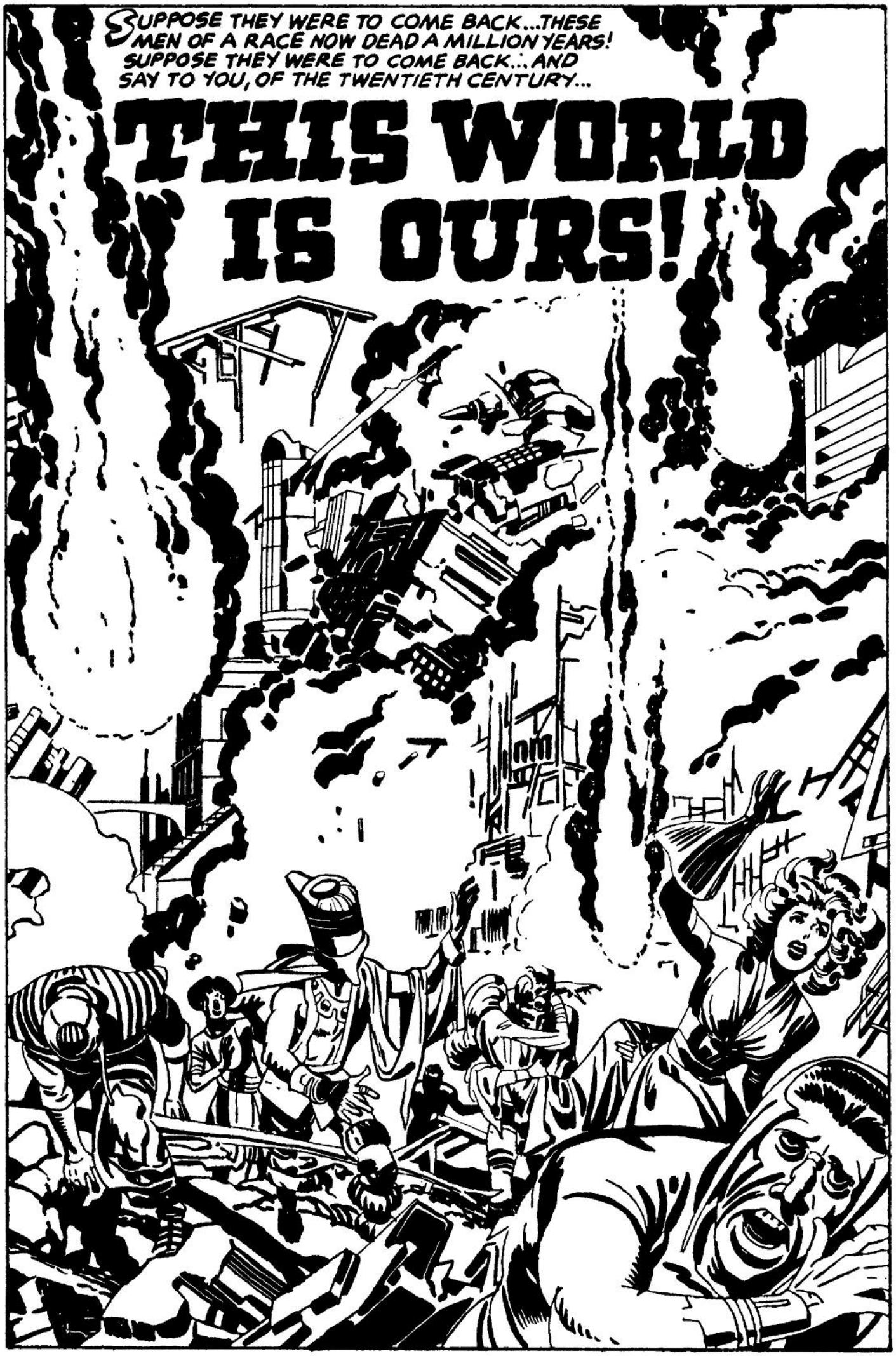


FOUNDATIONS

SHOOTING STARS

Art restoration by Christopher Fama

Since we're time-traveling this issue, we thought these two stories would be appropriate to present: "This World Is Ours" from *Alarming Tales* #3 (Jan. 1958), and "The Thing On Sputnik 4" from *Race For The Moon* #2 (Sept. 1958, inked by Al Williamson). Both were done at the beginning of the US/Russia Space Race, and concurrent with Jack starting his *Sky Masters* newspaper strip, which was fertile ground for him to use his sci-fi background to introduce space travel concepts that would eventually be adopted by the US Space Program.

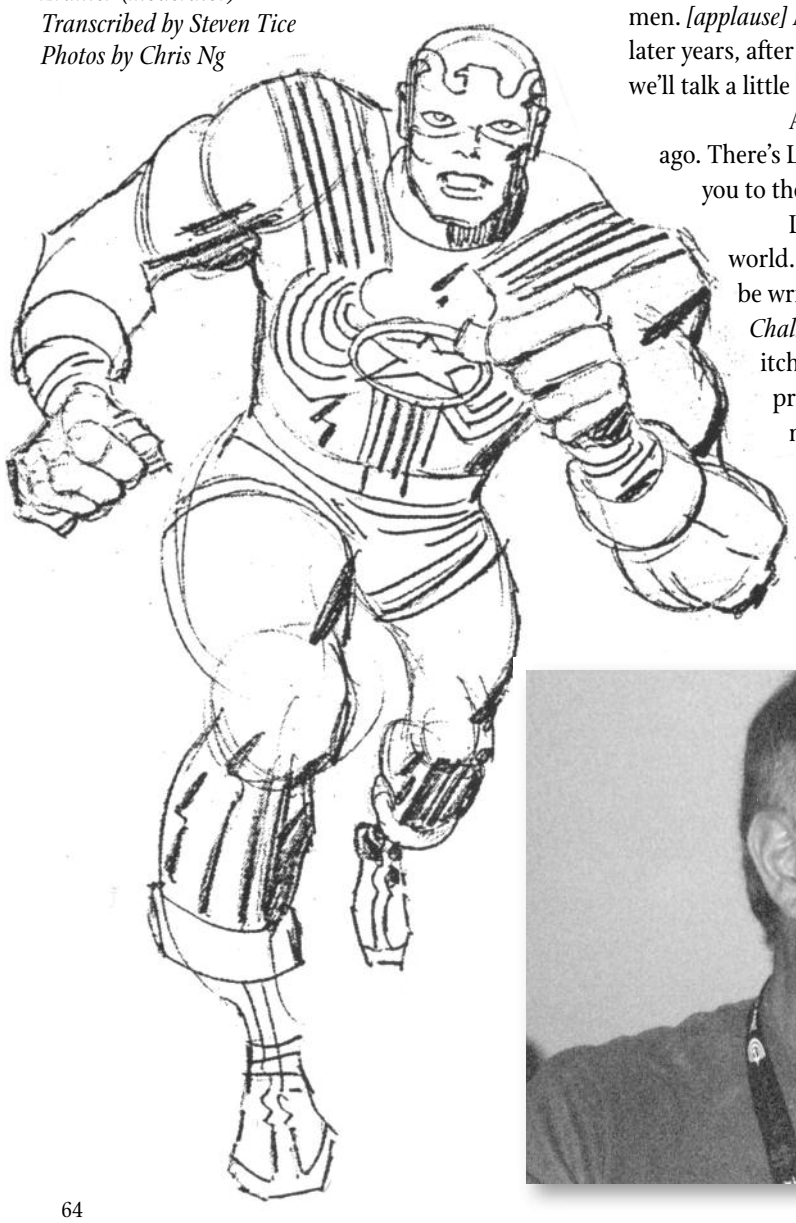


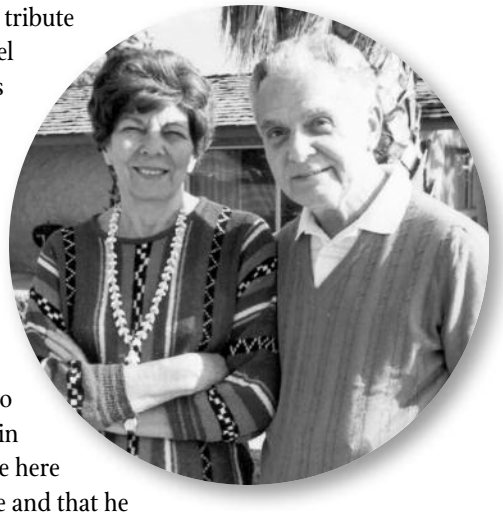
TRIBUTE

2005 KIRBY TRIBUTE PANEL

Held July 19, 2005 at Comicon International: San Diego, featuring (shown below, left to right) Steve Sherman, Robert Katz, Scott Shaw!, and Mark Evanier (moderator)

Transcribed by Steven Tice
Photos by Chris Ng





MARK EVANIER: I'm Mark Evanier. I'm moderating the Jack Kirby tribute panel. What are the odds? *[laughter]* In the last few years, this panel has generally taken on the shape of bringing up artists and writers over the years who were influenced by Jack to discuss the influence Jack had on their careers, both directly, in terms of giving advice and counseling and mentoring, or indirectly, because of the ways his work inspired them. This is a very important aspect of Jack Kirby, and one which you should not forget. It dawned on me that maybe this year we could talk a little more about Jack the person, directly. So we've assembled a panel here of people who knew Jack and worked with him more closely and had a closer personal relationship with him. And I want to talk about a couple of aspects of Kirby and what's going on in the world of Kirby today, also. Let me introduce the people here now. Paul Levine said he was going to get here a little late and that he was having trouble finding a parking space, so he's probably downstairs suing someone. *[laughter]* But Paul's an attorney who represented Jack, and a little later we're going to tell, again—some of you have seen it, some of you haven't—the story of Jack's encounter with Johnny Carson, and I'll show you the video of that again. Paul represented Jack during the only lawsuit, as far as I know, Jack ever filed in his life. And now that Johnny Carson's gone, Paul can talk more freely about the incident, so we'll probably close with that.

On my left is a gentleman who I've known since 1967 or '68. He was a member of our old comic book club, as you've probably heard *ad nauseum* about, many times, and later we worked for a company called Marvelmania, which he briefly alludes to in the new *Jack Kirby Collector*, and doesn't even begin to tell you the sleaziness and outrageous, shallow ripoffs and machinations of one of the great fraudulent mail-order firms of this world. And he worked with Jack for a number of years, and has been a close friend of the Kirby family all that time. This is Mr. Steve Sherman, ladies and gentlemen. *[applause]* Steve is now a puppeteer and puppet maker; I think he probably learned something around the comic book business that led to that conclusion. *[laughter]*

Sitting next to Steve is a gentleman I've known for almost as long. I actually met him at Jack's house—was it 1970, Scott?

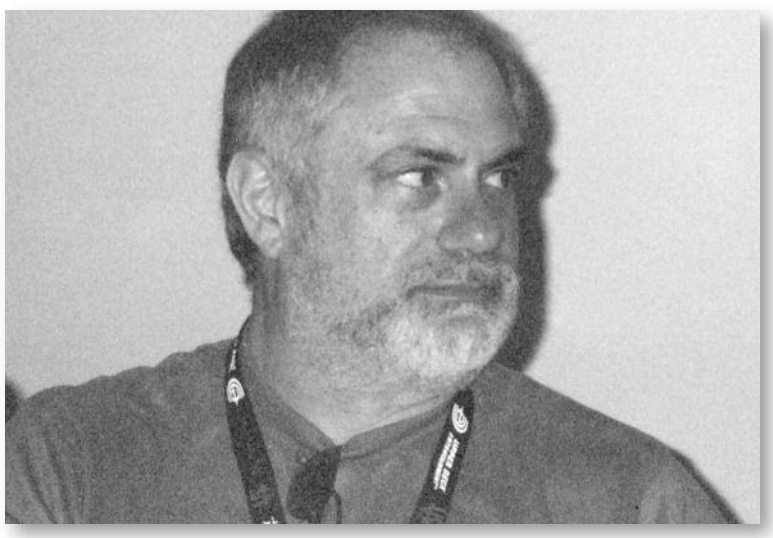
SCOTT SHAW!: 1969.

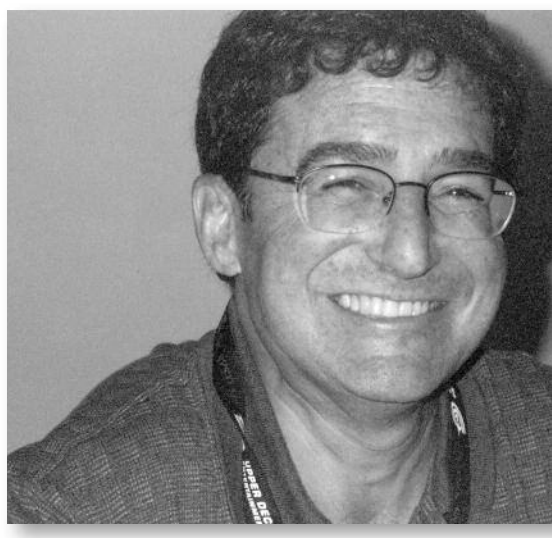
EVANIER: '69 or '70. At that time he was a beginning cartoonist, showing Jack stuff he'd done for his college newspaper and some underground comics. He's since turned into one of the top animation artists and illustrators and producers of our business. Mr. Scott Shaw!, ladies and gentlemen. *[applause]*

There are those of us who felt real close to Jack, and sometimes referred to him as "Uncle Jack"; let's hear from a man who had the right to actually call him Uncle Jack. This is Jack's nephew, Mr. Robert Katz, ladies and gentlemen. *[applause]* And a man who incidentally did extraordinary things watching out for the Kirbys' affairs in their later years, after Jack and after Roz passed away, and keeping track of a very volatile, perhaps, is the right word—we'll talk a little bit more about the legal problems that have plagued those of us who love Kirby over the years.

And then I'd like to introduce a few people in the audience. I believe Lisa Kirby was here a minute ago. There's Lisa Kirby. *[applause]* And I believe sitting next to Lisa is Tracy Kirby. *[applause]* Let me introduce you to the editor of the *Jack Kirby Collector*, Mr. John Morrow. *[applause]*

Let's briefly run down some of the pending Kirby-related projects that are coming up in the world. As you may know, DC is going to announce the *Kamandi Archives,* coming out shortly. I will not be writing the foreword to any more of the Archives at DC due to a dispute I had with them over the *Challengers Archives,* but I'm sure they'll put together a very fine job on this. I suspect that they are just itching to do just about everything Jack did for DC. Marvel is coming out with a deluxe, huge, overpriced, reproduction of *Fantastic Four* #1, for which I wrote a commentary; I wouldn't spend the money for it based on that if I were you. And I don't know much more about it than that. The *Fantastic 4* movie will be coming out on DVD very shortly, and some of us were interviewed for it. I was. Anybody else? Steve was interviewed. There's a documentary about Jack that's supposed to be—based on the number of people they talked with, it should be interesting. Neal was interviewed for it? Neal's supposed to be here. What else is coming out of Jack's? Anybody else know anything else?





STEVE SHERMAN: Bedsheets.

EVANIER: Bedsheets? Yeah, Kirby bedsheets. *[general chuckling]* I have just about, I think, finished what I consider the first draft of the Kirby biography I'm working on. It is so long that, when you see it you'll understand. I'm going to open up a beta test conference on the Internet in about a month or two where I'm going to ask for volunteers to read chapters of it and comment on it, but particularly to help me with some of the final bits of research. I had to track down some obscure little things, quotes and—I've got a place where there are certain panels I've got to find and I can't find them, so I'm going to ask other people to search the Web for them. Soon I'll be asking for volunteers to help me with the final bits of research, and I'm hoping to announce a publication date by this panel next year. It's very long, and I may have to publish it in two editions: the edition that normal people will read, and an edition that people like us will want to read *[some chuckling],* where it spends twenty pages explaining a certain layout on one page of one issue of *Tales to Astonish.*

Why don't we talk about Jack a little bit. I met Jack on the 17th of July, 1969, and I loved the guy. I loved Jack before I met him, through the comics. I loved the Jack I met, because he was just so giving and so loving. Every year I feel like on these panels, fewer and fewer people here had the chance to meet Jack in person. I don't know how many people here had the opportunity, but if you didn't have the opportunity to meet Jack, one of the things you should know about him is that when he met someone, he always tried to give them something. I don't mean a sketch. Sometimes he would try to force old copies of *Playboy* on us. *[some laughter]* But he used to meet people and think to himself, "What can I give to this person that is inspirational?" or, "What can I give this person so they'll go away enthused to do better work, or excited?". Usually it was a philosophical concept, and the people who came just hoping to get a sketch of the Thing were very disappointed, they didn't understand that that's not what Jack really had to offer that was wonderful. I got a lot of inspiration from Jack, I got a lot of joy and wisdom, and I'm still trying to parse and apply some of it in a useful manner in my life. And I've

(previous page, top) Jack and Roz at home in November 1989.

(Previous page, bottom) A 1960s illo of Fighting American.

(left) A 1983 Silver Surfer commissioned piece.

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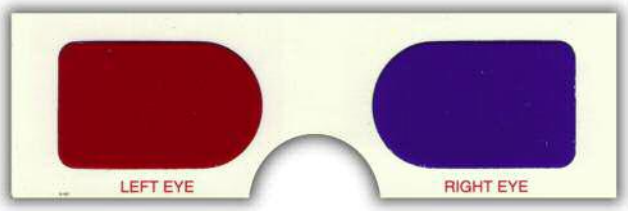

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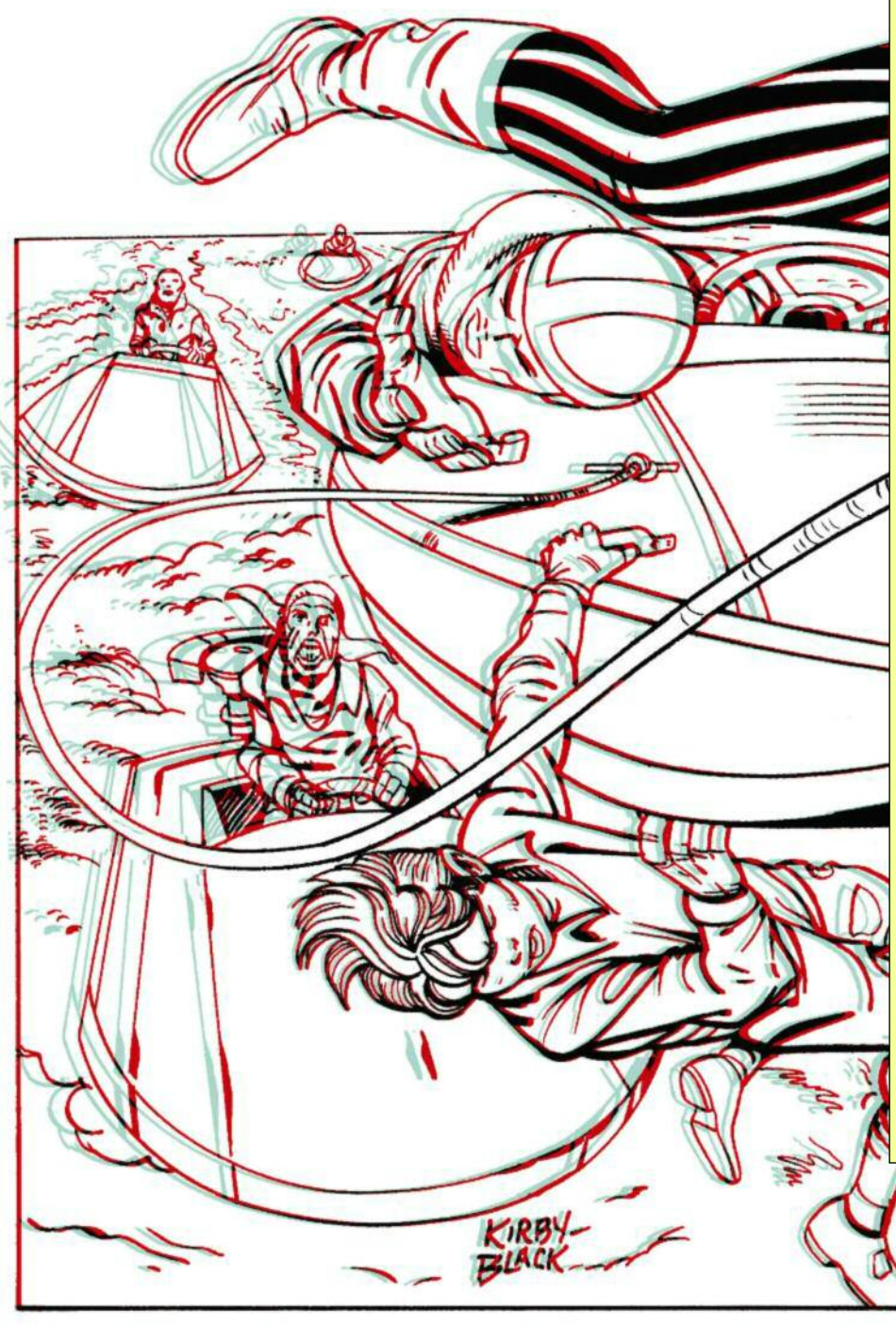

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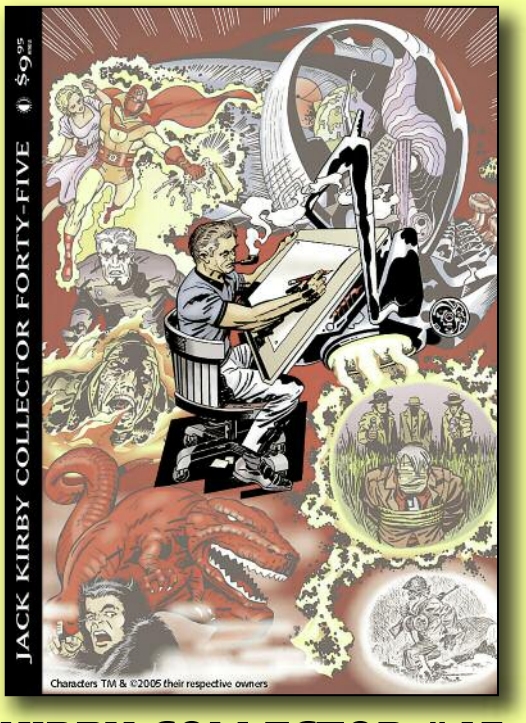

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