

JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR FORTY-NINE



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IN THE US

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Cover inks: **JERRY ORDWAY**
Cover colors: **TOM ZIUKO**

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THE NEW

JACK KIRBY

ISSUE #49, FALL 2007

C O L L E C T O R



(above) We've previously seen Jack's cover rough for a proposed *Big Barda & Her Female Furies* comic. We can think of no other reason for this sketch of Gilotina to exist, other than as a companion piece for that presentation. Man, that would've been one interesting comic! Gilotina TM & ©2007 DC Comics.

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by John Morrow,
editor of TJKC



I dare say, in all modesty, that I work with Jack Kirby on a daily basis now as much as Stan Lee did back in the 1960s. For the last 13 years (the length of time Stan and Jack worked together at Marvel), I've been producing this regular magazine about the man dubbed by Stan as "The King" of comics. Every day, whether I'm physically working on *The Jack Kirby Collector* or not, Kirby plays a part in nearly every aspect of what I do—from the time I wake up, till the time I

konk out and hit the hay (which, when I am working on *TJKC*, is usually pretty late in the evening).

So with my 50th issue approaching, I knew it had to be something really special. When we jumped to tabloid-size with #31, we gave "big" a whole new meaning in the comics-related magazine market.

THE BIG FIVE-OH!

Now, with *TJKC* #50, we're taking it one step further.

For one "issue" only, we're doing a tabloid-size, 168-page trade paperback book instead of the usual saddle-stitched 84-pager (think Ray Wyman's *The Art of Jack Kirby* book). Since it's twice the size, it'll count as two issues toward your subscription if you're a subscriber. (Of course, it'll be available separately for those who aren't, for a cover price of \$19.95, or \$24 postpaid in the US.)

I'm calling it *Kirby Five-Oh!*, and it spotlights the 50 best of everything from Jack's 50-year career in comics. Our regular columnists have formed a distinguished panel of experts (gently guided by your's truly) to choose and examine things like the best Kirby story published each year from 1938-87;

the best covers from each decade; Jack's 50 best unused pieces of art; his 50 best character designs; and profiles of, and commentary by, the 50 people most influenced by Kirby's work! Plus there's a 50-page gallery of Kirby's powerful raw pencil art, and a deluxe color section of photos and



finished art from throughout his entire half-century oeuvre.

The book features a previously unseen Kirby Superman cover [left] inked by DC: *The New Frontier* artist



Darwyn Cooke, and an introduction by

Mark Evanier. A percentage of profits will be donated to the Jack Kirby Museum and Research Center (www.kirbymuseum.org). It's scheduled to ship in February, and since it's a book, there technically won't be an "issue #50" of *TJKC*; the next magazine edition will be #51, out next summer (giving me a little time to recover from *Kirby Five-Oh!*). *TJKC* #51 will be the only other issue I'll be producing next year, but worry not; 2008 will see TwoMorrows releasing an updated *Jack Kirby Checklist* in April, a *Collected Jack Kirby Collector, Volume 6* (reprinting issues #23-26, plus new material) in June, and the *Fourth World Companion* book I'm writing with George Khoury for October. Those, along with the about-to-be-released Kirby, *King of Comics* from Mark Evanier, Marvel's *Fantastic Four: The Lost Adventure* (shown above, finally presenting FF #102 the way Jack intended it) and the *Nick Fury: Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D.* Marvel Masterworks volume (left, which I just penned the intro for), plus DC's next *Fourth World Omnibus*, should keep all you Kirbyites satisfied throughout the year.

Fifty issues is a great point to reflect and re-evaluate; where do *you* want to see this publication go after #51? Please help me shape the future direction of the mag. If you want to see it continue for fifty more issues, drop me a line at twomorrow@aol.com with your likes and dislikes, and consider contributing to the mag. Certainly, we're in no danger of running out of Kirby art to show, or of aspects of Jack's life and career to talk about. What *other* creator could you say that about, after 50+ issues? ★

(above) *Kirby Five-Oh!* sports a Superman cover image from Lisa Kirby's private collection. We figured a character as iconic as Supes was the perfect choice for this book spotlighting an artist as iconic as Jack.

Superman TM & ©2007 DC Comics.
Nick Fury, Fantastic Four TM & ©2007
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by Douglas Toole

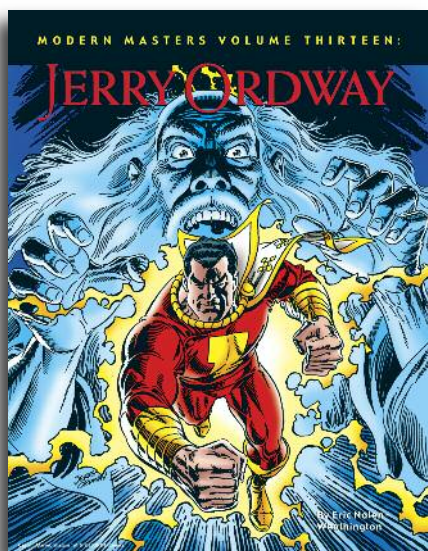
For this issue's "Warriors" theme cover, we started with an unpublished penciled piece that Kirby drew in the 1960s for Marvelmania, showing everyone's favorite Norse thunder god flying around Asgard. We asked the multi-talented Jerry Ordway (the subject of our latest *Modern Masters* volume, now shipping) to ink the sketch, and our longtime colorist Tom Ziuko to add the colors, and ended up with the terrific finished wraparound product you now see.

Ordway, who has provided artwork for previous TwoMorrows magazines, is making his first contribution to the front cover of *The Jack Kirby Collector* with this issue. "I did a back cover for an issue of *TJKC*, and I inked an interior Kirby sketch once," he said. "I have subscribed to *TJKC* since it was a newsletter. I finally just twisted John Morrow's arm and said, 'I want to do a cover!'"

This issue's theme is "Warriors," and the cover features Thor, Balder the Brave and Heimdall, the guardian of the Rainbow Bridge between Asgard and Earth. While Kirby drew plenty of war comics, and many of his science-fiction characters wore mechanized armor, the images of Thor and his fellow Asgardians are among the most indelible.

Ordway said the job allowed him to revisit his professional roots as an inker.

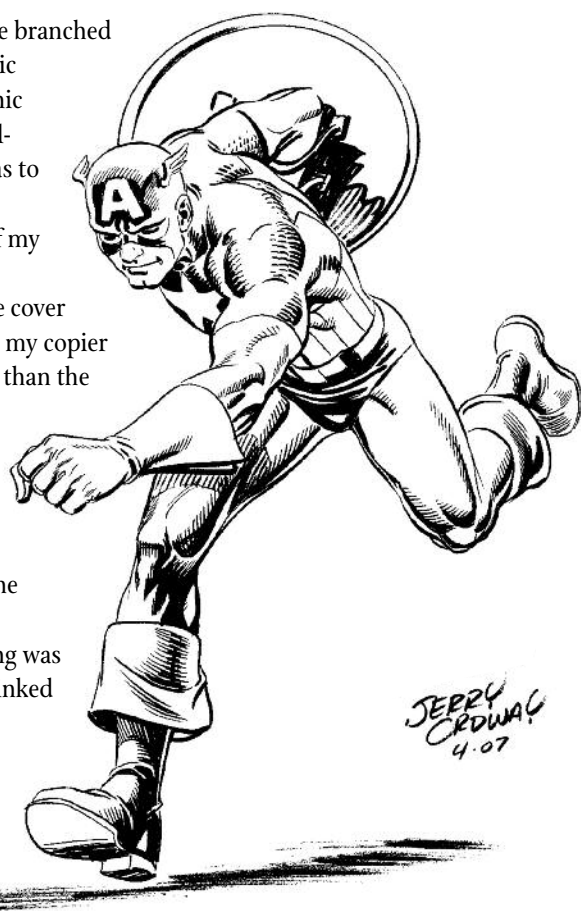
"Kirby's artwork is much more stylized than mine. Mine is rooted more in the Hal Foster/Alex Raymond tradition. My favorite Kirby era, however, is the mid-1960s



through the 1970s, when he branched off from doing more realistic drawings into his own, iconic visual language. So the challenge for me in inking it was to try to keep it true to Kirby while still injecting some of my own style into it.

"When I was doing the cover drawing, I blew it on up on my copier so that it was a little bigger than the printed size and then light-boxed it onto a clean sheet of paper. I did that because I wanted the best line-quality I could get on my inking. If I lost any of the 'Kirby' in the inking, it was because the original drawing was not as big as it was when I inked it. Sometimes when you do that, you find that a figure that was an inch tall is now two inches tall, and so a dot won't do for an eye. But I'm crossing my fingers that the printed version looks great, because I went that extra mile for it."

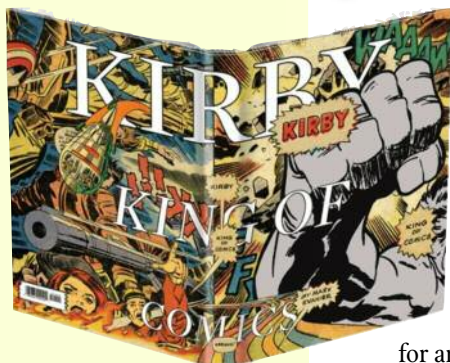
Thanks to both Jerry and Tom for their contributions! ★





(below) Luscious inks from the final page of a *Bullseye* #4 story (Jan. 1955).

Characters TM & ©2007 Joe Simon & Jack Kirby Estate.



(lower right) 1970s Cap sketch done for Scott Dunbier.

Captain America TM & ©2007 Marvel Characters, Inc.

A column answering Frequently Asked Questions about Kirby by Mark Evanier

First off, I hope that by the time you read this, my book on Jack—*Kirby, King of Comics* from Harry N. Abrams, Inc.—will be out and resting comfortably on the Amazon Best Seller List. Actually though, I'll settle for it just resting comfortably on my dining room table. It's taken a long time to get it off to press, in part because Kirby is not someone you can just slap together a book about. As a topic, he demands great care... and so does all the fine artwork we'll be reproducing.

I figure I needn't do a selling job on anyone who'd read this magazine. So I'll just say that I hope you'll think it does Jack justice, and please, people: Stop calling it a "definitive" work. Jack is too vast a subject for any one book about him to be "definitive" and there will be others, including at least one more from me.

I also want to thank all the folks who've pitched in to help, mostly in terms of locating artwork and arranging for high-resolution scans. I thank you all in the book... though knowing me as well as I do, I probably left someone's name out and will be apologizing here next issue.



On to questions.
A. T. Campbell, III of Austin, Texas writes to ask:

I was curious if you had a favorite run of issues or individual book that you felt represented Jack Kirby's best artwork. My favorite long runs are probably Fantastic Four when Joe Sinnott was his inker, and New Gods at DC. My favorite individual works are the Silver Surfer graphic novel he did with Stan Lee, and the Treasury-sized adaptation of 2001: A Space Odyssey.

It probably goes without saying—not that I'll refrain from saying it—that I like almost everything Jack ever did, at least from a visual standpoint. I stuck the "almost" in there because I'm sometimes saddened by the work he did his last few years when a combination of eye and muscular ailments made it painful for him to draw. Even then though, I sometimes look at that work and I so admire the determination and tenacity with which it was done that it doesn't sadden me. Thinking about Jack always, eventually, brings you to the positive view of any bad situation.

And, turning to the positive: I have a particular fondness for the late work out of the Simon-Kirby studio when Joe Simon or Jack was inking Kirby pencils on a strip like *Boys' Ranch* or *Bullseye*. There was something very bold and arresting about that work—pure, unfettered Kirby style and energy—and the more I see of it, the more I love it.

I would guess my favorite period for Kirby artwork was at Marvel from around 1965 until late 1967. In '65, Jack got a very slight increase in his rate. It was but a dollar or two per page but it enabled him to do a little less work per week and still make enough money to feed the Kirby Clan. Moreover, and perhaps more important: He began to make a concerted effort to spend less time going to the Marvel offices. Each trip in and back cost him most of a full working day. (His staggering output in the early Sixties, which we've discussed here in the past, is all the more remarkable when you realize the following: That even though he was working a seven-day week, he sometimes only got to spend four or five of those days at the drawing table.)

Once he got the teensy 1965 raise, he was able to spend a little more time on each page. It wasn't a lot more—maybe half an hour, if that much—but it made a difference. So did the fact that the storylines for the most part became even less Earthbound, thereby affording him more interesting things to draw. And of course, '65 was when Joe Sinnott returned to Marvel and began inking *Fantastic Four*. That sure made things look a lot better, and not just on the books Joe inked. Suddenly, he was raising the bar for Kirby Inking, showing everyone else how it should be done.

I liked that work and I liked everything Jack did that was inked by Frank



THE SURFER'S BIG WAVE

(right) The Silver Surfer finally hit the big screen in this summer's *F4* sequel, but the 1977 *Silver Surfer* graphic novel was originally intended as a treatment of sorts for a proposed film that never materialized. The letter from Jack (at bottom) to "Stanley" confirms that Jack was largely setting the direction of the GN (note Jack's mention of his "occasional typing error"; is it possible this script for the GN's first two pages is by Jack instead of Stan?). The page 27 sequence Jack refers to is shown on the next page.

by Robert L. Bryant, Jr.

Why can't the Silver Surfer "hang ten"? Because he's got no toes, brother. From the beginning, in the 1966 *Fantastic Four* comics in which the Surfer first appeared, Jack Kirby drew the skyrider without toes on his silver feet, as if he were a not-quite-finished statue, or as if his creator Galactus had simply not bothered to sculpt ten more digits on his herald.

Or maybe Kirby just felt that the toes would have been an annoying distraction, a detail too literal for such a symbolic character. For whatever reason, Kirby's Surfer soared through space without toot-sies—and so does the computer-generated Surfer in director Tim Story's *Fantastic 4* sequel, which opened in theaters June 15.



Story's Surfer looks like a living, 3-D representation of Kirby's Surfer in his 1966-68 *Fantastic Four* appearances, lacking only the sleek blacks of Joe Sinnott's inks and maybe an occasional flare of Kirby Krackle. Story and his special-effects men told reporters they pored over Kirby Surfer illustrations to nail the Surfer's poses. Visually, this isn't the Buscema Surfer or the Moebius Surfer—it's Jack's original.

But there's also something in there of the sad, wise Stan Lee Surfer persona, the suffering alien who would forever be characterized as "Christlike." (Do a Google search on the phrases "Silver Surfer" and "Christ," and try to count the hits.) Stan's contributions to the Surfer's character can't be ignored, says Roy Thomas, former Marvel editor in chief and only the second man (after Stan) to write dialogue for the skyrider.

Thomas says: "As one who was in the office the day Kirby's pencils for the *Fantastic Four* issue that introduced 'the Surfer' [came in]—and that's what Jack called him, no 'Silver,' and of course no actual dialogue—I saw how Stan, as editor and writer-to-be, gushed over Jack's idea... Stan was in his way as much the [Surfer's] creator as Jack was—just as, though the *Fantastic Four* itself was certainly Stan's idea, Jack had become that concept's co-creator by drawing Lee's story and fleshing it out in 1961. [Stan] not only named the character [with the "Silver" modifier], but put virtually every line of dialogue, and thus, to a great extent, characterization, in the Surfer's mouth from the very start.

"...Still... I believe my esteemed mentor Stan Lee made a mistake in 1968 when, as the artist for the Surfer's solo title, he chose to have John Buscema, not Jack Kirby, draw [and thus co-plot] it. He probably had numerous reasons, including both Kirby's busy schedule... and a desire to take the Surfer in a slightly different direction—but, in the long run, probably *The Silver Surfer* would have done better if it, too, had been done by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby—the most important comic book creative team from the 1960s through the present."

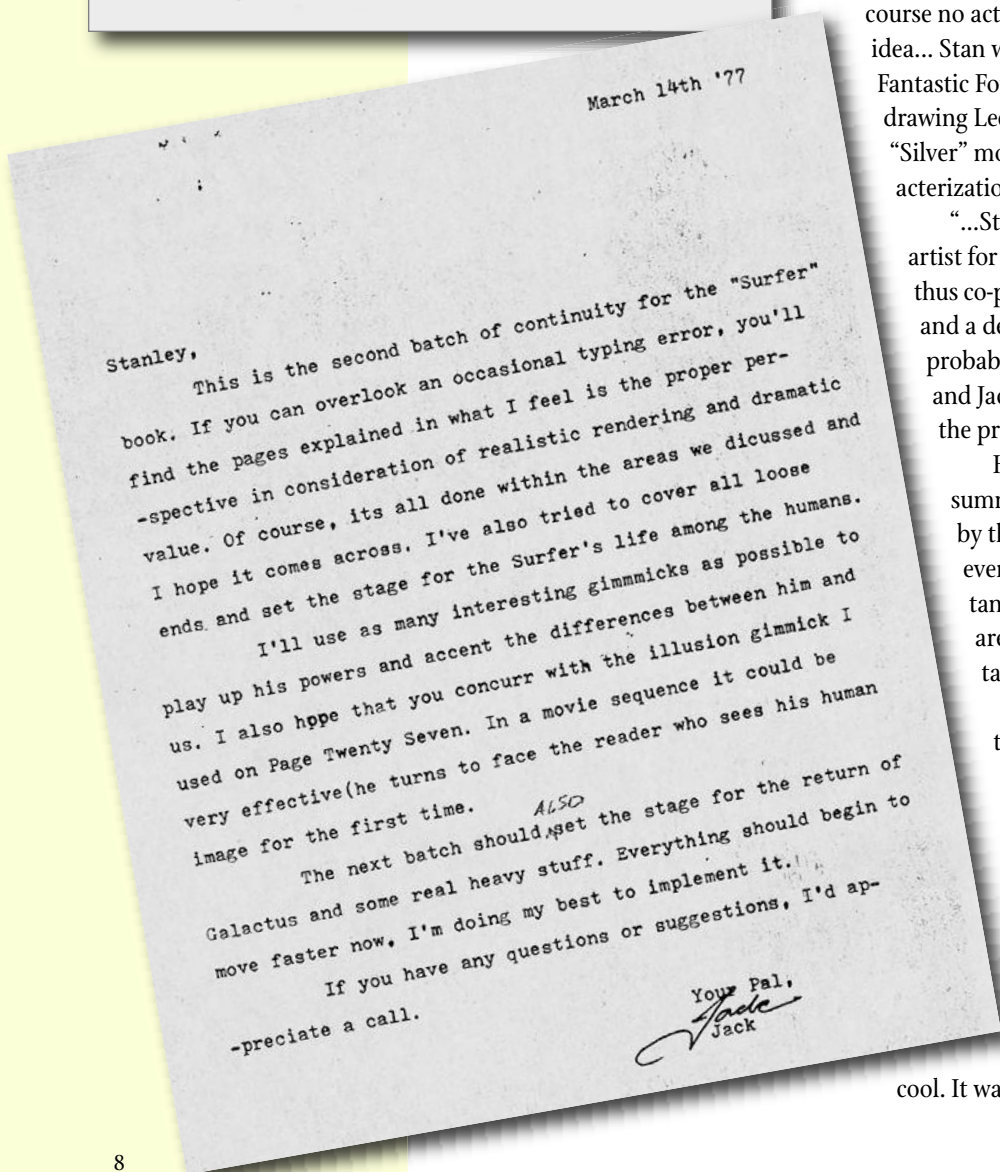
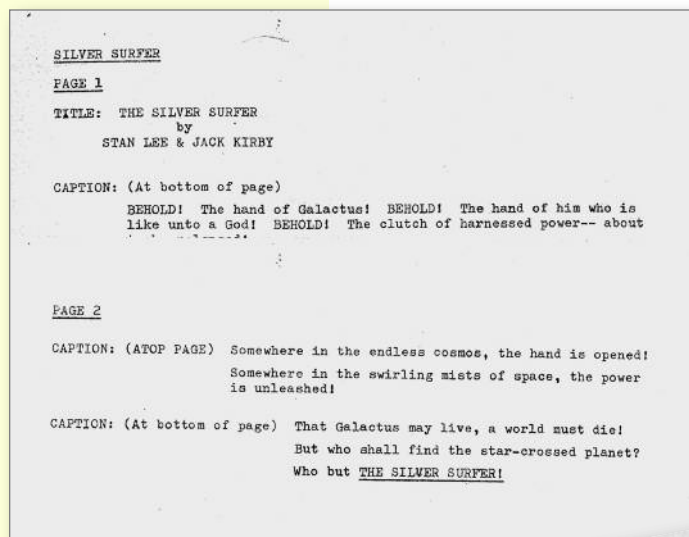
His origin aside, how did the Surfer play on the movie screens in Peoria this summer? The nation's film critics were generally more impressed by the skyrider than by the movie. *The Los Angeles Times*: "The Surfer has the kind of movie-star presence even movie stars dream about." *The Houston Chronicle*: "The Silver Surfer is an important addition, because he is as inherently and mystically cool as the *Fantastic Four* are inherently and prosaically flaky." *The Fresno Bee*: "The Silver Surfer could easily take over the film franchise."

Here are some thoughts on the Surfer and his past, present and prospects for the future, from e-mail interviews conducted shortly before the film opened:

LISA KIRBY: Jack's youngest daughter and a trustee of the Jack Kirby Museum and Research Center:

"I believe that people will love seeing the Surfer in a big movie... I think the movie will bring the Silver Surfer to a whole new generation of fans. I definitely expect to see Surfer action figures and other marketing merchandise.

"I was pretty young in the '60s, so I wasn't really aware of what my father did for a living—he was just my dad. It wasn't till I was a little older that I took more of an interest in his work. I [always] thought the Surfer was pretty cool. It was interesting that a guy who grew up in New York City could come up with a



JACK KIRBY, THE ORD-WAY

(below) Ordway solos on Thor in this pencil page from *Avengers: Dominion Factor*.

(next page, top) It was Kirby's suggestion to resurrect Captain Marvel at DC in the early '70s; here's Jerry's take on the character.

(next page, bottom) Ordway inks Kirby!

Captain Marvel TM & ©2007 DC Comics. Iron Man, Thor TM & ©2007 Marvel Characters, Inc.

Jerry Ordway interviewed by Douglas Toole

(Jerry Ordway has worked for comic books for more than 25 years as a writer, penciler and inker. While he is probably best-known for his work on DC Comics' All-Star Squadron, Infinity, Inc., Adventures of Superman and The Power of Shazam!, he has also produced work for Marvel, Dark Horse, Image, First Publishing and others, including WildStorm's recent Red Menace mini-series. Mr. Ordway was interviewed by telephone on November 30, 2006, and reviewed and copy-edited the article.)

THE JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR: What was some of your earliest exposure to Kirby's art?

JERRY ORDWAY: The first stuff of his that I saw would have to be *Thor*. My first exposure to Marvel Comics was a matter of happen-

stance. I did not have a newsstand near where I lived. My family was taking a train trip, and at a train station in Milwaukee, my mother gave my brother and me a dollar to buy comics. We went to the magazine section and said, "Holy cow! There's comics of that TV show we like to watch!" We used to watch *The Marvel Super-Heroes* show, and had no idea there were Marvel comics! We were a ready-made audience for the comics once we saw they were available. *Thor* was an immediate hit with me, and with my older brother, Joel, who was not really into comics. I got into the *Fantastic Four* about a year later, but my first Marvel Comics were *Thor*, *Spider-Man*, *The Avengers*, *Daredevil* and *Tales of Suspense* (with Captain America and Iron Man.) Years later, I realized that I had seen a *Captain 3-D* comic—long before that train ride—in a box of my oldest brother Mike's comics that were in the basement. I couldn't find 3-D glasses, so I was a little perplexed, trying to read it, but I do remember thinking that Captain 3-D had a really cool costume. Even now, I think it's pretty wild—a classic Kirby design.

TJKC: You mentioned that you liked Kirby's 1960s and 1970s work. Did you follow him to DC in the early 1970s?

ORDWAY: I really didn't collect DC comics before Kirby went there. I did get a few DC comics here and there, but not as a rule. For instance, I bought DC's *Captain Action* comics, which were based on a toy that I just loved. I was an 11-year-old "Marvelmaniac" who thought that Marvel was new and hip and DC was stodgy. But when Kirby went there, it made me look at DC as a cooler place. I am a huge fan of the Fourth World stuff, especially [*Superman's Pal*] *Jimmy Olsen*. I really liked the DNaliens and the weird stories with cloning and all that. As a kid at the time, the book seemed really cutting-edge to me. Kirby often put Jimmy Olsen at odds with Superman in the stories, which also played to my age group, I guess. That era's Superman was clearly a father-figure, and Kirby played with that to great effect.

TJKC: You and Kirby seem to have two very different art styles.

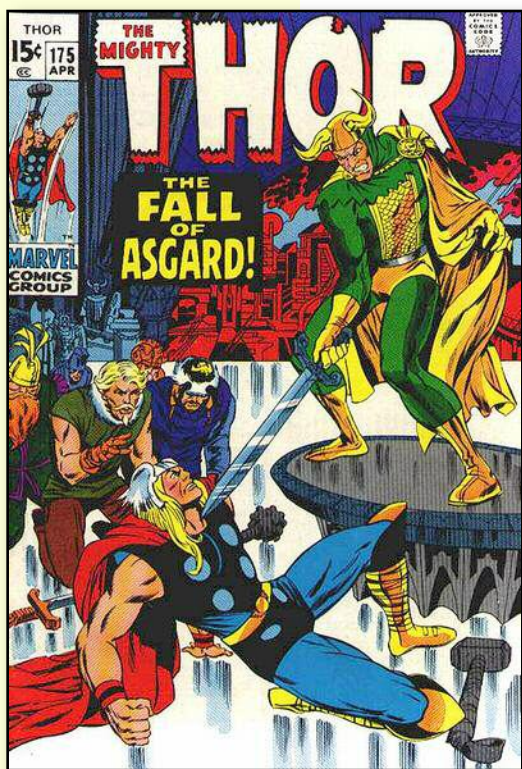
ORDWAY: I have a harder time breaking the rules. Some artists who are really good at dynamics and drawing something really powerful can say, "Okay, I know an arm doesn't bend this way and a tendon doesn't work this way, but this image looks best." Whenever I look at something like that, part of me wants to correct it. (*laughs*) But you can't do that with Kirby's pencils. When you start correcting things, you lose what Kirby put there. I always thought Joe Sinnott had a terrific way of grounding Kirby's pencils, even on pages where the anatomy of the characters were a secondary consideration for Kirby. Frank Giacoia did the same thing, giving Kirby's pencils a nice line weight so that they had more realism without compromising the style. I always wondered why Sinnott wasn't the regular inker on the *Thor* book until after Kirby left and John Buscema took over. I would have loved to see a Kirby-Sinnott version of Asgard. Or a Wally Wood-inked issue of *Thor*, for that matter.

TJKC: How is it to ink Kirby's pencils?

ORDWAY: I've inked Kirby's pencils a couple of times outside of TwoMorrows projects. I was part of the Image Comics group that did *Phantom Force*



INSTRUCTIONS FOR DOUBLE PAGE SPREAD: CUT AS SHOWN, ABOUT PAGE EDGES, TAPE ON BACK TO PREVENT



(above) Examples of the Everett Code abound in issues he inked, especially *Thor* #175 (April 1970).

(inset) You have to flip it upside-down to see it, but it clearly says “Judy Ann” in Everett’s inked squiggle.

(below) Bill Everett in the 1960s.

Thor TM & ©2007 Marvel Characters, Inc.

by Angel Gabriele

Like countless masses of comic readers, I have been and always will be a fan of the graphic talents of comics king Jack Kirby, studying it passionately over the years—so much so that even my pal Denys Cowan would tease me with, “Looking at those same comics again? Y’ been reading the same books over and over for 20 years! *Stop It!* Look at some new comics!” He was right! I had been reading the same books for more than 20 years—most all illustrated by King Kirby.

Jack’s work mesmerized me like none before or since. And although I could appreciate the talent of others, I had a small handful of favorites. Jack was at the top o’ the list followed by another old school legend, Bill Everett, creator of Namor, the Sub-Mariner. So in 1969, when toward the end of Kirby’s run on *Thor, God of Thunder*, “Wild” Bill Everett took over inking with

issue #170 (actually inking several pages in #169 no doubt due to the passing of another fine craftsman George Klein, who in turn had replaced Vince Colletta starting with issue #168), I was thrilled.

Everett’s distinctive style had graced the King’s pencils on several “monster” stories in the pre-hero era. He also had stepped in to finish *Thor* #143, years earlier, receiving full credit, even though Colletta’s linework can be seen on the first few pages. Still, starting with #170 and for the next six issues, Bill was inker for *Thor*. Man, did I love the stuff! Though not exactly faithful to the King’s pencils, the collaboration was still a visual feast for my hungry eyes, so much so that during the 1971 Metro Con in Washington, D.C., I bought three pages from issue #170 (pages 1, 14 and 15) from a New York art dealer in attendance. It was then I realized the printed book *did not* do Bill’s brushwork justice, as anyone lucky enough to own any originals from these six issues well knows!

About a year or so later, as finances dictated, I sold the pages to dealers, and always regretted doing so—never thought to xerox them back then, but I still had the comics, and I would continue to study them over and over for years to come.

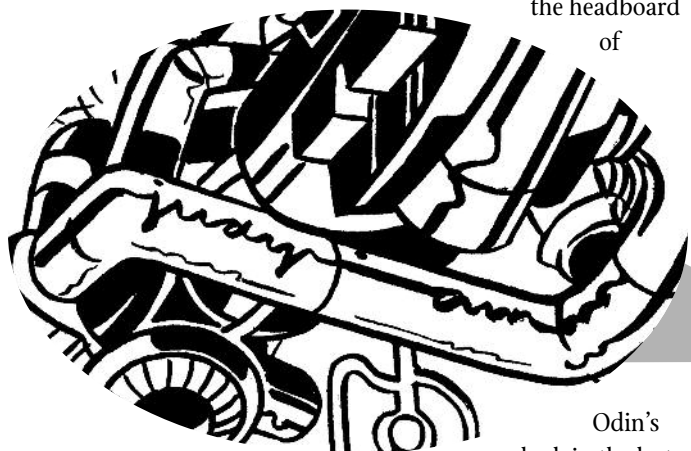
Cut to 1989: I’ve gone to the Mid-Ohio Con to pick up my friend Denys, where he had spent the weekend as a guest. In the dealer’s room, I met an art dealer who had ten or twelve pages from various *Thors* inked by Colletta and Everett!

Oh, did I want them, but couldn’t afford ’em. I *did* manage to talk the dealer into trading several pages for some Cowan and other art (cool!) and he would xerox some others for me, as I would do for him, with other art I had. I’ve never run across him again, but then I rarely go to conventions. As far as the art goes, *oh boy!* Christmas, my birthday and other great days all in one!

After a drive of several hours, we arrived at my studio in

the quiet hamlet of North Manchester, Indiana, where I was working with Denys on his assignments for Marvel and DC. After settling in, I again began to study xeroxes of Bill’s incredible, detailed brushwork. Suddenly, while looking at page nine of issue #175, I saw it! Why hadn’t I seen it before? Carefully hidden on an enormous Kirby weapon was a squiggle that spelled “Judy Ann.” In the same panel on a warrior’s shield that resembled a telephone dial was “Judy.” *Wow!* Bill had hidden a name in his inks. Then, on page 10, in the Asgardian tower dead center on the page were the letters “Judy!” Was there more?

Since my originals and xeroxes were few, I snatched my well-read copies, and continued my search. There on page 11, panel three, alongside the Storm Giant’s ax blade I could see an upside-down “J-A-T.” “Hey! That’s not Judy Ann. What’s going on?” I thought. The middle panel on page 12 held the answer: “Princess Judy Ann Taylor” and “Roman” graced the wall between two black areas. And, by Loki’s horns the words “Judy Ann” and again “J-A-T” were evident. There in the next panel were again the letters “J-A-T” in the wall behind Loki! Then on page 13, decorating

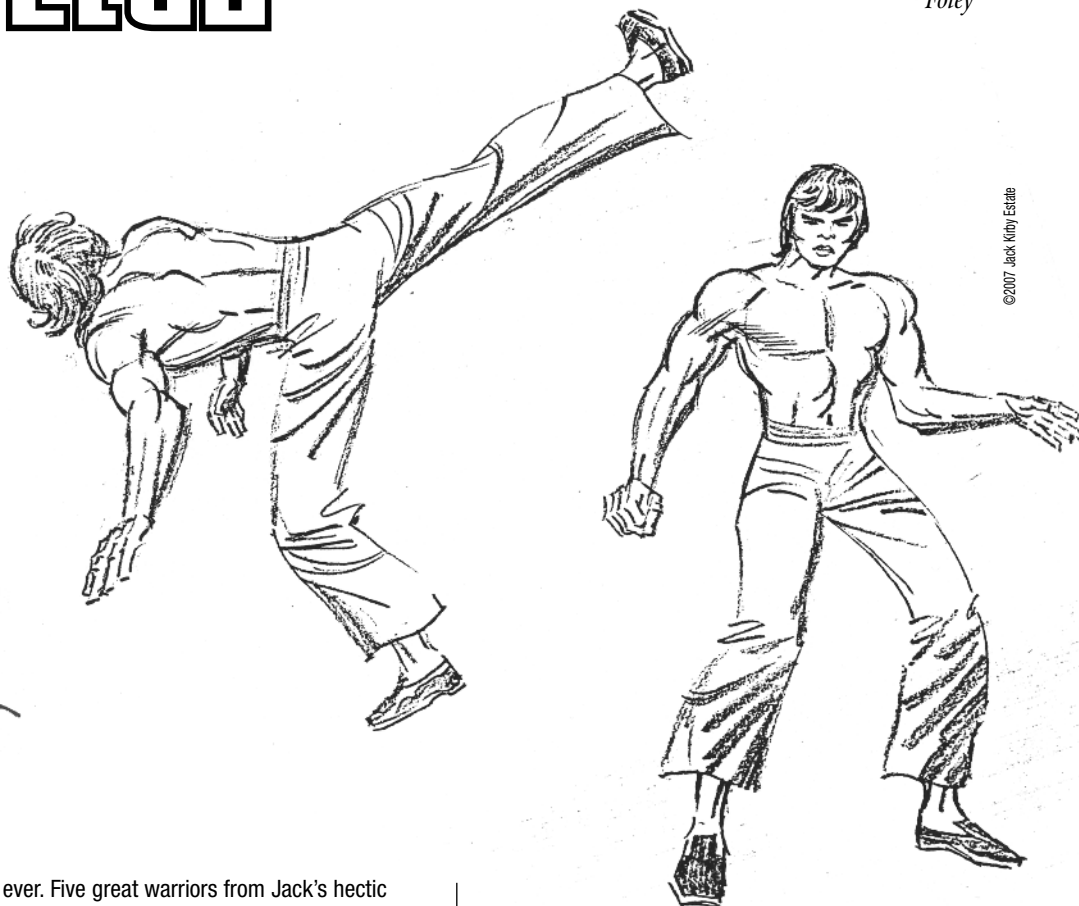


the headboard of Odin’s bed, in the last panel “Judy Ann.” On the floor of page 14’s first panel—“J-A-T!” “Pretty neat,” I thought.

In page 15’s last panel, under Hogun’s mace, and again on both sides of the first panel of page 16 hidden in the blue walls was the name “Judy.” On page 17, however, the initials were undetectable. Maybe Bill had grown tired. But alas, not so, for on page 18, on Loki’s wrist, “J-A-T” was formed in the wrinkles of his glove and in the helmet on the warrior to his side was what looked to be another clever “J-A-T!” On page 19 “J-A-” graced the magenta chest armor of a warrior in panel three, and finally the final panel of page 20 hid another “Judy” by the base of the torch.

I pondered how long the enigmatic Judy Ann Taylor had been with us. Although long thought as mere background details, the “Taylor,” “Princess Ann” and “Judith” on pages seven and eight now meant something! Even the faint “JAT” on the truck gracing the splash page now had purpose, as I suspect did the numbers “10-01-20,” found on panel one, page two. Mayhap it was Everett’s birth date, but this is total speculation! I couldn’t resist going back to *Thor* #170 and seeing what else there was to “discover.” And true to form, the talented Mr. E. started his game (as best as I could find) on page two with “J-A-R,” again on page five with “J-A-T” and “J-U-D” on page nine. There are others in ish #170, but if I gave them all, then you’d miss out on the fun of finding them yourself. So, when you next look at these issues, see how many *you* can find. Remember, “Wild” Bill had hidden variations in every issue in his run, with #175 hosting the most. In issue #174, on page five, the date 10-01-20 again appears as does the date 5-28-38 (could this one be Namor’s birth date? Or maybe the birth date of the enigmatic Judy Ann?), and again 5-28-38 in the third panel on page six, along with another “JAR” and “NS” or “HS” and others. As I stated earlier, I’ll leave some for those interested sleuths among you readers to discover for yourselves.





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Jack was a guy from the mean 1930s streets of New York's Lower East Side, so it's no surprise he could draw his characters dishing it out as well as taking it:

(page 24) **Bruce Lee character sketches (mid-1970s)**

A real life warrior getting the Kirby treatment. For some reason, I've always been surprised by Kirby's ability to capture likenesses—like he did, for instance, in *The Prisoner*—and with Henry Kissinger—and here, with Bruce Lee! This was apparently done in conjunction with Jack's unused Bruce Lee sample pages (see below) that later saw print as part of *Phantom Force*, with Bruce turned into the character Gin Seng.

(page 25) **OMAC #7, page 5 (Sept. 1975)**

OMAC's antagonist is a small box! Yet even in a scenario like that, Kirby is able to make the struggle really dynamic. 'Power' is one of the buzzwords used to describe Kirby's wonderment—and this page proves the point!

(page 26) **Johnny Reb Sunday strip (December 8, 1957)**

A '50s page with warriors of a totally different and more realistic kind. Not a single 'action' panel, yet the page is alive with character and group dynamics and the promise of excitement! What amazing art came from Jack during this time—and so much of it was rarely seen!

(page 27) **Black Panther #10, page 2 (July 1978)**

More warriors in choreographed violence! Compare the published page to these pencils and see how Jack added some background elements to make a clearly readable page even better!

(page 28) **Destroyer Duck #5 cover (Dec. 1983)**

Battered—rough as guts! Jack could even make a duck into a warrior! Fabulous trademark Kirby explosion!!

(page 29) **"Death Fingers" concept drawing (precursor to Dingbats of Danger Street) (circa 1975)**

Great layout! With minimal detail and his amazingly creative use of shadow, Jack shows his new character's environs and dangers. Love the clothes on the line behind!

(page 30) **Avengers commission drawing (1983)**

Hard to believe the artist here is the same as that who did the *Johnny Reb* page. Yet for all the grace that was now missing, Jack's pencil work got

tighter than ever. Five great warriors from Jack's hectic days in the early '60s!

(page 31) **Thor/Loki commission drawing (1984)**

More warriors from his past. Note how Jack was so good at placing his characters in evocative environments—even when he's drawn that place a thousand times before!

(page 32) **Atlas #1, page 7 (April 1975)**

[sigh] If only Jack had produced more episodes of this wonderful warrior! A perfect example page of how to manipulate the reader's eye from panel subject to panel subject!

(page 33) **In The Days of the Mob #2, page 21 (unpublished) (1971)**

A particularly grisly episode comes to a flamboyant end, as a mobster who was caught with his hand in the proverbial "cookie jar" gets his comeuppance. What a waste of a pin-ball machine...

(page 34) **In The Days of the Mob #1, 2-page spread (Fall 1971)**

The warrior involved here was Jack himself!! What detail! Precious few shortcuts were taken here—an inspired work, inked by Vince Colletta!

(page 35) **In The Days Of The Mob #1 cover rough (Fall 1971)**

People who saw Jack draw said it looked like he was reproducing a drawing he could see in his head! Maybe he

did that with this cover too—'cause this is very close to how the published cover looked!

(page 36) **Demon #1, page 10 (Aug. 1972)**

With pages like these, it's no wonder many feel that it's the early '70s where Kirby was at his best! Isn't the mass and power of the upper left warrior a work of sheer brilliance?

(page 37) **New Gods #8, page 18 (April 1972)**

Another early '70s page! Kirby liked to use the word 'Ultimate'! Pages like this show that it was Kirby himself who was the 'Ultimate'! What more can be said?

(page 38) **Our Fighting Forces #151, page 8 (Oct. 1974)**

Look at the decoration hinted at on the back wall. Kirby drew at 100 miles an hour, yet always managed details like this. A quiet, yet immensely powerful page...

(page 39) **Our Fighting Forces #152, page 9 (Dec. 1974)**

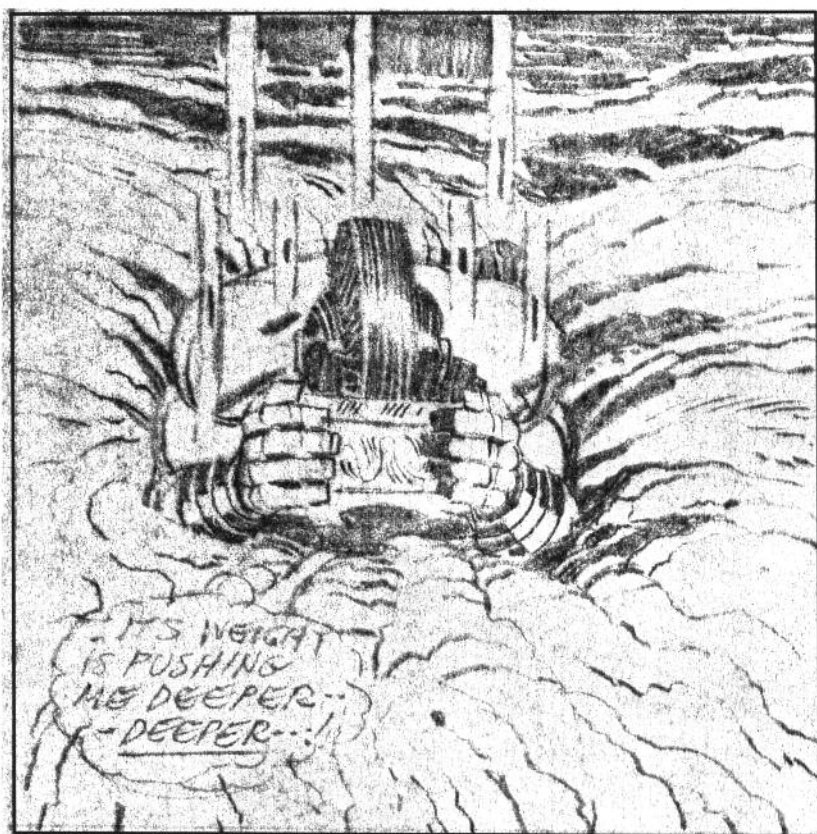
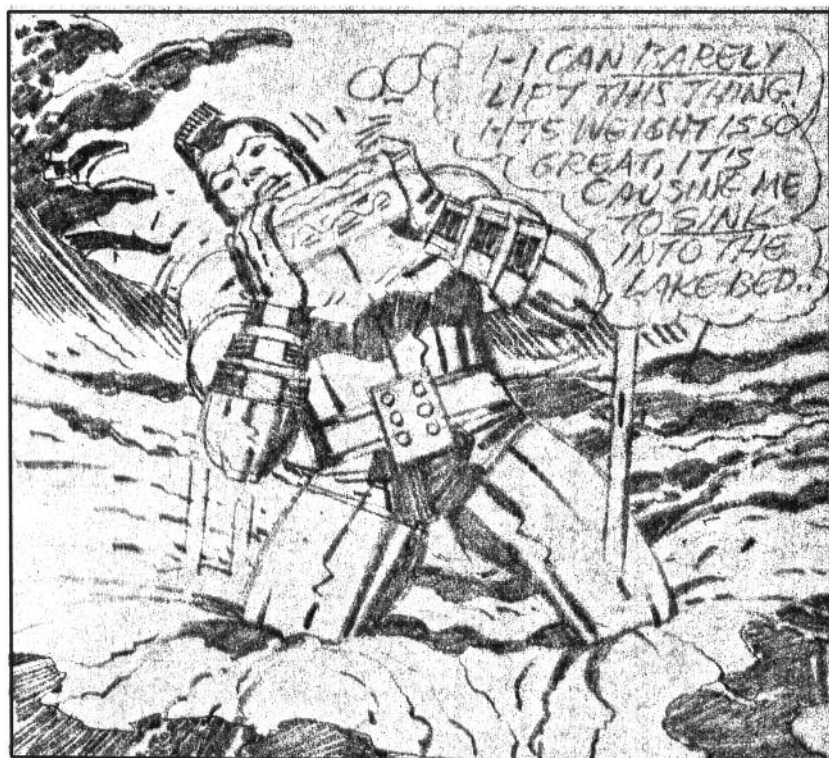
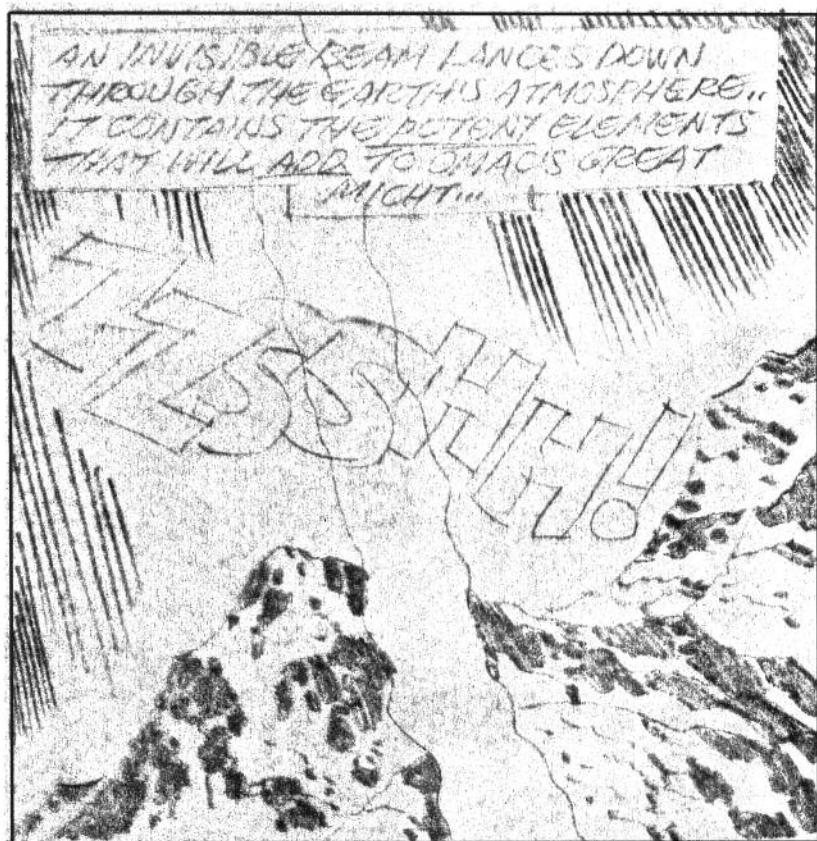
...followed by an all-out action page. Explosions, debris, rubble, action—and warriors of one kind or another everywhere! Kirby loved 'em all!

(page 40-41) **Thor in Asgard pencils (pencil version of our wraparound cover) (circa 1969)**

Partially unfinished Marvelmania piece—who knows why? Jack must have enjoyed the effects his Krackle made—why else would he finish those before finishing the rest? ★



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Sgt. Fury & His Howling Commandos #6 examined, by David Schwartz

Role models. We all need them, and those of us who were lucky enough to have good ones, have immeasurably better values because of it. Nowadays it seems that role models that kids can count on are few and far between. After all, outside of a child's parents, who does he or she turn to for role models? Is it the rapper who advocates violence? Is it the politician who lies to further his own position? Is it the over-worked and underpaid teacher who just wants to get through the day and go home?

These days, who can kids turn to for advice and a sense of understanding of our culture? You got me. With all the craziness in the world today I don't know how a 10- or 12-year-old child could look to outside sources for advice on how to become a well-rounded individual. Hopefully kids today have grounded, well-rooted parents, or many of them are going to be

caught adrift without the moral compass to understand right from wrong.

Thankfully, much of my role modeling came in the way of Marvel comics during the 1960s, and most notably Stan Lee and Jack Kirby (with a little help from Steve Ditko).

For example: The Rawhide Kid taught me that it's important to do what you know to be "the right thing" even when everyone around you misunderstands your actions. Ben Grimm (the Thing) taught me that no matter how rough the world has been on you, you still deserve to be loved, and can still be a part of a family. The Human Torch taught me

(and Spider-Man as well) that there's no shame in losing a battle, as long as you give it your all and face your challenges instead of running away from them. Thor taught me the importance of respecting your parents, even when they are wrong-headed and you can't always follow their dictates. For all of Thor's disobeying of Odin over his love for Jane Foster, he maintained respect for his father.

But one of the most important lessons learned was in *Sgt. Fury and his Howling Commandos* #6. This comic came out in 1964, at the height of the Civil Rights movement. This was one year after Martin Luther King, Jr. led his march on Washington. And this was the year Stan Lee and Jack Kirby let all comics readers know where they stood on prejudice and bigotry.

Looking at the cover of *Sgt. Fury* #6, you'd never know it was going to be a story about morality. You'd never know that it was

going to teach every young reader in no uncertain terms that prejudice was unacceptable in our society—that bigotry of any kind was something to be scorned and ashamed of. Nope, the cover looks like any other issue of *Sgt. Fury*. It was a story about a Nazi leader (Field Marshall Erwin Rommel) who was known as the Desert Fox. It was a story that promised to be full of action and suspense.

In fact, the first few pages of the story sparkle with Kirby's dramatic power. The splash page sets up the villain, with the floating heads of the Howlers fore-shadowing their involvement in trying to stop this Nazi menace.



(this spread) This story was pretty hard-hitting for its time, and really pretty daring during the Civil Rights Era in which it was published.

(next page, top right) A 1980s fan commission of Nick Fury.

Characters TM & ©2007 Marvel Characters, Inc.



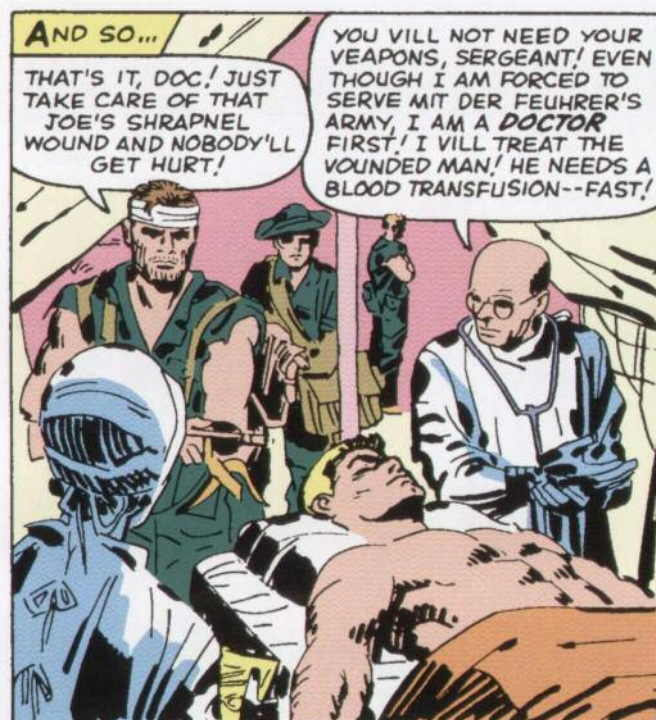
For those unfamiliar with *Sgt. Fury*, the Howling Commandos were an integrated army unit. They were multi-cultural, and even had a black member in their group, Gabriel Jones. Since the real army was segregated until 1948 and World War II ended in 1945, Lee and Kirby took creative license with the inclusion of Gabriel Jones—they were clearly trying to make the Howlers a

melting pot of nationalities and cultures. Rebel Ralston was a southerner from Kentucky. Dum-Dum Dugan appears to be Irish. Dino Manelli is Italian and Izzy Cohen is Jewish. Junior Juniper (who loses his life in battle) is an "ivy-leaguer." All of these disparate commandos come together to fight like a well-oiled machine without any tension regarding differences in their religious or cultural backgrounds.

This changes in issue #6. Early in the story while the Howlers are training to take on Field Marshall Rommel, Dino Manelli is hurt while leaping from a plane when his parachute fails to open. Sgt. Fury hurtles after him and saves his life by untangling his chute in mid-air as they fall! Leave it to Kirby to make everything he touched bigger than life and virtually bursting off the page! Kirby almost makes you feel what it's like to be in the air without a chute, as we watch Fury risk his own life, without hesitation, to save Dino.

While Dino's life is saved, he suffers a broken leg, which causes Fury to have to get a temporary Howler to replace Dino on the mission. Here's where the life lessons start to be introduced. The replacement, George Stonewell, is introduced to Dino in the hospital, but refuses to shake his hand. When introduced, he mutters only, "Manelli, eh? An Italian I see..." Immediately, we see that this new replacement has a bit of a chip on his shoulder. Fury notices it, too, but gives Stonewell the benefit of the doubt.

Next, Fury introduces Stonewell to the Howler's Izzy Cohen, a Jew. Again, Stonewell is standoffish and dismissive. Again, Fury is concerned, but believes Stonewell is just trying to impress Fury

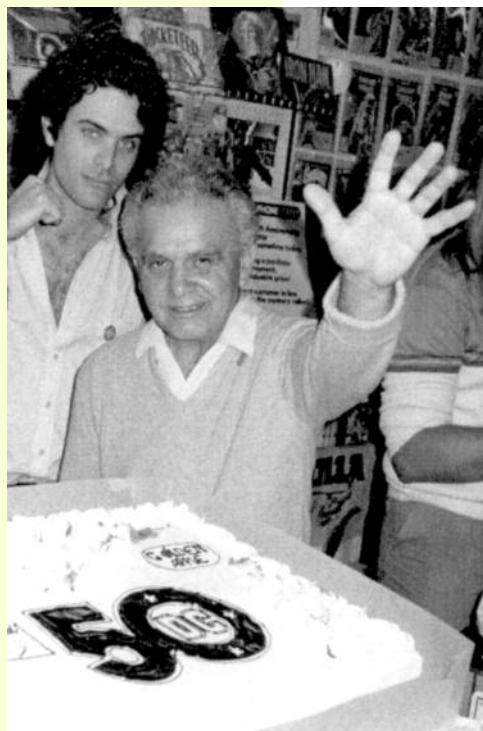


(right) This excellent detail from the cover of *Foxhole #5* (July 1955) shows the King could capture intense combat scenarios with the best of them.

(next page, top) Here's a marker drawing of the greatest shield-slinger of them all.

(below) Jack and Scott Fresina pose behind a special cake to commemorate DC's 50th anniversary, at the Golden Apple Comics store in 1986.

Foxhole TM & ©2007 Joe Simon & Jack Kirby Estate. Captain America, Bucky TM & ©2007 Marvel Characters, Inc.



(right) Cap and Bucky radiated confidence to an uneasy nation in the detail from the first page of *Captain America Comics #1* (March 1941).

(next page, bottom) "Home Alive in '45!" was a popular saying among Patton's soldiers as the Allies sensed the collapse of Fascism in Europe. Jack and Roz happily posed for this picture upon Jack's release from duty.

War stories and their combatants as told to and interpreted by Scott Fresina, with historical notations and additional writings by Jerry Boyd

If you sit down long enough to hear from various veterans about their war experiences, you'll find they usually come in two types. There's the combat vet who keeps the horrors he's seen deep inside and wants to share little or none of it with others, and the other type who's made some peace with his former situation and who's willing to pass on the information as a testament of his own worth as a soldier, or an exorcising of past demons, or a warning... of possible perils for the future.

Former P.F.C. Jack Kirby was the latter. In interviews, travels to comic conventions, and as the

subject of books and magazines, the King's reminisces of the killing grounds of Western Europe in '44 were sprinkled throughout his postwar conversations.

I first met Kirby in the early '80s as was recounted in *TJKC #43*. Being a lifelong fan of the fantastic in pop culture (particularly television, comics, and sci-fi and horror films), it was a joy to meet Jack and his family through Mike Thibodeaux. As a former New Yorker and having some talent as an artist, the Kirbys and I hit it off and a long friendship followed that ended somewhat with Roz's death but lives on (happily) through get-togethers with Lisa Kirby, Mike T., and other members of the extended Kirby "*familia universalis*". (That's Italian for... awww, figger it out!)

It was my honor to introduce and say a few words at the 2004 Jack Kirby Awards in

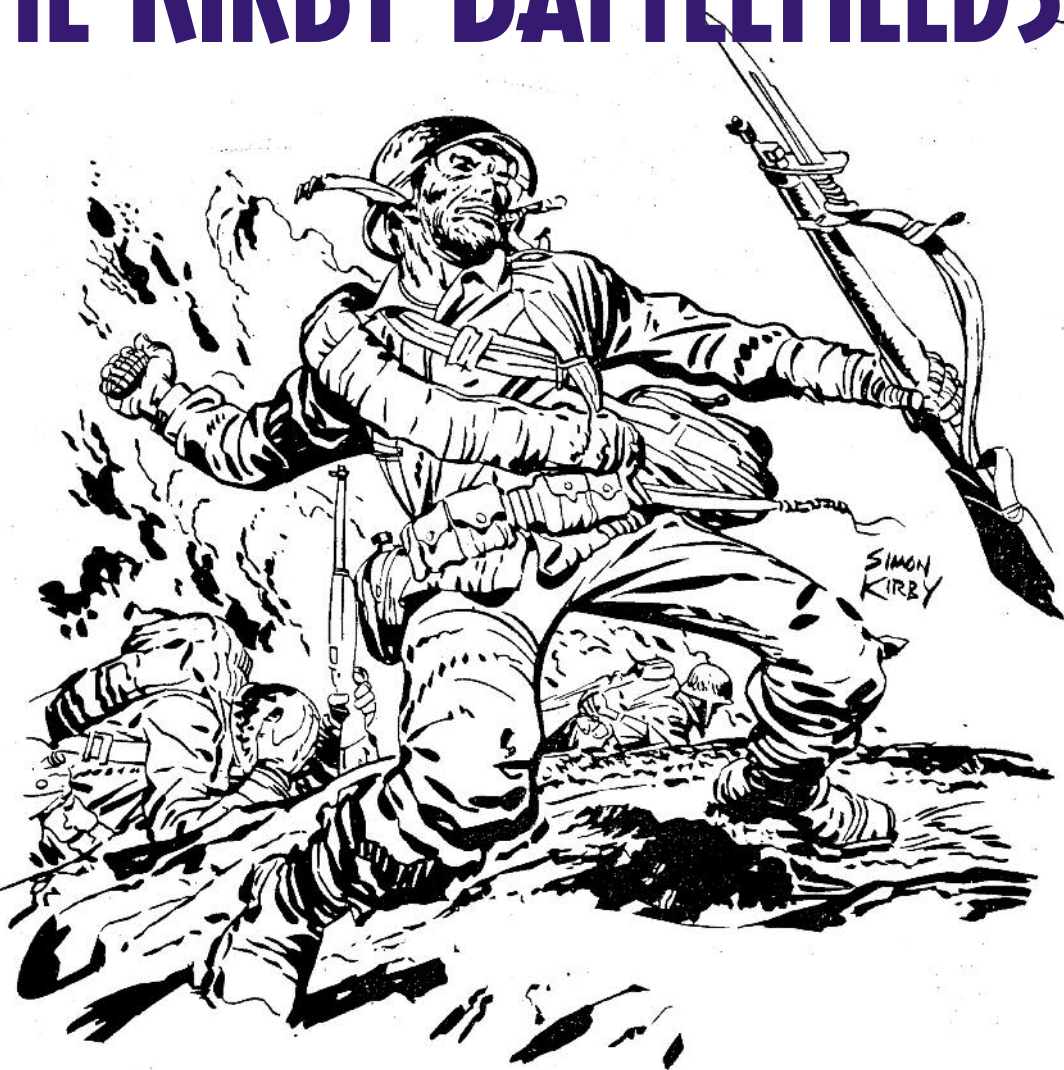
San Diego, and of course a greater honor just to have known and to have had many pleasant afternoons with the Kirbys. In the soldier's scenarios Jack would recall for general public consumption (such as the ones printed in this 'zine and elsewhere), I noticed there'd be war tales he trotted out for some... and other darker, bloodier ones he'd held back—just for his intimates, or perhaps, people he'd felt would understand.

What follows are some stories of his I remember almost word for word, and since I treasured those special talks as they were happening, I'm happy to pass on the memories of an old soldier (who'll never fade away) down to his many fans.

THE RED SHEET

Occasionally, Jack and I'd go to the backyard where they had a pool to sit and talk—always a great place to relax.

Mostly, we sat in Jack's studio, which I believe was originally a den. We had a lot of fun talking about all sorts of things but things got a little more sober when he shared his war stories.



It really wasn't a happy time when he got drafted—and I think he was already married to Roz. She made it a point to write something to him every day. She wanted to write something nice to him on a regular basis because she felt he was out there struggling, suffering—he's out there in the war every day so she felt he needed to hear something nice and positive from home.

He told me, "One day, we had a particularly ugly day. One day something... so ugly... happened to me that I didn't want to talk about it later. When I came back to the barracks and there was mail for me, I read a poem and I read it out loud—something Roz had written for me."

He couldn't remember the poem or exactly what it was about, but he said it was a *Reader's Digest* kind of "fluff stuff" and when the barracks guys heard it they were just howling with laughter and falling over. At first he didn't want to tell what that horrible event was... and those of us that heard that part of the story assumed the laughter spilled out because you had these battle-hardened dogfaces listening to this easygoing, *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* kind of poem and the audience has been out catching hell!

Over the years the story would actually come out in bits and pieces.



by JOE SIMON and JACK KIRBY

I never pressed it. But sometimes I'd ask, "Isn't it funny, Jack—that you ended up in the infantry and you're an artist. How come they didn't put you in an artistic function?"

"Well listen, it was World War II and they needed every able-bodied guy. Not that I didn't try to get out of combat. I thought I'd get work like Willy Mauldin or work with *Stars and Stripes* or something."

At one point he told me he approached his C.O. (Commanding Officer) and said, "Look, I know my name tag says Kurtzberg but my professional name was Jack Kirby." He says the C.O. was unimpressed so he went on, "I drew Captain America for the comics! So, maybe you can get me some work, y'know... doing work like that."

"So the guy says, 'Oh, you're an artist! I didn't know we had an artist in this platoon here. Let me look into this...'"

And Jack could go on sometimes and just ramble. I didn't know where he was going with this or what revelation he was going to blindside me with, but he recalled that the officer later called on him to do a job.

Kirby was told, "I need an artist on this. It's good you're an artist." He held up this map for Jack to look over for a reconnaissance mission—a dangerous outing, y'know.

"Go across this river here," the C.O. explained. "We think it's not occupied but we gotta know. If you spot any kraut machine guns or if you see any occupied areas in this village here, I need you to put some x's where they show up. This is what I need an artist for."

Jack and I laughed and I asked, "So this is the favor he's giving you?!"

"Yeah well, I opened my big mouth so I got in even hotter water! So now I'm doing something really dangerous!" We continued to laugh about that but as the story went on it was no laughing matter. This was the story he didn't want to reveal earlier.

He apparently had big problems with the freezing cold as winter went on. It was bitter, bitter cold. He spoke of a buddy who saved his toes because he found some cognac in an abandoned house and he shared it with Jack. It kept their circulation going. Another friend of Jack's lost three toes.

Jack, following orders now, went to investigate (with some other soldiers) this empty inn. It was big, gorgeous. They went in there and it seemed to be abandoned. Concerned about his feet, Jack said to himself, "I'm gonna find some booze... because it's freezing cold." He locates the bar but he turns to find three Germans have got the drop on him.

And he's thinking, "This is it."

So, they order him to sit down but they don't know he can speak German and he understands their conversation. His grandmother told him stories in German when he was small.

The Nazis notice the name Kurtzberg and recognize it as a Jewish name. They start saying "Juden" (Jew)! They call him a Jew and all this stuff. Again, I didn't know where Jack was going with this but it was fascinating because they had held him at gunpoint. Anyway, they decide they're going to do the drinking and they sit down on some easy chairs and they make Kirby sit down on the floor in front of them. They've got guns trained on him and one has a pistol... the three of them have him covered.

Then Jack veered off in his narrative to me.

"The Germans were pretty boys, you know what I mean?"

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Well, they really liked to look good... in their uniforms. And their uniforms were very beautiful. If you look at the way they're tailored—there's much more thought that went into the (aesthetic) design that the average dogface American in their fatigues."

Now I'm really lost.

Kirby continued, "They have these great, beautiful riding boots that go up to here (he made a sweeping gesture to his kneecap). Not only that, but the riding boots have a sheath for a dagger that fits perfectly in there."

Now I realize where he's headed.

As the German soldiers are drinking, they're getting pretty drunk and they start to pass around the whiskey or whatever they're drinking.

As Jack put it, "They're speaking German but I understand them perfectly. They start saying things about my mother."

And Jack says, "And a few times in my life this has happened to me—a 'red sheet' comes down before my eyes... and then I don't know what happens."

Then he got quiet. I'm all into it and I shout, "Well—what happened?! I gotta know—!"

Kirby says, "All I can tell you is... I started shouting stuff in German back at them... and when I was done, they were all on top of me... but they were all dead."

I sat there dumbstruck and I finally whispered, "Oh, my God... I'll bet that's something you'll never forget."

"I can still hear their screams."

Roz elaborated. "He keeps reliving it in his dreams. Whenever I hear he's talking German in his sleep, I wake him up because I know he's... reliving that situation. I say, 'Jack honey, wake up!'"

Apparently, Kirby had pulled the knife from one guy's boot (that was extended toward him) and was incensed enough—old style "East Side rumble"—and three guys dead, y'know.

He finished it all with a smile.



"By the time I make it back to the barracks, I read this 'sing-songy' poem about how beautiful life is... from Roz..." And we all started laughing so hard we were near tears. We were about to lose it—Roz, too.

It was a very grim thing though, and I said to him, "Boy, what horrors you guys went through... to keep this country free."

Philosophically, Jack asserted, "Yeah, war's a terrible thing. But when I see you kids and how you turned out, I would do it again." (One of the nicest things I remember him saying.)

A final addendum to the "red sheet" thing: He told me a few times he'd lost it before like that; street fights, that kind of thing.

I said, "Like the Hulk, huh?"

He'd answer in all seriousness, "Really that's the Hulk."

FROZEN FEET

(In the record cold along the Western Front in late 1944, GI's with "frozen feet" or "trenchfoot" was one of the biggest problems for soldiers from England, Canada, America, Australia, France, and elsewhere. Many of the Allied commanders expected the war to end before Christmas, and unfortunately thousands of their men didn't have proper winter combat gear. Consequently, many soldiers (like Pvt. Kurtzberg) were sent home because they were unable to continue fighting. Some lost their toes or had to have their feet or legs amputated due to loss of blood circulation in the trenches.)

Jack was aware of the problem of frozen feet but couldn't account for why he didn't lose any of his toes or worse.

He shared a foxhole with three guys. One guy kept an eye out for cognac or any type of alcohol that aided the circulation. The other guy kept his feet together because he stole extra pairs of socks.

So I asked him, "So, Jack—you didn't keep a bottle around and you didn't steal socks. So how did you keep from losing your digits?"

He said, "Oh, I don't know!"





STREET FIGHTING

Another time we got together, Jack told me about the experiences he and his friends had in taking towns from the enemy.

"War is never like it is on television or the movies," he began. "One minute you're receiving orders from a guy and the next minute the building you're in is caving in from artillery fire! If you're in a certain part of the building you can jump out of the window and you might be safe for a while longer. If not... you're killed.

"I remember talking to this lieutenant and in the next few seconds, I'm knocked all the way into this factory and he's a big red smear on the wall. To this day I'm not sure what exactly happened. We thought we were in a secure area, y'know, but it turns out three tanks with infantry had come up the streets around us. We were surrounded and didn't know it! Tank fire, I guess... killed our lieutenant. This lieutenant was from Brooklyn like me, and we had that in common... but he must have



(above) Jack in 1945 in Brighton Beach, NY.

(top right) PFC Jack Kurtzburg, recuperating in an Army hospital, sent this illo of his frozen feet condition home to Roz.

(right) The *Foxhole* #1 (Oct. 1954) cover sums up how some soldiers reassured their families back home.

(top right) A rare Kirby art lesson depicting a soldier struck down in action.

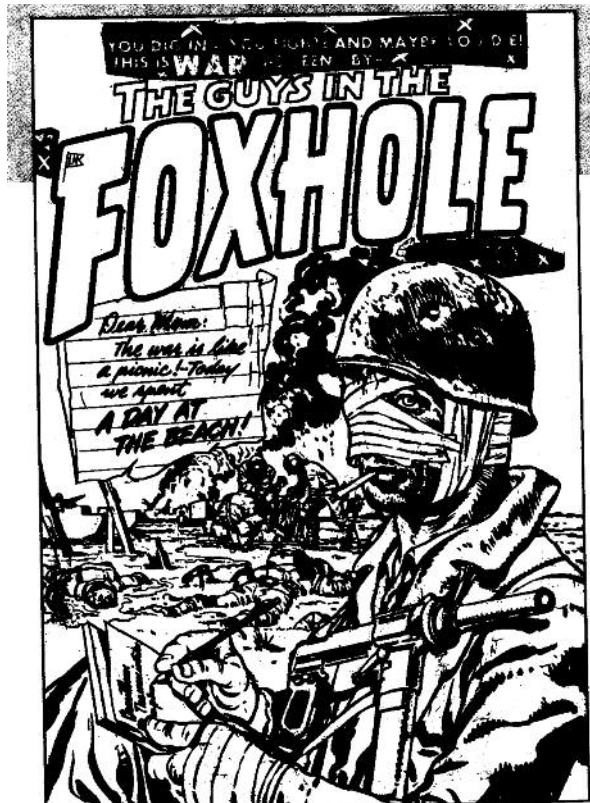
taken a direct hit and I'm thrown on another floor in another building!

"We all did what we had to do. The Germans are charging the factories and we're firing on them from the windows. A German charges me but a G.I. from the second floor hits him with a bullet and the guy must have been knocked back through three rooms.

"You get... combat experience fast in those situations."

I asked him what he was most concerned with when his life depended on his every little move.

"You soak up everything that goes on... quickly," he said without a pause to reflect. "You're conditioned to do that. Sometimes combat is like a comedy. Guys are running and shooting in all directions. But you're still in the most serious... the deadliest of realities. You gotta kill the enemy! So you pay attention... and soak in everything that's going on around you. You have to do that! It may mean the difference (between life and death)..."



CARNAGE

Jack explained, "We had to cross the Moselle River (in France). It was an important area that was contested by us and the Germans.

"So, we sit next to this big ravine that goes along France for miles. It's hundreds of feet down from our former positions and we gather there with replacements. The wind is blowing so hard we can barely hear our colonel's orders."

(It was always interesting to me when I heard Jack's war stories that he usually placed himself in the scenarios all over again, speaking in the present tense as if he was actually reliving those days, and writing it down as it happens. I'd heard these last two a few times, so I remember them well.)

Kirby went on, "It's the middle of winter and the cold is our enemy, also. Sounds just disappear in the wind, but we figure out what he wants us to do and it's confirmed when we get up, move out, and go down this cliff to join this tank battle.

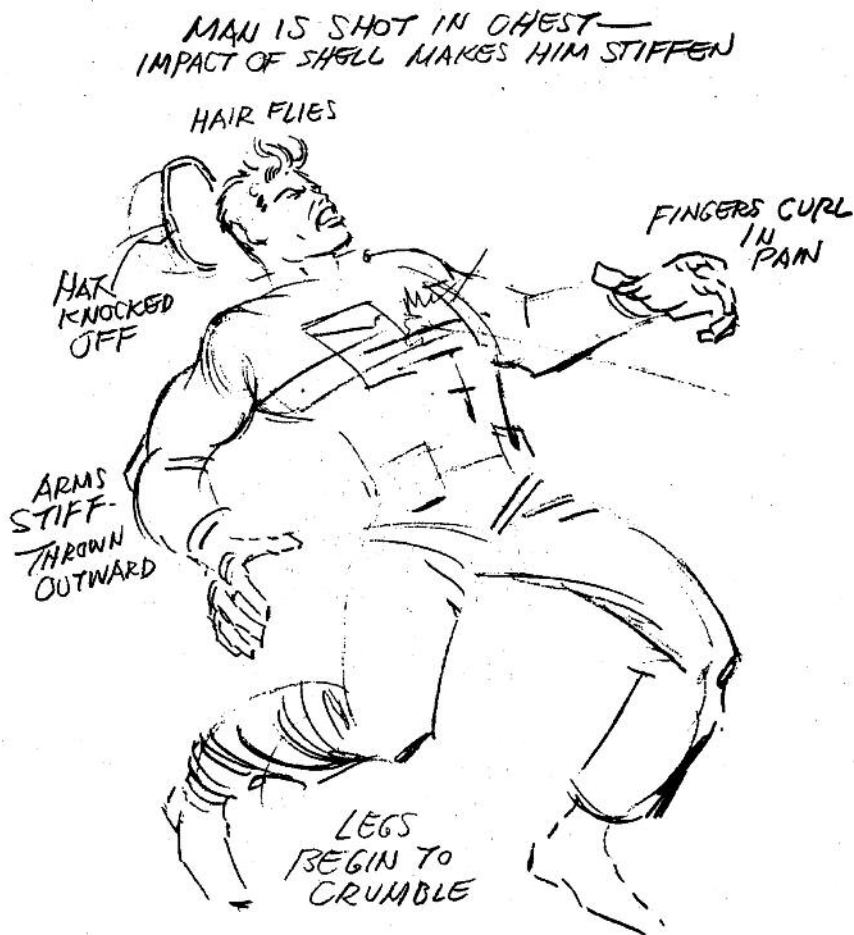
"The sounds of the tank battle couldn't be lost in the wind! We heard it all... and saw incredible things! The fighting is crazy! Guys are running naked back and forth across the Moselle River. A German tries to surrender to me and I yell to him that I don't have the time to take prisoners and that we're trying to march someplace.

"We're still in line, following our lieutenant, and moving toward this massacre. We went over (the river) in long flat boats, assault boats, y'know.

"The Germans know they have to turn us back, this river is vital to them. It (the battle) went back and forth. They chase some of us back to our boats after guys reached the other side. They were firing directly into our foxholes where our guys were sleeping!

"I was one of the last guys to cross, and I hung onto... one of the boats. The smoke of the battle shielded me and I barely made it across. The Germans didn't waste their ammunition firing into the smoke. They fired at guys they could see.

"I guess we had enough guys to take that side of the river. The Germans ended up retreating. Later, the engineers came down and put the bridges down. The next wave of guys had an easier time crossing than we did.



IF MAN IS SHOT IN LOWER AREA -
IMPACT WOULD DOUBLE HIM OVER
HE WOULD JACK KNIFE FORWARD -- IF IN
LEG -- EFFECT WOULD BE AS IF HE WERE LASSOED --
BY ROPE

The Comics Code Authority would have had a field day with the title of this story! You'll understand in a few brief pages.

Foxhole was part of a "new group of comics designed for readers who are tired of the same old stuff," or at least that's how the ad ran. In fact, most of Joe Simon and Jack Kirby's creator-owned line bore a striking resemblance to the team's earlier successes with Prize Publications.

The idea behind the line was very similar to an idea Jack would pitch to DC Comics some years later. Joe and Jack would develop concepts for titles, then staff out the actual stories to a bullpen of artists, with the two men serving largely in an editorial "big-picture" capacity.

Later at DC, Jack launched most of his titles himself. But at Mainline, other artists handled the bulk of the interior work immediately, often with a Kirby cover to entice readers. The Mainline bullpen was pretty much the same guys who freelanced for S&K at Prize—artists usually relegated to back-up features behind a Simon & Kirby main feature.

The comic racks where jammed with titles at this time, and it didn't take long before the team's dream of starting their own imprint was in jeopardy...

In this story from *Foxhole* #2, Jack tells a tale very similar to "Slaughter House" originally published in the July 1954 issue of *Black Magic* (reprinted in the *Jack Kirby Collector* #44). *Foxhole* #2 was cover dated December 1954.

While restoring this art, I was struck by the odd title

lettering. Readers of this magazine know Jack often penciled the title of his own stories in large regular handwriting at the top of the page. I wonder if that wasn't the case here; but the inker was in such a hurry, he inked Jack's chicken scrawl and no one caught it.

And now, strap yourself in and enjoy "Booby Trap!" ★



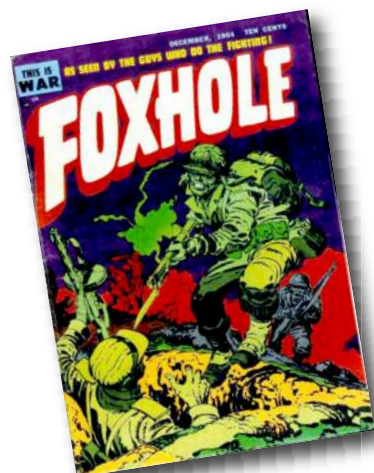
"RIGHT FROM THE START, I DIDN'T LIKE THIS PATROL... FIRST, BECAUSE IT WAS A COMBAT PATROL... SECOND, JAKE LOOMIS WAS ALONG... HE MADE TROUBLE A CERTAINITY!"

OKAY, LOOMIS... WE TRAVEL LIGHT, REMEMBER? NOW, DITCH IT!

DITCH WHAT, SARGE? I DON'T GET IT!

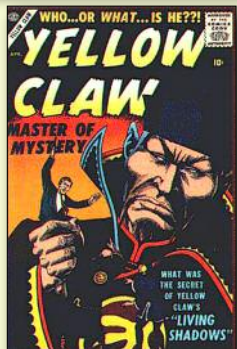
GIMME THAT CANTEEN! YOUR DOGTAGS HIT IT—SOME REDS HEAR IT, AND WE'RE ALL DEAD! AND GET THOSE DOGTAGS TAPED SO THEY DON'T JINGLE TOO!

SURE, SARGE, SURE... BUT A GUY GETS THIRSTY ON A HOT NIGHT LIKE THIS!... HAVE A HEART!



KIRBY

OBSCURA



Yellow Claw TM & ©2007
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House of Mystery,
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A regular column focusing on Kirby's least known work, by Barry Forshaw

Here's something new for this column: why don't we take a glance at a double-header of covers Jack Kirby did for DC comics in the late '50s? But here's the kicker: while many a Kirby fan over the years must have grabbed two issues of *House of Mystery* (#78 and #79) at comic marts, salivating at the thought of Kirby goodies inside (the cover stories, at least), The King's involvement with these issues extends to the eye-catching covers, no more. His clash with DC editor Jack Schiff over the *Sky Masters* newspaper strip was just around the corner, and his involvement with the home of Superman and Batman was about to undergo a lengthy hiatus (before Carmine Infantino invited him back to create his Fourth World books), and it's a particular shame that his body of work for the company during this period is relatively slender—particularly as Kirby had refined his style to a level of concision that had become a master class in design—and, what's more, it was a style he was to modify even further on his move to Marvel. Once again (as so often in the pages of *TJJC*), we have to talk about conflicts of personalities bringing wonderful work to an abrupt end.

Having said that, both the comics under the spotlight here have work by massively talented contemporaries of Kirby's, and are well worth picking up—not just for the covers. Take *House of Mystery* #78 (September 1958): the cover features a blue-clad woman in picture hat, veil and cape, rushing away from a building collapsing because of an earth tremor, while a bystander shouts that "The Lady in Black" always appears whenever disaster strikes. Kirby seems

to have inked this cover himself (any dissenting voices out there?), and it has the clean stylization that is the hallmark of his work during this period. Interestingly, the crumbling building is drawn in Kirby's best futuristic style (though the story is set in the present), and it's fascinating to compare the cover with Nick Cardy's illustration of the tale itself, the wind-up in this issue. Cardy was also doing some of his very finest work at this period for DC—more detailed and inspired than his later, more celebrated work on superhero fare such as *Aquaman*, and his rendering of The Lady in Black is exquisite (the eponymous siren is more naturalistically rendered in the tale than the figure in Kirby's cover drawing). The rest of this

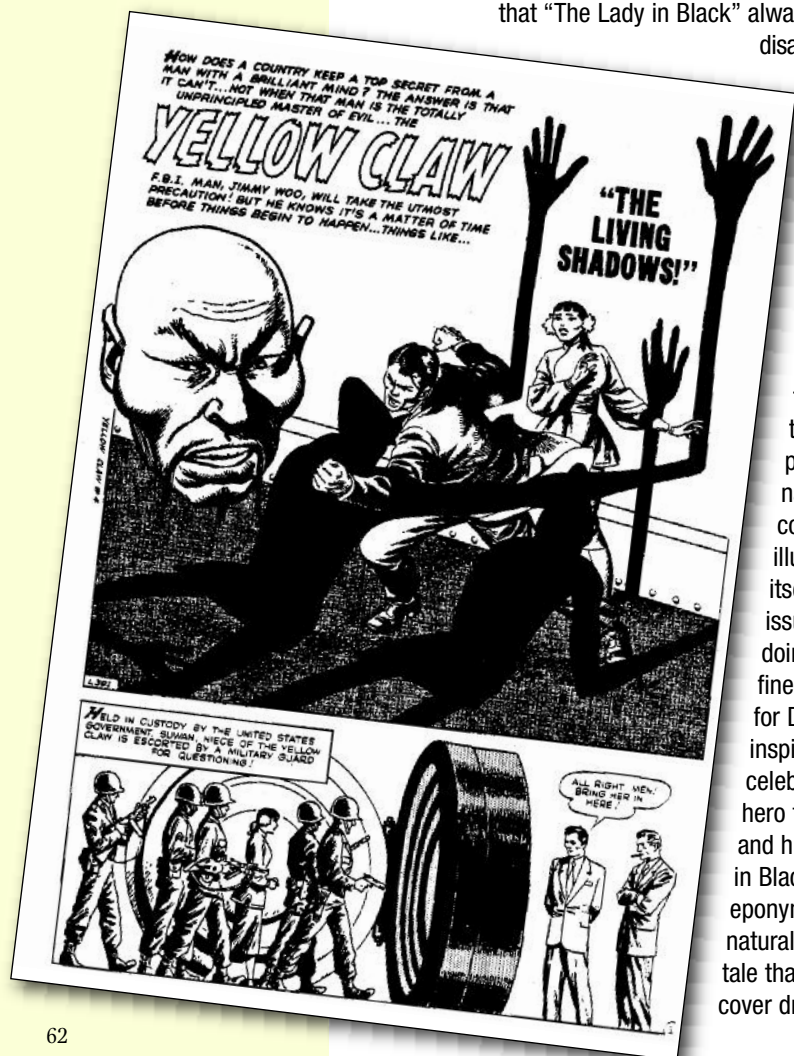
issue, with workaday pieces by Mort Meskin and Howard Purcell (efficient but uninspired as ever) won't set your pulse racing, but cover and title story are worth anyone's shekels.

And with the very next issue of *House of Mystery*, #79 (October 1958), we have an even more striking Kirby cover, with an early prototype of the destructive monster he would soon be turning out by the yard with Stan Lee for Marvel. Kirby's cover shows "The Creature from Inner Space", a crystalline monstrosity walking across a steaming lake while a frantic hero tries to steer his boat out of its way.



Comparing the creature

with Ruben Moreira's interior rendering of the tale is instructive, and a reminder of the gulf between Kirby and even his most talented contemporaries. Jack Kirby drew the creature once only—on the cover (no doubt created before the story was drawn)—and it's that stiff-armed pose of the thing that Moreira reproduces again and again in the story as the undersea behemoth lays waste to all around it.





FINE PRINT

GRANTED AN AUDIENCE

(above) Scott Free evokes *New Gods* #1 and goes back even further in *JLA: World War III* (art by Howard Porter).

(right) Creep-tacular Doug Mahnke monstrosity from *Seven Soldiers: Frankenstein* #4—not a Kirby character of course but, Grant told us, the Soldier he rotated in when DC turned down his proposal to include Kirby's Demon! (In this case, the creative team more than made up for what might have been.)

(next page, top) The dialogue ain't naturalistic, but it sure fits the tone of this gripping scene where a human encounters the true face of "God" (Orion) from *New Gods* #9 (June 1972).

(next page, bottom) The splash page of Grant's dreams, from *Forever People* #3 (June 1971).

(below) After Kirby himself, no one writes a scarier Darkseid than Morrison—cover to the *JLA: Rock of Ages* collection (art by Howard Porter).

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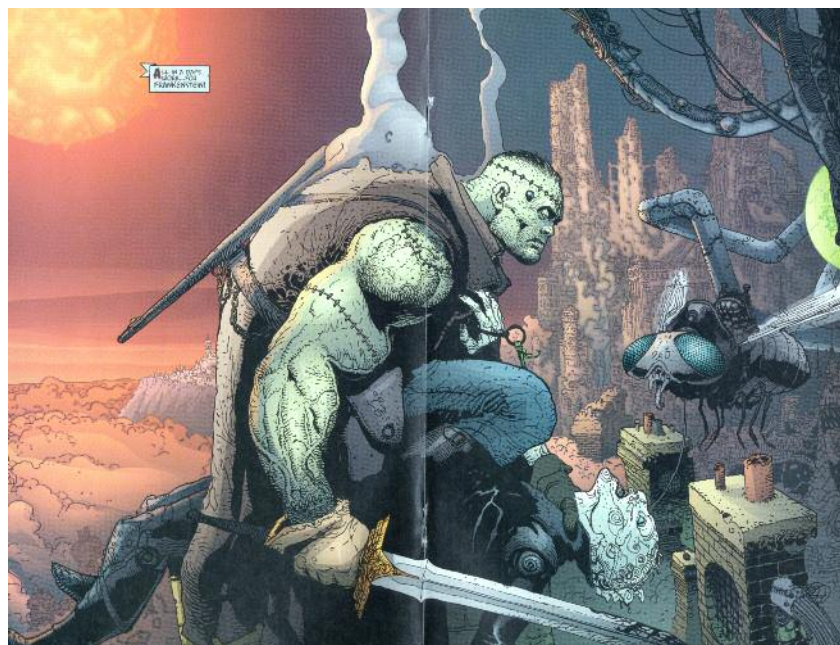
An interview with Grant Morrison, conducted and transcribed by Adam McGovern on January 24, 2007, and reviewed by Grant. Many thanks to Dom, Fred and Ryan.

(The fans of Grant Morrison are legion, yet he counts himself in the front rank of Kirby's own. The connection between comics' most established icon and this most modern of mavericks is no mystery. Much the same as his thoroughly professional and restlessly pioneering predecessor, Morrison is the go-to sage both for offbeat original concepts like *Seaguy* and *We3*, and definitive takes on established properties like *JLA* and *X-Men* that carry them forward while preserving their classic flavor. Most recently he's been refreshing the mythos of comics' signature creation in *All-Star Superman*, and mining the wonders and eccentricities of some of the medium's most notorious cult characters in his *Seven Soldiers* cycle, a groundbreaking set of subtly interrelated series with visionary collaborators like J.H. Williams III and Ryan Sook that did much to expand the creative possibilities and elevate the folkloric value of the comics artform.

Along the way, Morrison has borne the banner of comics' King, not just with some of the most affectionate and inventive revisitations of Kirby characters but with cosmic storylines which, like Kirby's own, are among the genre's few offerings with ideas as big as their spectacle. His late-'90s *JLA* arc "*World War III*" concerned a primal psychic weapon of fury and despair from the *New Gods*' prehistory, and captured the *Fourth World*'s flavor of an unusually intimate and emotional epic. As part of *Seven Soldiers*, he tapped into Kirby's themes of trauma and transcendence from the original *Mister Miracle*, remaking it as an odyssey of personal release for Scott Free's former protégé Shilo Norman. That series put the hero through a dazzlingly disorienting narrative of illusions and revelations, putting Morrison himself in the forefront of creators using the complexities of indie-comics storytelling to transform super-hero fare.

In advance of appearing in this magazine which focuses on Kirby's ideas and images, Morrison cracked the lid on a fascinating Pandora's Box of fan debate with his very first message to me, setting surprisingly high stakes for an appreciation of Kirby's language: "I feel it's about time a writer talked in depth and with some enthusiasm about the unsurpassed comic book poetry of Kirby's often-overlooked or derided writing," he effused in an e-mail. "I consider Kirby's unique non-naturalistic dialogue one of the highest expressive developments of the comic book writing style. It reads to me like Mickey Spillane teaming up with Allen Ginsberg to write the Bible for moderns and deserves much more attention and respect than it gets." As someone on the outer frontier of divining sublime meanings from pulp materials, Morrison ought to know, and we sat down to find out much more.)

THE JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR: There's no more intriguing place to start than with your defense of Kirby the writer. Your comments really struck a chord because I always thought there was, strangely enough, a realism to the way he gave baroque speech to fantastic characters. It seemed like a much more considered stylization



than a lot of the dated hipsterisms in other comics of the time. **GRANT MORRISON:** I think Kirby was a lot more like theater writing; in theater writing you're able to be a little more literary, because in a lot of cases you tend to be describing things that the audience doesn't see, or you're trying to evoke a certain atmosphere. And that's what impressed me; it makes me think most of that type of writing, and of poetry—it's that attempt to use comic language and compress it down into very powerful, almost slogans. It has been decried in the past for not being naturalistic, but y'know, Stan Lee wasn't naturalistic either, he was just a little *more* naturalistic [than the norm]; Kirby was much more poetic and compressed, and I think that's why people may find it a little strange.

TJKC: I remember an early review of *New Gods* #1, referring to the "comic-opera dialogue."

MORRISON: Well sure, but then again, Carl Jung in his book *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* talked about when he encountered the archetypes, when he was forming his theory of the archetypes and had these personal revelations and experiences of them, and said that, "the archetypes talk in the language of bombast." [laughter] That's what they do! It's kind of embarrassing, but that's the way they talk because they're kind of primal qualities, and Kirby just understood that.

TJKC: Speaking of archetypes, I think Kirby was rare as a comic writer in being able to conceive of these beings who we're seeing on two planes at once; they're both characters and ideas, persons and personifications. When it comes to gods, most people just do a super-hero in a period costume. You're certainly someone who grasps this too. What do you feel is the key to doing it?

MORRISON: To me, when Kirby's been done in the past that's been the mistake of many writers, to just turn the *New Gods* into super-heroes. There's been so much of that, they've been devalued, and I think there's a concerted effort on now to put them back in a position of grandeur. They've been played as super-heroes but

Kirby never did that. He had that extra dimension, and the extra dimension was, I think, to do with the language. 'Cause you look at something like "The Glory Boat" [*New Gods* #6]; I remember reading "The Glory Boat" as a kid and it just seemed like a chapter of the Bible. [laughs] It was so intense and operating on such a high level of symbolism, but it was very emotive, so all the feelings were coming through; it didn't have to be naturalistic. If you read the Bible, it's not naturalistic [to our speech] anymore, but it still has a power in its evocation and it's still emotional and it can still move people. And I think Kirby was tapped right into that type of language that goes straight into the unconscious mind and stirs emotions. To me, it's why his work as a writer is a lot more artistic than people may think of it as—it's more like music than writing.

TJKC: Another part of that archetypal orientation is this prismatic characterization, where Darkseid seems like three different characters among the main Fourth World books, from the Forever People's impish foil to Mister Miracle's absentee abusive dad. I saw that at work in *Seven Soldiers*, for instance the way that Nebuloh is a fearsome huntsman in one of the books and is pining about the princess in another. Do you perceive any influence there?

MORRISON: It wasn't conscious but definitely that's what you want from a character; that's why Darkseid is so popular still. Because as you say, he is very different in each of the books. I remember when I was doing *Justice League* [*Rock of Ages*] I picked up on the bully Darkseid, who appears in *Super Powers*, and he just keeps punchin' guys in the head [laughter]—but the Darkseid that remains in my head is that amazing splash when he says, "I am the tiger-force at the core of all things!"—y'know it's just terrifying, that monstrous, elemental presence. And those two are very, very different, but the fact that he contains both of those is kind of... when I did him in *Justice League* I think I was trying to combine those two, the bully who just punches his para-demons and throws them off parapets but at the same time this elemental quality. I



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think the Force of Evil should be able to be evil on all scales, even the most petty. I used to think Darkseid's the sort of guy who would go in and change all the records in the record sleeves. [laughter]

TJKC: That would especially trouble the Forever People—"Maan, I'm too stoned to know if I left the Grateful Dead in the Paul McCartney sleeve..."

MORRISON: "I thought I was puttin' on a happy record but it's a creepy one."

TJKC: Exactly; completely change the direction of their trip.

MORRISON: The Darkseid who just crushes biscuits in their packets and then leaves. [laughter] I played him a little like that at the end of *Mister Miracle* #3 where you see him moving the diapers from one shelf to a higher shelf, the most petty—but I wanted Darkseid to be evil on all scales so he's evil on the towering, cosmic scale but he's also evil in that he'd just f*ck up an innocent person's life for the hell of it.

TJKC: Still, another aspect of Darkseid that I think you got better than anyone (though Walt Simonson tapped into it too in *Orion*) is that in *Mister Miracle* you did an eerie job of portraying Darkseid the way he sees himself—all the greatest villains of both history and fiction see *themselves* as heroes.

MORRISON: It has to be that way, or else they don't have any real drive. No one sets out to be hated by everyone. Most people believe that what they're doing is the right thing.