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THE JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR

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ISSUE #8, JAN. 1996

AN ALL-STAR
CONVENTION
THEME ISSUE!

TRANSCRIPTS
FROM THE *KIRBY
TRIBUTE PANEL*
AT THE 1995 SAN
DIEGO COMIC CON,
FEATURING

**JOE SINNOTT,
MIKE ROYER,
MARK EVANIER &
TONY ISABELLA**

A RECAP OF
OUR TRAVELING

**KIRBY
ART SHOW**

A RARE 1975

KIRBY INTERVIEW

A LOOK AT JACK'S
CONVENTION ART

A 1972 CONVENTION
PANEL WITH

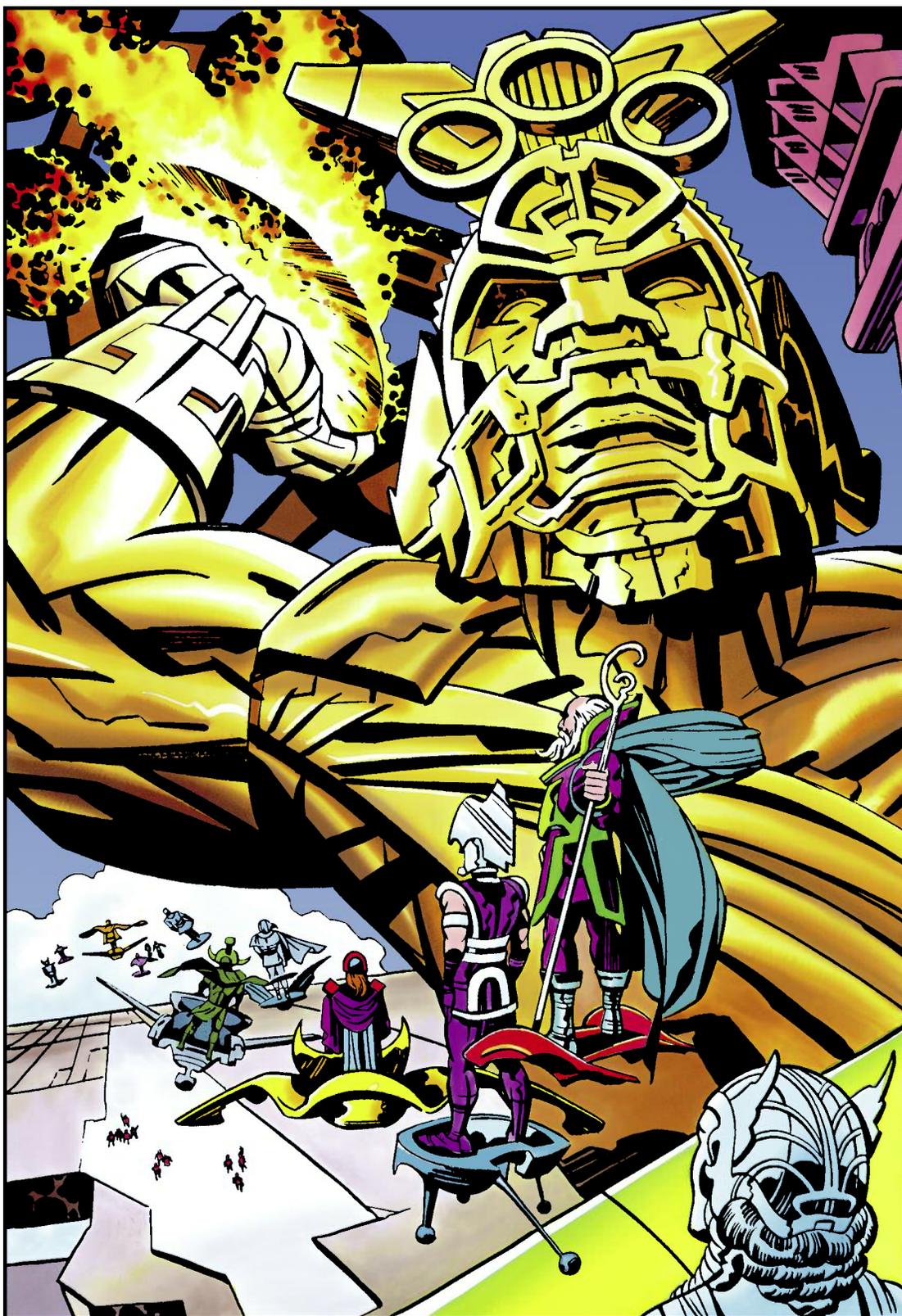
**KIRBY &
ALEX TOTH**

HOW JACK MET

PAUL MCCARTNEY

UNPUBLISHED ART

INCLUDING PENCILS
FROM *CAPTAIN
AMERICA* AND
S.H.I.E.L.D. BEFORE
THEY WERE INKED--
AND *MUCH MORE!!*





Jack at the 1991 San Diego Comic Con
(photo by Mark Blackney)

DANGEROUSLY GEEKY?

Recently, the San Francisco-based review-zine *Destroy All Comics* reviewed *The Jack Kirby Collector* #6 (our Fourth World theme issue). Let me quote the intro for those of you who missed it: "The idea of a whole magazine about dead artist Jack Kirby is pretty weird, kind of obsessive and dangerously geeky, but at the same time, it's about a really great and important comic-book artist, and has plenty of interesting information."

Now don't get me wrong; I love all the press we've been getting since starting *TJKC*, and it's been overwhelmingly positive. In fact, the review of #6 in *Destroy All Comics* was very favorable. The reviewer even called *TJKC* an "almost insane magazine," which I took as a major compliment. But his comments got me thinking.

Are we a bunch of weird, obsessive geeks?!

This question weighed heavily on my mind for days after reading the review. It's not like I live in my parents' basement, or forget to bathe regularly, or lack involvement with the opposite sex. I've got a comfortable home, a beautiful wife, a successful business; so what if I want to spend my evenings and weekends putting together a magazine about a comic book artist?

The same goes for our subscribers. They come from all walks of life: Doctors, Lawyers, Animators, Writers, Teachers, Police Officers. We've even got female subscribers. Surely we're not geeks. Not us.

But why, then, do we spend our disposable income on old comic books, original art, posters, hardcover reprints, portfolios, trading cards, etc... all by the same man? Why do our palms sweat when we see an unpublished piece of Jack's art? And why do so many of you call me (long distance!) if your new copy of *TJKC* is one day late?

Let's face it. We're geeks.

My wife Pam is new to the comic book scene, so our recent travels to the summer comic conventions showed her just how weird some of us are (as you'll see in this issue's write-up of our trip). But at the same conventions, Pam saw firsthand why I'm willing to spend my free time

on this publication. She got to meet many of the people who send us wonderful, gushing letters of support. She got to make lots of new friends, both fans and pros. And she got to see for herself why so many people say such glowing things about Rosalind Kirby.

Maybe we are geeks. But if so, we're the most kind, thoughtful, considerate, generous, and just plain nice geeks on Earth. And we're brought together by a love of the incredible work, talent, vision, and warmth of one of the most remarkable creative geniuses of our times. Our convention experiences inspired us to produce this All-Star Convention Theme Issue, and we unabashedly dedicate it to the prospect of fostering that Kirby geekiness that lives in each of us.

If you're new to *TJKC*, here are the ground rules: We produce it on a not-for-profit basis, just for the fun of it. We only charge enough to cover costs, and we always keep our back issues in-stock at cover price. If you happen to possess unpublished Kirby drawings or original artwork, or have old fanzines, posters, etc.. with art by Jack that hasn't seen the light of day in many years, we ask that you submit a good-quality photocopy of it for us to print. Or if you'd like to write an article for publication, submission details are on page 7 & 35. We can't pay you, but if we print something you submit, we'll send you a free copy of that issue, or extend your subscription by one issue.

Now c'mon, you Kirby-Geeks. You've got a new issue of *TJKC* to read. Run down to your parent's basement and enjoy!

Long live the King!

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(This issue's cover is a piece Steve Rude inked for the 21st Century Archives Kirby card set. No one's quite sure what it was originally drawn for, but the characters and background bear a striking resemblance to those on page 5 of New Gods #1. Check it out, and decide for yourself! The original pencils are on our back cover.)

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THE JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR #8

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REMEMBER ALL *TJKC* CONTRIBUTORS RECEIVE ONE FREE ISSUE FOR THEIR EFFORTS!

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KIRBY NEWS

JACK KIRBY: A CELEBRATION

Things are still proceeding on *Jack Kirby: A Celebration*, the tribute book Mark Evanier and Frank Miller are co-producing. Stay tuned for more details. We gave the wrong address for Mark last issue: His new mailing address is 363 S. Fairfax Ave., #303, Los Angeles, CA 90036.

GOLDEN AGE KIRBY ON MICROFICHE

MicroComics Incorporated has many Golden Age Kirby comics available on microfiche (it's like microfilm, but comes as a 4" x 6" sheet, usually with a single comic per sheet). The color reproduction is beautiful, and you don't have to worry about harming a valuable comic by actually reading it! The fiche price through Dec. 31st is \$33.95 per set of five comics, or \$7 each. You'll need to have a microfiche viewer, which costs about \$225. You can also get 8 sets (40 issues) plus a viewer, or 15 sets (75 issues) with no viewer for \$430. Here are some of the Kirby comics currently available:

- *Adventure #72-91, 100, 102 (Sandman & Manhunter, plus assorted covers)*
- *All Star #14-17, 19 (Sandman)*
- *All Winners #1-2 (Captain America)*
- *Captain America #1-10*
- *Detective #64-83 (Boy Commandos)*
- *Marvel Mystery #13-27 (The Vision)*
- *World's Finest #6-13 (Sandman and Boy Commandos)*
- *Yellow Claw #2-4*

They have many non-Kirby titles as well. Ara Hourdajian, the president of MicroComics, is considering expanding its offerings to include Silver Age comics. Unfortunately, the microfiches have not been very profitable, and they and the copyright holders have to be convinced that they could sell a sufficient number to make it worthwhile. Silver Age comics would be filmed two per fiche so would cost about \$3.50 per comic. If you'd be interested in getting early issues of *Fantastic Four*, *Thor*, *Challengers of the Unknown* or other Silver Age titles, or you'd like more information or a catalog of titles, contact Ara at MicroComics Inc., P.O. Box 243, Ridgewood, NJ 07450, or by e-mail to arah@aol.com (their Web site is at <http://www.ftech.net/~micro/mci.htm>).

TJKC GETS DISTRIBUTED, GOES 2X-SIZE

Starting with this issue, *TJKC* is distributed to comic shops worldwide through Diamond Comic Distributors and Capital City Distribution. We made the move now for one main reason: submissions to *TJKC* are down, and we need to reach more Kirby fans to keep it going. But to compete for customer attention on store shelves, we felt we needed color covers. So we're taking the risk that comic shops will order enough extra copies to offset the cost of color and the huge discounts we have to offer through distributors. If your local shop doesn't carry *TJKC*, show them a copy and ask them to look for it in Diamond's *Previews* magazine or Capital City's *Advance Comics*, or they can get it directly from us at a discount. Only by maintaining and expanding our current subscriber base will we be able to continue publishing *TJKC*. If you got this copy at your local store, consider subscribing from us. Not only will you save money and get your issues sooner (in a cool envelope!), you'll leave copies in stores for new readers to discover. And we ask current subscribers to keep subscribing directly from us; if we had to give a distributor a discount on all our copies, it would force us to cease publication.

Starting with this issue, *TJKC* is officially 36-pages permanently. This size has proven so popular that we're keeping it for good (rather than opt for an occasional 16-page issue, like #1-5). The price is reflected in the new subscription rates of \$24.00 for six issues in the U.S. (\$32.00 Canada and Mexico, \$44.00 outside North America). We've adjusted your accounts accordingly, and if you had the equivalent of a single-size issue left in your account, your mailing label will show ".5" issues remaining in your subscription. So you'll need to send an extra \$2.00 U.S. (\$2.50 Canada and Mexico, \$3.50 outside North America) to even it up to a full issue.

NEW KIRBY TRIBUTE BOOK

Jim Steranko and Mike Thibodeaux are continuing work on their Kirby tribute book. It promises to contain a large assortment of previously unseen Kirby artwork, including many pieces from the Kirby family's private collection. But to fill the book out, they need more unpublished Kirby art. If you have any obscure Kirby art in your collection, including rejected covers and pages or nice convention pin-ups, please send photocopies of it to Jim at Supergraphics, Box 974, Reading, PA 19603. And while you're at it, make an extra copy and send it to us at *TJKC*!

WE NEED A VOLUNTEER!

We're working on compiling an up-to-date checklist of everything Jack ever had published (including reprints and interviews). Compiling and cross-checking all this information is a time-consuming task, and we need a volunteer to take on the bulk of it. Qualifications should include a thorough knowledge of Jack's work (although you'll have interaction with many knowledgeable Kirby fans to help you out), access to a computer (Macintosh preferred), good organizational skills, and a detail-oriented mind. We can't pay for your services, but we can offer a LIFETIME SUBSCRIPTION to *TJKC* in return! If you're interested in volunteering, drop us a letter detailing why you feel you're the one for the job. We look forward to hearing from you! We'll announce our decision next issue, so hurry if you're interested.

As a starting point for the checklist, we're using the existing one from Blue Rose Press' *The Art Of Jack Kirby*. So keep sending those lists of errors and omissions from the *AOJK* checklist, or if you've got an accurate list of your own to contribute, write us!

KIRBY ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB

We've got a *Jack Kirby Collector Web Page*, thanks to *TJKC* subscriber and webmaster Randy Hoppe, who put it together for us and keeps it updated. The URL (Uniform Resource Locator) is:

<http://www.mordor.com/thehop/kirby>

Randy's done a wonderful job on it, and he deserves a big pat-on-the-back for his efforts. The *TJKC Web Page* includes biographical information on Jack, so uninformed visitors can learn a little about him. It also includes a synopsis of each issue of *TJKC* published to date, and samples of Kirby art and articles from each issue. And copies of the updated Kirby Checklist will be available for free downloading once it's completed. If you're on the Web, be sure to check it out and let us know what you think.

KEEP SENDING LETTERS TO MARVEL!

Let's keep up the pressure on Marvel Comics to give Jack a co-credit line on the characters he co-created. In conjunction with Mark Miller's ongoing letter-writing campaign, we're asking all Kirby fans to send a letter to: Mr. Terry Stewart, Marvel Comics Co., 387 Park Ave. South, New York, NY 10016. Tell Mr. Stewart politely but firmly that you feel Jack deserves to have his name listed (with Stan Lee's) everytime Marvel publishes a book with one of his characters in it. Do it for Jack, folks!

HAVE YOU READ JACK'S NOVEL?

Many fans don't know that Jack had been working for several years on a novel called *The Horde*! It's a tale of racial hatred and mysticism set in Mongolia, but Jack never completed the final draft. So far, two stories from it have been published, with the assistance of author Janet Berliner. One was in the July/Aug. 1994 issue #4 of *Galaxy Magazine* (back issues are \$5.00 postpaid, from: *Galaxy Magazine*, PO Box 370, Nevada City, CA 95959). Check your local bookstore for a new anthology book entitled *David Copperfield's Tales Of The Impossible* which contains a second story from *The Horde*!

Don't forget that you can still make donations to the educational fund that was set up in Jack's name shortly after his death. Send to:
The Jack Kirby Educational Fund, Temple Etz Chaim, 1080 Janss Rd., Thousand Oaks, CA 91360.

JOHN & PAM'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE

by John Morrow, Editor of *The Jack Kirby Collector*

Remember those awful "What I Did On My Summer Vacation" papers you were forced to write in grade school? After the fun I had this summer, I almost wish I was back in school to write one! My wife Pam and I traveled to several comic conventions to promote *TJKC*, and the adventures we had rivaled anything I've ever read in the pages of a comic book. Everywhere we went, we found fans with severe cases of Kirby Fever, made even worse by the display of nearly 25 pieces of rare and unpublished Kirby artwork we brought with us. So strong was the response that we got almost 800 signatures on a petition to get Marvel Comics to give Jack a co-credit line (for details on how you can participate in the campaign, see page 3 of this issue). Here's a recap of our excellent adventure.

First came *Heroes Con* in Charlotte, N.C. in June. This three-day show is rapidly becoming one of the best in the southeast, and it was gratifying to see so many Kirby fans there. Thanks to Todd McFarlane's long autograph line (which snaked right in front of our booth), our Kirby display had a captive audience of between 1000-2000 people that weekend.

Next came the *San Diego ComicCon* at the end of July. Our booth was constantly full of Kirby fans, many of whom weren't yet aware of *TJKC*. Needless to say, we picked up a lot of new subscribers, and numerous comics pros came through to see the display and talk about Jack's influence on them. Mark Evanier moderated a Kirby tribute panel, and was kind (or foolish) enough to ask me to sit in on it. (You'll see the transcript of the panel on page 22 of this issue.) All in all, it was an amazing four days on Jack's "home turf."

Finally, we attended the *Dallas Fantasy Fair* for three fun-filled days in August. Besides meeting a lot of old and new friends in the southwest, this gave us the opportunity to talk to Jim Steranko about the upcoming Kirby tribute book he and Mike Thibodeaux are working on (details of the book are on page 3 of this issue).

The Kirby mystique seemed to attract the media wherever we went. A reporter from the *Charlotte Observer* newspaper made the



We displayed this unused cover from What If? #10 with the published version alongside it, prompting many people to wonder why Marvel chose to have it redrawn. (We don't know, either.)

mistake of asking us for a little background information on Jack. Once we (with the help of inker Jim Amash) finished talking his ear off about Jack's amazing career, his article on *Heroes Con* ended up focusing on Jack, including mention of the campaign to get Marvel Comics to give him co-credit. In San Diego, the *Sci-Fi Channel* showed up, asking to use our display as a backdrop for the introduction to a segment they were filming on Jack. We naturally agreed, and the feature was supposed to air sometime in October. (The *A&E Network* was also filming a *Biography* episode on Stan Lee's life, which we heard devotes a substantial amount of time to Jack's contributions.) And in Dallas, I was interviewed about *TJKC* on a local cable access show about comics.

As you'd expect, some strange things happened at the cons. Imagine my surprise when a young fan at *Heroes Con* proudly showed me a 1995 issue of *X-Men* that was supposedly autographed by Jack (based on the date, I was a bit skeptical about the authenticity of the signature). Pam swears that one day in San Diego, a clueless autograph seeker walked up to her, and with a totally straight face asked if she was "Jacquelyn Kirby." (Please tell me you're kidding, Pam!) Another day, a fan continually insisted she explain why Jack drew six fingers on a throwaway character in one panel of an obscure comic book from thirty years ago. (Poor Pam; the whackos seemed to show up while she was minding the booth!) And we had to gently tell more than one inquiring fan why Jack wouldn't be appearing at our booth.

After the *San Diego ComicCon*, we spent a few days in Los Angeles, where we were treated like royalty! After visiting Mike Royer's house



The Sci-Fi Channel invades the TJKC booth in San Diego.

1972 COMIC ART CONVENTION LUNCHEON

Jack Kirby and Alex Toth, Guests of Honor (originally published in the 1973 Comic Art Convention program book)
Originally transcribed and edited for publication by John Benson, submitted by Mark Mayerson

© 1973 Phil Seuling

JIM STERANKO: Jack, I think one of the things on everybody's mind today, when they view your work, is the question, "What will Jack Kirby do next?" So, briefly, could you tell us some of the things that you have planned in the immediate future?

JACK KIRBY: Well, let's just say that, being a family man, it's going to be nothing exotic. *(laughter, applause)* It's going to be a very, very wholesome character, with all of the virtues that a wholesome character should have, but with enough interest in his exploits to maybe sustain him with the readers for a long time. Of course, the books I have coming out now are *Kamandi, the Last Boy on Earth*, which is kind of a unique thing, and *The Demon*, which is a demon as super-hero, and also a challenge because of its uniqueness—that's already out, and it seems to be initially getting a response. So I'm trying a lot of things, and I think they're worthwhile because of their uniqueness, and I hope you all like them, and I hope to do a lot of things in the future that will really interest you. The only thing I can say is keep looking, keep watching, keep reading, and I thank you for every time you pick up some of my stuff. *(applause)*

STERANKO: About a month and a half ago, a number of people got together for an International Congress of Comics. About 90 cartoonists from all over the world, from Spain, Italy, South America, Mexico, converged at a hotel here in New York, and it was not a surprise to discover that many of them spoke of Alex Toth—Robert Gigi, Jean Giraud, and particularly Hugo Pratt, who won a number of awards this year as an international cartoonist, told me that one of his influences was Alex Toth. Alex has always been the artist's artist, and maybe we can get him to make a few comments about his position as that kind of cartoonist.

ALEX TOTH: Heh-heh, you kind of left me hanging there. I don't know exactly what to say. "My position as being an artist's artist," is that what you said?

PHIL SEULING: Is that like a gentleman's gentleman? *(laughter)*

TOTH: Well, it's very flattering to be called that—an artist's artist. But anyway... I'm also told I'm not commercial enough, and I hear that often enough that I'm starting to believe it.

STERANKO: I think that's to your credit.

TOTH: Well, whatever. But the bank account doesn't get any bigger. That's about all I can say about that particular question.

STERANKO: Does anyone have some questions?

BOB COSGROVE: In the display downstairs there are three large ink drawings that struck me as attempts to portray your version of God. I wonder if you could comment a little about those. Also, will your firm Communicators Unlimited be offering prints of them?

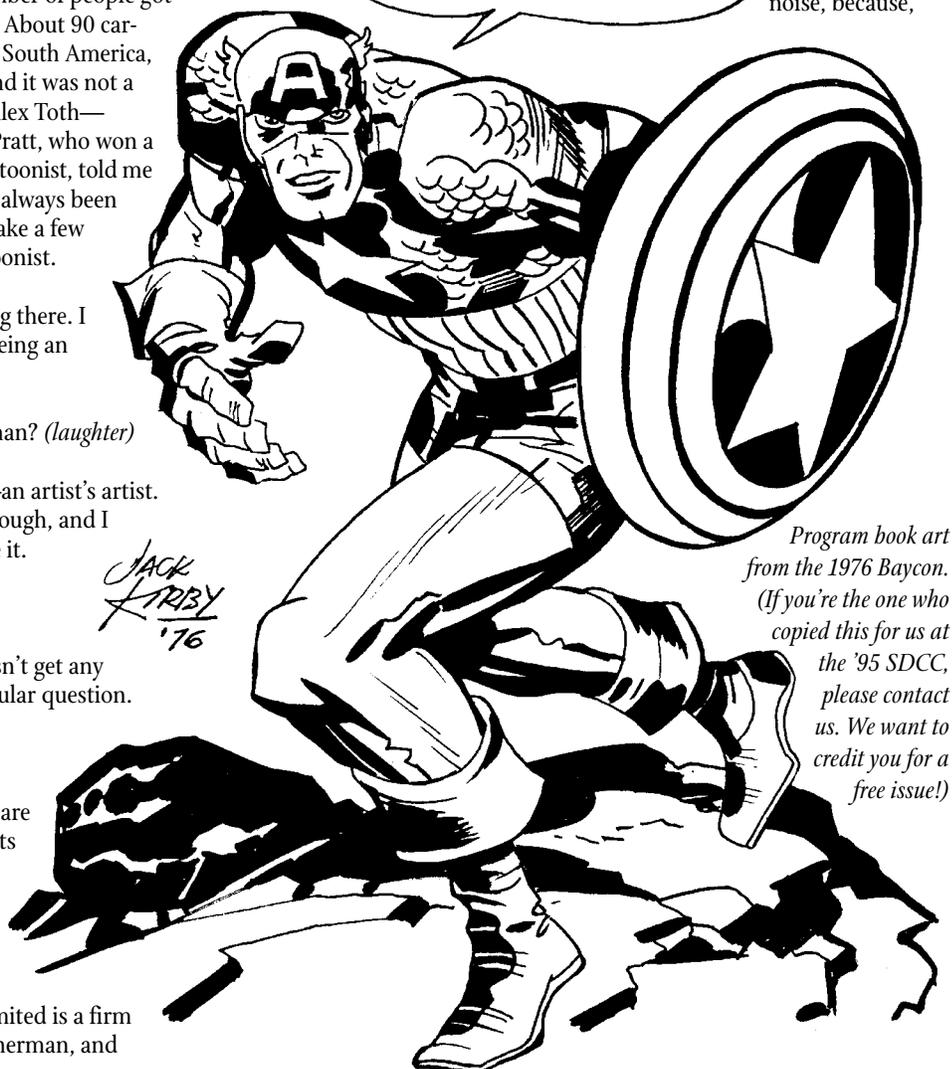
KIRBY: First let me say that Communicators Unlimited is a firm which was organized by my son Neal and Steve Sherman, and

what they're doing is using me as a product, just as you would use apples and oranges. You have to start somewhere, and I was just the nearest thing that was around. I've given them that, and I think they've been using it to the best advantage possible. Also, I think they're rendering a service to people interested in comics with the exhibit downstairs, by illustrating comics in the various stages of production. I think that kind of thing has never been done, and fans have had to scrounge for some kind of evidence on what the comic method is like. I feel that all the operations of doing a comic should be made available to people who want to know how it's done. And Communicators Unlimited is doing that in a limited way, *(laughter)* but at least they're doing it. I'm hoping a lot that they'll have a future. I think they will. Because they're young, they've got plenty of time, and they'll do it.

As for God... *(laughter)* gods are nothing to laugh at. *(laughter)* If we laugh at gods we laugh at dramatic versions of ourselves. Gods are not the objects we think they are. Sure, they're overpowering,

they're omnipresent, they overwhelm us and they make a lot of noise. Sure they make a lot of noise, because,

BEST WISHES FOR
A HAPPY TIME AT
THE BAYCON!!



Program book art from the 1976 Baycon. (If you're the one who copied this for us at the '95 SDCC, please contact us. We want to credit you for a free issue!)

individually, gods are us, they are our own feelings, the feelings that we never express. Sure, we'd like to have a lot of money, but we never do. We'd like to say a lot of things, but we never say them. And we want to live as an overpowering presence which we're never going to do, because we're just average people and we're going to live average lives. We're going to live as comfortably as we can, and that's rational—but inside us are those feelings and we have to express them and they come out as gods.

People make a mistake when they think people are taking a passive interest by worshipping these images, which are merely themselves. I think it must have been some Norseman with a rusty helmet and a muddy beard sitting on the bank of a river scratching himself... he looked like nothing, you know, and he knew it, but somehow he wanted to have a better image of himself, and he concocted Odin and Thor and Hercules and Samson and a lot of other figures that stood sky high. And in that reflection he saw himself, and by worshipping that reflection he himself became bigger, and his helmet became shinier and his beard became silkier, and he was able to throw around that thunder and lightning. And I feel it hasn't changed much, except that we're sophisticated enough to rationalize it better. We know what they are, at least I think so, and accept them for that. I use them in comics because they are impressive, they are powerful. You don't have to analyze them, but you can enjoy them by absorbing their exploits. They're really superb images. And actually those are the things that you'd like to be doing, making a noise bigger than yourself, being an image bigger than yourself. I think people might have seen that in the first Superman. We all live with these ideal images... sometimes bad images. And those are a reflection of ourselves, too. I feel that my character Orion is all of us; the good side and the bad side of us.

Actually we in ourselves are some kind of a grand opera, only in our everyday living only the writers and artists see it dramatically. We see it dramatically too, but only in our own eyes. So when we see it expressed in a magazine, we relate to it. We sense that it isn't just Orion and it isn't just Darkseid, Darkseid and Orion are real somewhere. So the gods, or anything else that we write about, are all reflections on ourselves; what we'd like to be, what we don't like to be, what we hate, what we love, and what we love and hate at the same time. So, sure the stories are sometimes contrived, sometimes uninspired, but they're stories; the characters and the cast are real, because whoever's in that story is a reflection of the guy who buys that comic book.

STERANKO: Jack, from the very beginning of your career you've been concerned—perhaps obsessed in some cases—with the gods-on-earth theme, going all the way back to your character Mercury. Do you know how that started?

KIRBY: It must be a hangup of some kind. (laughter) I'm prone to my own environment and express it in the terms of gods. Maybe I was oriented to some sort of mythology. I speak in terms of mythology. Another man will speak in terms of straight adventure, or in terms of romance. I'm communicating in my own way. And I try to make variations of it from time to time in order to be commercial. I have to make a living; I have a family. I'm oriented in that direction.

STERANKO: Jack, you created your own niche in the comics field, particularly with the kid gangs; the Young Allies, the Boy Commandos, the Newsboy Legion, the Boy Explorers. And the Challengers of course were a team; the X-Men; and the Forever People was a magnificent team of the '70s, the '80s and the future. Do you have any other plans for a group of heroes?



KIRBY: That's always a possibility. The group thing is familiar to me. That's not a hangup. That's environment. I was brought up in that environment. That was the easiest thing to come up with in comics for me, because it was something I knew. Some people called it a club; around my neighborhood they called it a gang—"a gang of kids." It had no evil connotation to us—just kids that hung around together. I knew their types—I tried to reflect their types. And when they began they got a good response, because there were other people involved in the same sort of thing. So, of course, if I'm going to do another book, I might very well do it, because it would come very natural to me.

STERANKO: Could you tell listeners about the evolution of your style as an artist? You started back in 1938 or '39. Like Alex, you were also an animator, at the Fleischer studios. That certainly must have had a great deal to do with your ability to envision action on a page, action like no other cartoonist has ever evolved. Could you tell us something about your concepts of action and movement on a comic book page?

KIRBY: Movement to me is everything. Analyzing it now as a mature person, to me motion is life. Something that doesn't move is dead, and I instinctively like to live. Everything I do moves—when it stops moving I don't touch it. Of course, in the early period I would never have analyzed it that way. I liked figures that moved, figures that fought and twisted, and there's nothing ugly there. Violence is just like a well-timed dance, a ballet. I'd put myself in these situations, and it would become like a problem—what would happen if I fought five guys, if I fought six guys, and I'd work out the whole problem, and I'd

JACK KIRBY INTERVIEW

(Originally presented in the 1975 Comic Art Convention program book)
Interviewed by Steve Sherman

Many tributes by intelligent critics have been written about Jack Kirby. The only thing missing from the analysis, and the celestial praise, and the biographical notes is the man's own words. And Jack Kirby is no slouch when it comes to words. He is articulate, idea-oriented, and pointed. We may see his work as so basic that it seems instinctive, but Jack has an observer's eye and an awareness of his effectiveness which make him a commentator worth listening to—as you will find in this interview, garnered from conversations Mark Evanier and I had with him when we were planning a companion volume to the King Kirby Portfolio.

Steve Sherman, 1975

QUESTION: What is it that would compel a man, such as yourself, to stay up all hours of the night, penciling comic books?

JACK KIRBY: Probably something in my psychic make-up! I decided to do comics because I liked comics. I developed a deep interest in them at a rather early age and ventured to answer an ad which publicized a cartoon correspondence course. I was probably twelve or thirteen at the time. What makes me stay up all night? Probably because I want to make a living!

Q: You're asked constantly where you get your ideas from. Any clues?

KIRBY: An idea can come from anywhere. The process of creation has no standards. You either think it out by yourself or talk it out with someone else or with a group... but eventually you come out with something. Ideas are everywhere. The guy in the shipping room might come up with something and what he has to say might be quite valid. The fellow in charge has to have an editorial sense. In other words, he must recognize the salability of an idea. And, while anybody may have an idea, it is the person with the editorial capability who will recognize its relevance to the particular situation at hand. *Black Magic* came about because we saw a trend emerging in comics back in the fifties; something begun by others but which we had to pick up on if we didn't want to get left behind. It wasn't a new idea to use all those ghosts and spooks, but it was a saleable idea at the time and we were fortunate to get involved in it early. We had to compete with E.C., so it was tough.

Q: At that time, you and Joe Simon were editing, writing and drawing for the Crestwood people. And you had quite a staff under you—some men who could rival or even surpass the crew at E.C.

KIRBY: E.C. was very basic in their approach to horror. By that I mean, they left nothing to the imagination; same with most of the other horror producers. That may have been part of their downfall. You can only throw that kind of thing at the public so long before they develop an immunity to it. I think we were a little more restrained with our stories, but that may be because we were putting out a lot of

romance comics and it mellowed us somewhat.

Q: The material you did for Crestwood was, more or less, superior to what you were producing, just before and after your employment there. Was this due mainly to your having editorial control?

KIRBY: Yes—in Crestwood, we had complete control of editorial policy, of writing, of artwork. We set our own standards and Joe and I just about had complete say over our material. We tried everything! We were getting into satirical strips for the first time. I tried to do a satirical super-hero with Jack Oleck's *Fighting American* in order to get something new and, hopefully, get some response from a declining readership. They did as well as any books of their time. It sounds like I might be finding excuses, but the field was in very bad straits at that time. Not only did publishers have internal pressures, but they also had external pressures. One day a guy might buy a new car, and the next day find the publisher cleaning out the offices. They were in a shaky frame of mind. Only the publishers with outside sources of revenue had any confidence at all.



The drawing that became the cover for the 1975 Comic Art Convention program book.

THE KIRBY TRIBUTE PANEL

Held on July 28, 1995 at the 1995 San Diego ComicCon
featuring Joe Sinnott, Mike Royer, Mark Evanier, Tony Isabella, and John Morrow
(transcribed by John Morrow)

EVANIER: Thank you all for being here. We're going to make this an annual event. We all know why we're here. We want to talk about Jack Kirby a little bit. We should take a moment at all these conventions to talk about Jack, because we all would not be here if not for Jack. We're going to rotate this every year, and try to get everybody who ever worked with Jack on these panels. The convention, by the way, is probably going to get Joe Simon out here, and we're all very excited about that. (applause)

Let me introduce you to the people up here. You're probably all getting a very fine magazine called *The Jack Kirby Collector*. On my far left is the gentleman who puts it together, Mr. John Morrow. (applause) On my immediate left is a friend of mine. I've known this gentleman for 28 years—that's enough. (laughter) He worked on one of the more recent Kirby projects, the Kirbyverse at Topps, and countless other things over the years. He's been influenced by Jack, who was a friend of his. This is Tony Isabella. (applause) On my right, we have two gentlemen who made it possible for you to enjoy Jack Kirby's work over the years. You all know their work very well. I'd like to introduce Mr. Joe Sinnott, (applause) and Mr. Mike Royer. (applause) I think we owe these gentlemen an enormous *thank-you* for bringing as much of Jack's work to us as they did over the years, and for going over those pages and putting every single thing in that was there, and then some. Those of you who had the pleasure to see Jack's pencil work know that there was something in there, with all due respect, that no inker could ever capture, but these two gentlemen, I think, got closer than was humanly possible over the years. When I think of all the great Kirby work that was lost to us by people who didn't know what to do with it or didn't do a conscientious job, I think we owe them a special debt of gratitude for a lifetime of very fine service. (applause)

Okay, there's someone in the room who is more important than any of them. I'd like you all to meet Roz Kirby. (thunderous applause, standing ovation)

I'm going to ask the first few questions, and you can all join in a little later. Joe, tell us about the first time anybody ever sent you a Jack Kirby page and said, "Here, ink this."

SINNOTT: Well actually, it was a western, Mark. Stan for some reason called me up and said, "Joe, I've got a western here. Jack doesn't have time to ink it, and I can't find anybody to do it." I had never inked anybody's work at that time except my own. This was twelve years after I'd started at Marvel. So I said, "Sure, send it up. I'll do it." It was one of Jack's average westerns, and he did a beautiful job on it, naturally. And I inked it, no big deal, and I mailed it back to Marvel. It was a five- or six-page story, and then about a week later, Stan called me up again, and he said, "I've got another Kirby here, it's a monster story. I'd like you to ink it, Jack doesn't want to ink it." I always felt,

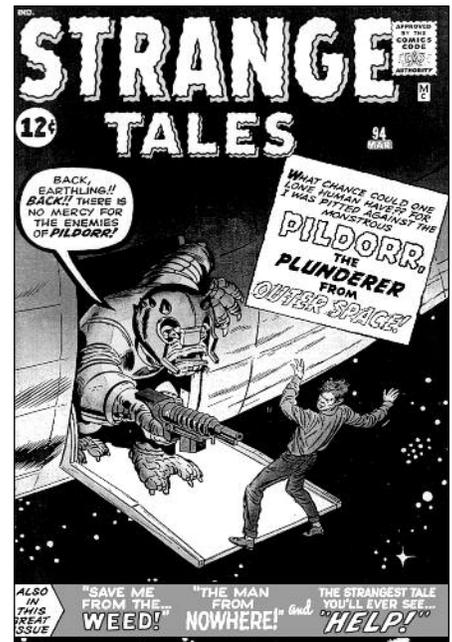
and I think Jack may have told me once, that he really didn't like inking his own stuff, because it was like doing it twice, he had to go over it again. So, the monster book came in, and I was overwhelmed by it. Jack did great monster stuff, but this was called

"Pildorr." I think he was a space pirate or something, and when I looked at it, I was amazed by the characters. To this day, I still think that Pildorr was the prototype for the Thing. Maybe Jack wasn't conscious of it at the time. But if you ever find that story and look at it, he looked like the original Thing, the lumpy Thing. He was a pirate, he had a patch over one eye, and these great cohorts of his were these monster-looking guys with teeth sticking out all over the place. It was just a great story. Down through the years, when Jack and I started getting some artwork back, I made a swap with Jack. I sent him some stuff that he wanted,

and I got the rest of the Pildorr story that I wanted. I have the complete story now, and it's something that I really would hate to part with. Y'know, you have favorites, and this is certainly one of my favorites. It's one of the first things I did with Jack, and I think it was one of the greatest things he ever did, even though it was one of the monster things that predated the superheroes.

EVANIER: You inked so many people over the years. Talk about what was different about inking Jack. Was there anything really different?

SINNOTT: First of all, when you got Jack's work, you got it all at once, you didn't have to wait for it in dribbles and drabs, which you did with a lot of artists. There were many reasons for it. Certainly Jack was a prodigious worker, and he was a fast worker. So when I got the stories, they always came all at once. I'd get 22 pages or whatever. Not only that, but there wasn't a single line drawn that wasn't there. You didn't have to correct anything. Everything was there, and you had no problems with anything. Everything was shaded in, he never left anything for the inker to think 'What should I do here? It's very vague.' Which has happened with a lot of pencilers, but certainly not with Jack. Everything was complete and every time I got a story, he was the one



"Pildorr" appeared in *Strange Tales* #94.



Shown here at the 1995 San Diego ComicCon are Roz Kirby (seated) and (l to r) Joe Sinnott, Mark Evanier, and Mike Royer.

artist I looked forward to getting his work, because you were always overwhelmed by what he had done. You can't say enough about him.

EVANIER: I know the answer to this, but between the time you started inking Jack, around '57 or '58, and the time you did all the Marvel stuff, how many meetings did you have with Jack during that period?

SINNOTT: I met Jack Kirby once in my life, can you imagine? It was at the 1976 *Marvel Convention* in New York City. I thought I was introduced by Marie Severin, but...

EVANIER: I thought I introduced you. *(laughter)*

SINNOTT: You did!

EVANIER: It doesn't matter!

SINNOTT: Yes it does, because now I can tell the story that Mark Evanier introduced me to Jack Kirby! But in any case, Jack and I hung around each other the whole convention, and I never had a greater time.

EVANIER: Remember the first thing you discussed? I remember this. Jack had gotten used to doing a thing with his pencils where he would take an area and fill it full of very close-together black lines. He didn't blacken the whole area in, there were white streaks between them. And Joe pointed to some pencil samples in a Kirby art display on the wall, and he said to Jack, "Do you want that in as line, or do you want it as a solid black area?" And Jack thought for a second, and he says,

"You can ink it as line... you can ink it as solid black area. Whatever you do is fine, Joe. You're tops!" *(laughter)*

SINNOTT: I was going to say something about Jack, but you threw me off balance. *(laughter)* We'll come back to it.

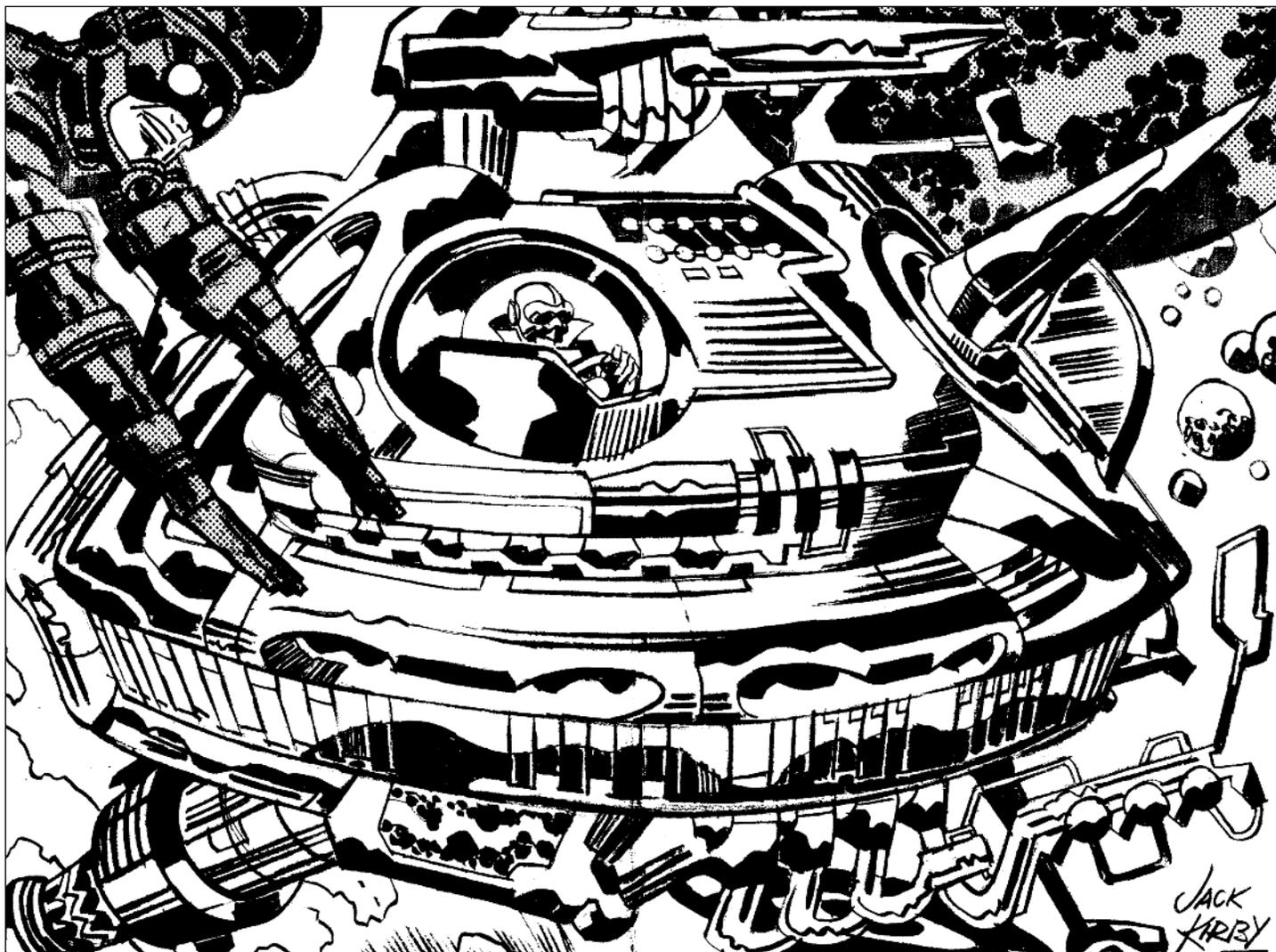
EVANIER: I'm sorry. Let's talk to Mike for a second.

ROYER: I want to say something about Joe. Joe had the same kind of passion for comic art that I think Jack had, and I like to think I have that passion. And I think that you were an influence on Jack, because he saw the beautiful job you were doing. When I started inking Jack, I would look at how you inked it, and I realized looking at this evolutionary period of your early inks and later inks, that he started penciling certain things the way that you inked them; things such as outer space, which is basically a configuration of black circles that come together in large masses and feather out. He started penciling that the way you inked it. I think it's interesting, this cross-influence.

SINNOTT: Something like that was bound to happen, even though it was unconscious on Jack's part.

EVANIER: Joe, wasn't there a period when you, either because Stan said something or you looked at the books, and said, "I think I better submerge a little less of Jack's stuff, and let a little more of his style through."

SINNOTT: Yeah, I told that story yesterday, Mark. *(laughter)*



Jack's cover drawing for the program book from the first San Diego convention in 1970 (it was originally called the San Diego Golden State Comic-Con).

EVANIER: Well, how many people want to hear it again? (applause)

SINNOTT: When I first started getting Jack's work, as great as Jack was, nobody is perfect, right? So I used to look at Jack's work and say, "Jack doesn't draw his ears the way Alex Raymond draws an ear. So I'm going to make Alex Raymond ears on Jack." That's how I made my ears, I patterned my ears after Alex Raymond. So I used to make Reed's ears like Alex Raymond's a little bit. And we all know Jack had the tendency of not putting his eyes on the same plane, which was very unique with Jack, he was probably the only artist who ever did it. But it made his work so unique. And I used to change that a little bit, I fixed the eyes. And I used to slim his girl's hips down. I always felt like Jack had the girls a little too 'hippy.' Then it got to the point where, a year or two later, I said, "Gee, I shouldn't do this, it's not Jack Kirby." So I started doing it just the way Jack had it down there, at least I tried to. And I think it certainly worked out much better that way. But I think that happens with anybody who worked with Jack. They may have said, "This'll look better if I do it this way, maybe Jack will like it this way." If you just inked every line that Jack had down, the way he had it, you couldn't have done any better. That was the bottom line. That was the way it should've been, just the way Jack put it down.

EVANIER: I remember one time you were inking one of the guys who was tracing Jack later. Of course that guy was working off the printed books. And I remember talking to you, and you said, "I'm inking drawings I inked before. This is like *déjà vu*. They're coming in penciled with my ears on them." (laughter) Speaking of inking Jack exactly the way he penciled, let's talk about Mike.

ROYER: The second book that I inked was a *Mister Miracle*, what was it, #5? And because at that time I was heavily influenced by Leonard Starr, I just had this bug that I was going to try to make Big Barda prettier. Of course, in doing so, it wasn't Jack's Barda anymore. And it's the only time that I remember Jack ever saying anything critical. He said, "Don't EVER change the faces!" So I never did after that. (laughter) And he was right! Because what I did wasn't Jack anymore.

SINNOTT: When I got *FF* #5 in the mail, I lived up in the Catskill Mountains. I never went to the city. Everything was done by mail. I never went down to the office, because it was like taking a whole day out of your schedule, and there was really no reason for it. So that's the reason I didn't see Jack all those years, and a lot of the other artists. When Stan sent me #5, it was the first *Fantastic Four* book I worked on, I didn't even know the *Fantastic Four* existed. I didn't see #1, 2, 3, or 4. I never bought a book off the newsstands. I would go in and buy my own book. This was in the days when Marvel was on a shoestring, so-to-speak, and they didn't send you the books like they do today. Unless you went down to the office and took one off the rack, you had to go out to the cigar store and buy your own book. So

when I got #5 in the mail, I couldn't believe what I was seeing. It overwhelmed me, especially the Thing. Of course, I had seen Reed in other forms, and even Johnny Storm, of course, and Doctor Doom. It was amazing to see these characters. And then I realized I had missed #1-4, and I ran out and tried to buy them. But after I did *Fantastic Four* #5, actually, people don't know this, but...

EVANIER: This man did about two panels of #6.

SINNOTT: I did! How did you know that?

EVANIER: I know this stuff! (laughter)



Mike Royer's inks for the unused cover to *Mister Miracle* #10, as shown on the cover of *The Buyer's Guide For Comic Fandom* #19 (August 15th, 1972).

SINNOTT: Stan sent me #6 right away, and I inked about two panels, and I got another assignment in from a company I was doing some biographical work for, and I just *had* to do that. So I sent the *FF* back to Stan and said, "Stan, I can't do it." I regretted it, but I just couldn't do it at the time. So in any case, there was a long stretch where I didn't do the *FF*, so when he sent me #44, I started working on it again. But it was a few right after that where Stan called me and said, "Joe, I really like what you're doing on Jack's work. Please continue doing what you're doing. If there's anything that has to be changed, go ahead and do it because we like the way you're doing it." But I don't think I changed much, maybe the slimming of the legs a little bit, but here again, I was wrong. I shouldn't have done it from the start. And maybe later on, on some of the later *Fantastic Fours*, I may have gotten a little too slick, which can happen. But then again, slickness was all part of the superhero genre, so that

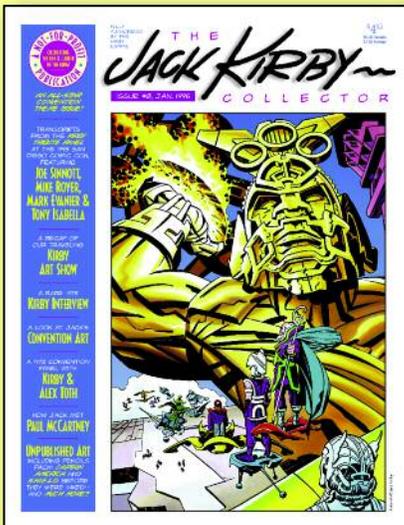
was never criticized. Stan liked my inking. He'd always give you a little pat on the back every now and then, which you don't often get. I couldn't have had a better association with Stan and Jack. So you can't imagine how bad I felt when Jack moved over to DC. At the time I felt nobody could replace him at Marvel—Marvel's going to go down the tubes. Of course, nobody's indispensable, even Babe Ruth wasn't. And certainly nobody ever replaced Jack in that respect. I missed him terribly.

EVANIER: Mike, tell us what you're doing now.

ROYER: I create product for the Disney stores. I'm a character artist, product designer, and I almost exclusively do Winnie-The-Pooh and Tigger and all the *Hundred Acre Woods* characters. Believe it or not, there isn't a day that I sit down at the board with a blank sheet of paper, that I don't think about Jack. Because what I learned from Jack is that a blank sheet of paper is a wonderful challenge, and it's a challenge that should be met, you should have fun, make it exciting. And believe it or not, you can have fun and make Winnie-The-Pooh exciting, and vital, and alive.



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