



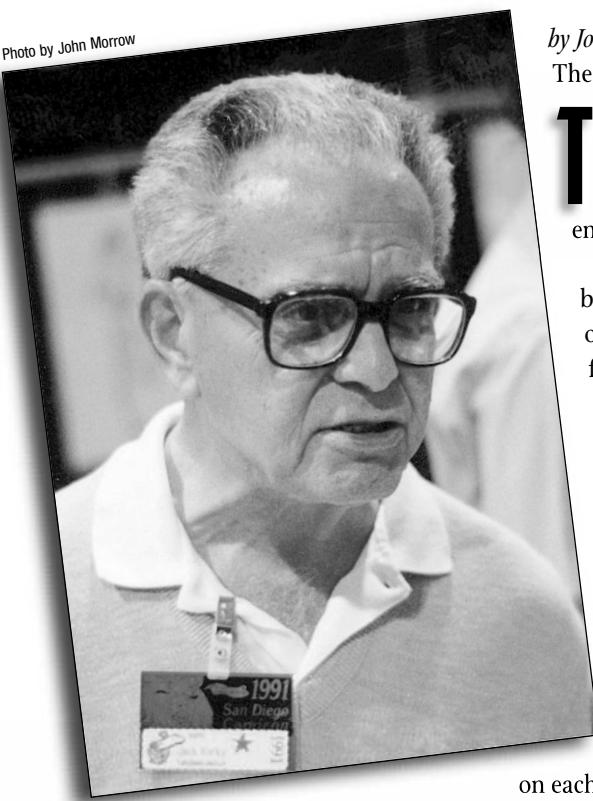
KRYPTONITE

Superman™ &
©2008 DC Comics.

Jack
Kirby '84
Darwyn '07

PREFACE (by editor John Morrow)	4
FOREWORD (by Mark Evanier)	5
INTRODUCTION (by Glen David Gold)	7
50 BEST KIRBY STORIES (by John Morrow and a variety of Kirby experts)	11
50 BEST KIRBY COVERS (assembled by Jerry Boyd, as chosen by a galaxy of superstars)	19
50 BEST EXAMPLES OF UNUSED KIRBY ART (by Shane Foley, Adam McGovern, and John Morrow)	35
50-PAGE KIRBY ART GALLERY (by Jack Kirby—who else?)	45
COLOR GALLERY	97
50 BEST KIRBY CHARACTER DESIGNS (by Sean Kleefeld)	105
50 PEOPLE INFLUENCED BY JACK KIRBY (by Adam McGovern)	115
AFTERWORD (by editor John Morrow)	165





by John Morrow, editor of
The Jack Kirby Collector magazine

The picture at left was taken by me, at my one and only meeting with Jack Kirby in 1991. We only spoke for a few minutes, but thankfully I had the wherewithal to snap a shot to preserve the moment. He was gracious and polite, just like I'd always heard he was to his fans, and at the moment I had no idea how that brief encounter would eventually change my life, and lead me to create this magazine about him.

Yes, you read correctly; contrary to appearances, what you hold in your hands is a *magazine*, not a book. It may look like a book, feel like a book, quack like a book... but at its core, it's a magazine—issue #50 of *The Jack Kirby Collector* magazine, to be exact. I've been producing *TJKC* since 1994, and after producing the first thirty issues at standard *Time* magazine-size, I felt like the biggest imagination in the history of comic books should have the biggest *magazine* in the history of comic books, so I bumped it up to an 80-page tabloid-size monster with card stock covers. Now, to celebrate reaching the half-hundred mark, I figured it was time to take it the next step, and do one as a *bona fide* tabloid-size *book*, and title it *Kirby Five-Oh!* (a name that hit me as the *Hawaii Five-O* theme song inexplicably ran through my head). Since Jack was in comics for 50 years, it just seemed right. But make no mistake; there were 49 issues before this book, and #51 will appear a few months after this one is published, with many more to come—including *Kirby One-Oh-Oh!* a couple of decades from now, if I live that long.

As I've watched the last fourteen years pass working on each new issue, I'd routinely make a game of sorts in thinking to myself, "What was Jack Kirby working on when he was my age?" Comparing his relative successes and failures at that age to my own, and thinking about what he still had ahead of him related to my own life, was sometimes a bit depressing in comparison—he, I seriously doubt anything I create will be breaking box office records some day—but it's a fun exercise nonetheless. I'm 45 years old as I write this, and my wondering what age 50 will be like was where much of the inspiration for this book came from.

See, when Jack was 50 years old (he was born in 1917, so that would've been 1967 by my count), he'd just completed arguably the most prolific (and successful) creative period of his career, ushering in the Marvel Universe with Stan Lee. He co-created a score of characters that are now household names thanks to Hollywood, from the Fantastic Four and Hulk, to the X-Men, Silver Surfer, and Iron Man (with more certain to come). But at the half-century mark, he was getting more and more disgruntled about his treatment and lack of recognition (and compensation) at Marvel, the company he helped save from the brink of closing in the late 1950s. It's reassuring to me that, though he pretty much bided his time in the latter 1960s (refusing to offer any more really lasting concepts to Marvel), he went on in the 1970s to produce my favorite Kirby work: the Fourth World, at DC Comics. Hey, there is hope after 50!

After five-oh issues of *TJKC*, I'm optimistic about what the future holds for both my magazine and me. And I figured, what better time to reflect on the past accomplishments in Kirby

fandom than this book, which is a love-fest of *TJKC* contributors? So I rounded up the mag's regular columnists and formed a panel of Kirby experts to pick the fifty best of everything Kirby, and then tracked down some contributors whose names will be familiar to readers who've been with us since those primeval days of 1994 when I used to hand-xerox this publication.

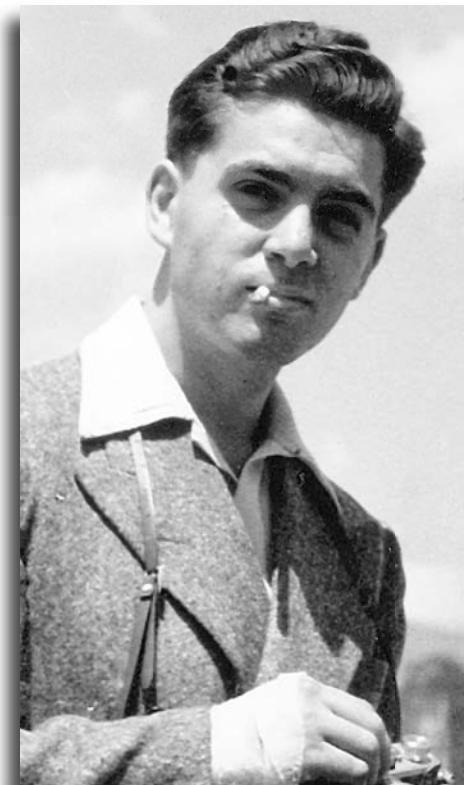
Why use an illo of Superman as the cover art of this book, you may be asking? After all, Jack didn't draw the character on many occasions, and when he did most prolifically (on *Superman's Pal, Jimmy Olsen* in the early 1970s), the management at DC Comics had other artists redraw the character's head to match the company's generic house style. But like Jack, Supes was there at the beginning of comic books (although Jack didn't get a chance to work on the character until much later in his career). And this drawing is one Jack did for his daughter Lisa Kirby, who had graciously loaned it to me for use in my magazine. I've been saving it for just the right opportunity, and this seemed perfect. Seeing how Darwyn Cooke, one of the current keepers of the Kirby stylistic flame, spiffed it up, I think you'll agree it was a great choice.

So, after fifty issues, what's left to learn about Jack? Hopefully a lot, but if nothing else, this book should serve as a refresher course for semi-jaded Kirby fans who've been with me since issue #1, and think they've seen it all. I know, in doing research for this volume, that I ran across a lot of art and anecdotes I'd long since forgotten about "King" Kirby, and it was a blast to re-experience them! Hopefully it will be for current *TJKC* readers too, and a real eye-opener for anyone out there who's just discovering this magazine, and the "King" of comics.

This book isn't here to tell you Jack Kirby's life story—a tale much too complex for any single book anyway (although the guy who wrote the Foreword on the next page is working on proving me wrong about that). It's more a retrospective of the 50-year career of a man I only met once for a few minutes, yet I feel like I know him well enough to be on a first-name basis. From my encounters with other Kirby fans, many feel the same way—even those who never actually met him. His work spoke to us, and continues to do so, in a way that transcends any personal encounter with the man himself.

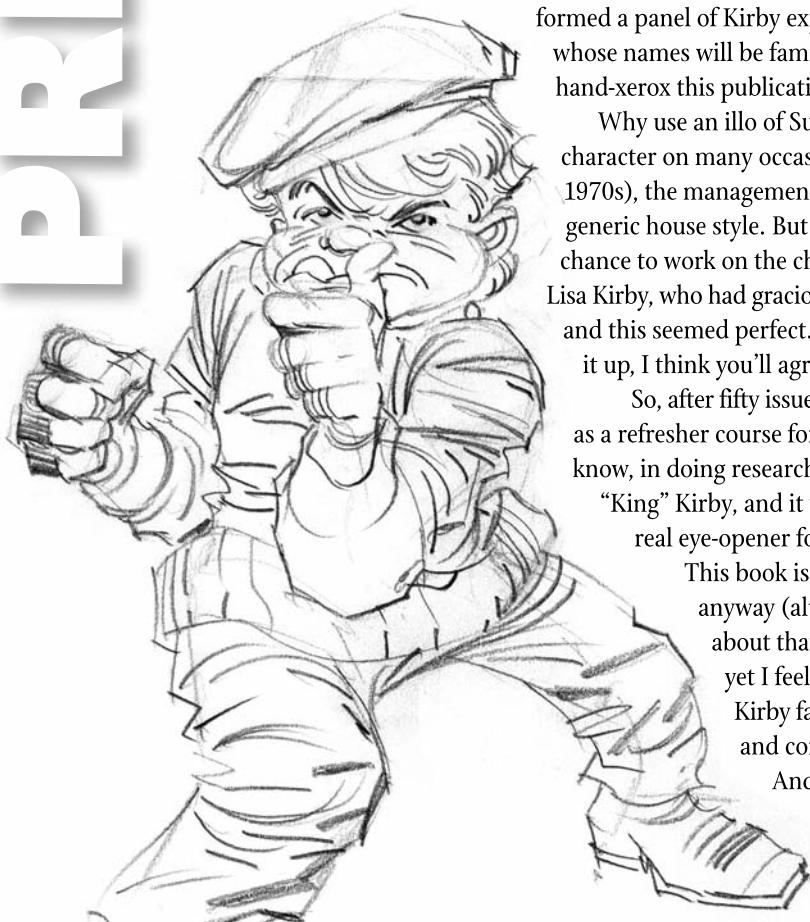
And as long as that work exists, the man's always with us.

This book (excuse me, *magazine*) is a celebration of that work, and I'm delighted to have the honor of putting on the party. So welcome, have a seat, and enjoy. Fifty years of Kirby magic is about to unfold! ★



Kirby at the 1939 World's Fair, age 22. Note the bandaged hand, probably from a street fight.

Photo courtesy & ©2008 Jack Kirby Estate.



A "Scrapper"-like sketch that accompanied a 1970s ad proclaiming Kirby's son Neal the "exclusive agent" for Jack's originals.

Scrapper TM & ©2008 DC Comics. Courtesy of David Folkman.

by Mark Evanier

As I've said many a time, the only bad thing about *The Jack Kirby Collector* is that Kirby didn't live to see it. And hey, I just thought of another one: Roz didn't live to see enough of it.

Other than that, it's wonderful. Every time another issue arrives, those of us who miss Jack get to spend a little more time with him. No, it's not as good as the real thing—or even the real Thing, which is kind of what Jack was at times—but it's a whole lot better than no Kirby at all.

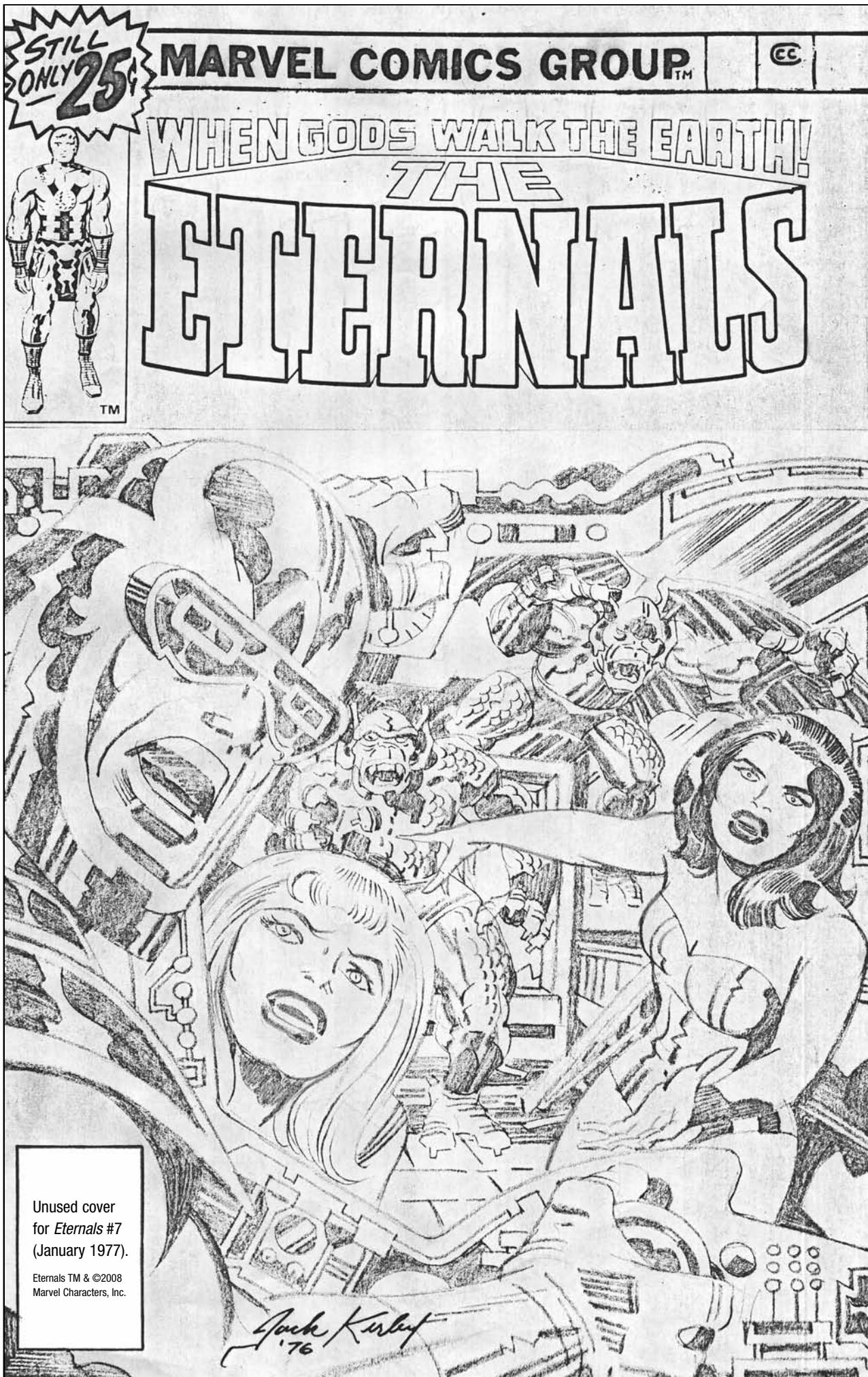
I am happy ("Happy?" Try "ecstatic.") to report that Jack Kirby has never been more popular, more recognized, more valued...

...or more reprinted. The way it's going, it won't be long before every major work of his, as well as a great many lesser ones, will be back in print. And not just in print, but usually in deluxe, well-printed "keeper" collections that we can all keep on our shelves and read any time we want a little dose of comics' most vibrant, imaginative talent.

This includes the Kirby output that at the time of its original publication was declared uncommercial or unsuccessful or just plain ungodly. It may have been outta sync with the marketplace when it came out—Jack was always a bit ahead of his era—but it has endured. New readers find it and old readers find it again.

I don't know how much credit, if any, I should give to John Morrow's wonderful publication for this endurance. I mean, the work is the work. People seek it out now for purchase because it speaks to them, energizes them, means the world to them. Understandably, it leads to questions about its creator. The day does not pass that I do not hear from people who want to know more about the amazing man who concocted all that amazing imagination. I'm so delighted with *The Jack Kirby Collector* that I usually forget about my own book and tell the inquirers to grab up every issue they can of the magazine.

The interest in Jack has been thrilling to me and also a little stunning. A few years ago, I was amazed at how often I was hearing people say, "I'm so sorry I never got to meet Jack." My first thought was, "How could you *not* meet Jack?" He was so available to his fans, so open and approachable. Go to any San Diego Comic-Con of his lifetime, save for the one he missed, and you could meet Jack. He'd stand around all day and make himself available to anyone who wanted to meet him... and I mean just that: He'd



stand. Oh, once in a while, Roz would make him sit down, but Jack was never on his butt for very long except when he was drawing, and he didn't draw at conventions. The folks who came up to meet him were almost always standing, so Jack was standing. Because to him, everyone was at least an equal, even total strangers. You were standing so he'd stand. Simple as that.

As the two of you stood there, you could ask him anything and get an answer. It might not be an answer you understood and occasionally, it would have very little to do with your question. But by God, it would be an answer. Someone once said of a famous politician, "If you ask him about New York, he'll have you in Bermuda by the time he stops answering." Jack would have you on some other planet

in some other galaxy—probably one he invented on the spot. And

unlike the politician, he wouldn't take you there because he was trying to sidestep a direct reply.

Jack's mind just wandered... here, there, everywhere. It was the same wonderful disconnect with reality that made his stories possible, so you just accepted it.

And then one day, you couldn't ask him anything. He was gone.

That was a wrenching day for some of us. Jack had seemed like, to borrow the name of a Kirby comic, an Eternal. He was a constant and enriching presence in our industry and some of our lives.

It was a few years after that—maybe seven or eight—that I began to hear the "Wish I'd met him" line and I realized how much time had passed. A whole new generation had discovered comics and Kirby (for most, those two discoveries go together) and they'd never had the chance to meet the man. He was gone before they got here.

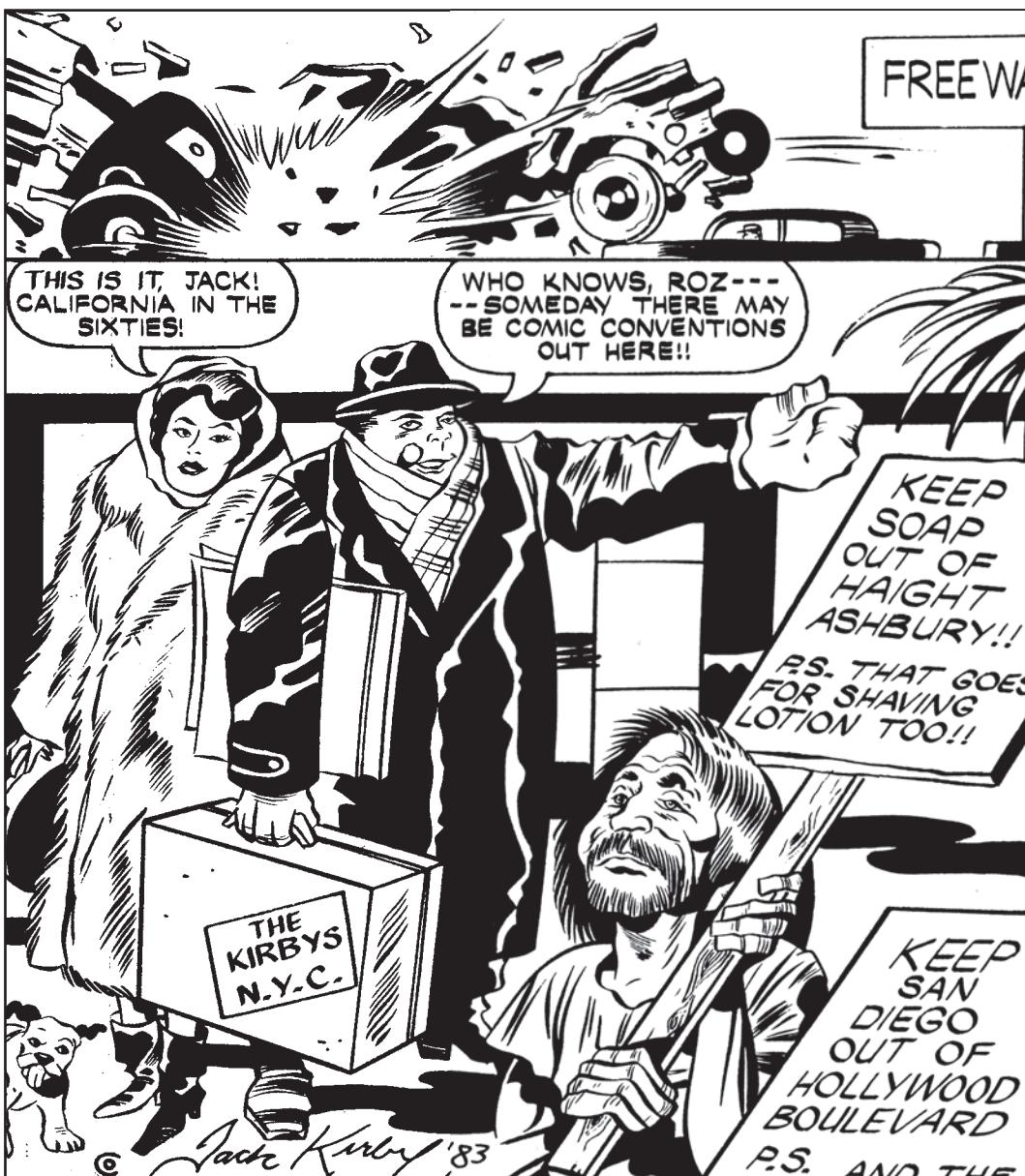
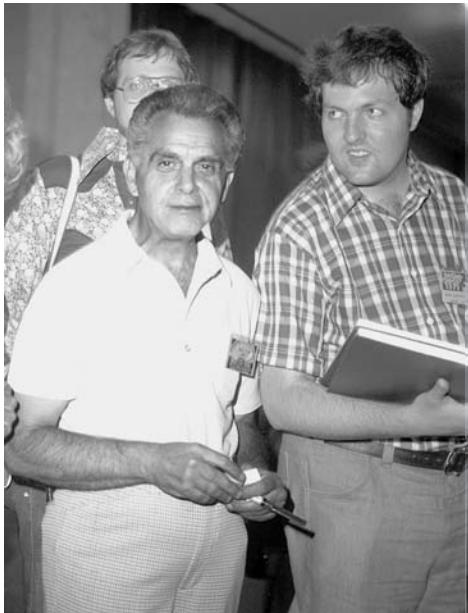
For them, for all of us, I'm so glad we have this magazine. You can get to meet Jack in some ways by reading his comics, but TwoMorrows gives us so many other vantage points.

(top) Jack stands as he signs autographs for fans at the 1979 San Diego Comic-Con, and (above) Mark Evanier whiskers him from his adoring public to have lunch. That's comics writer Marv Wolfman peering from behind Kirby.

Photos courtesy Shel Dorf.

(right) A self-portrait of Jack and wife Roz, whimsically recounting the couple's arrival to Southern California in 1969. This was done for the 1983 San Diego Comic-Con program book.

Artwork ©2008 Jack Kirby Estate.



Fifty issues may seem like a big deal and in some ways, it is. Fifty issues? My God, how many publications of any kind last fifty issues? Especially ones with me in them?

And yet... no offense, John...

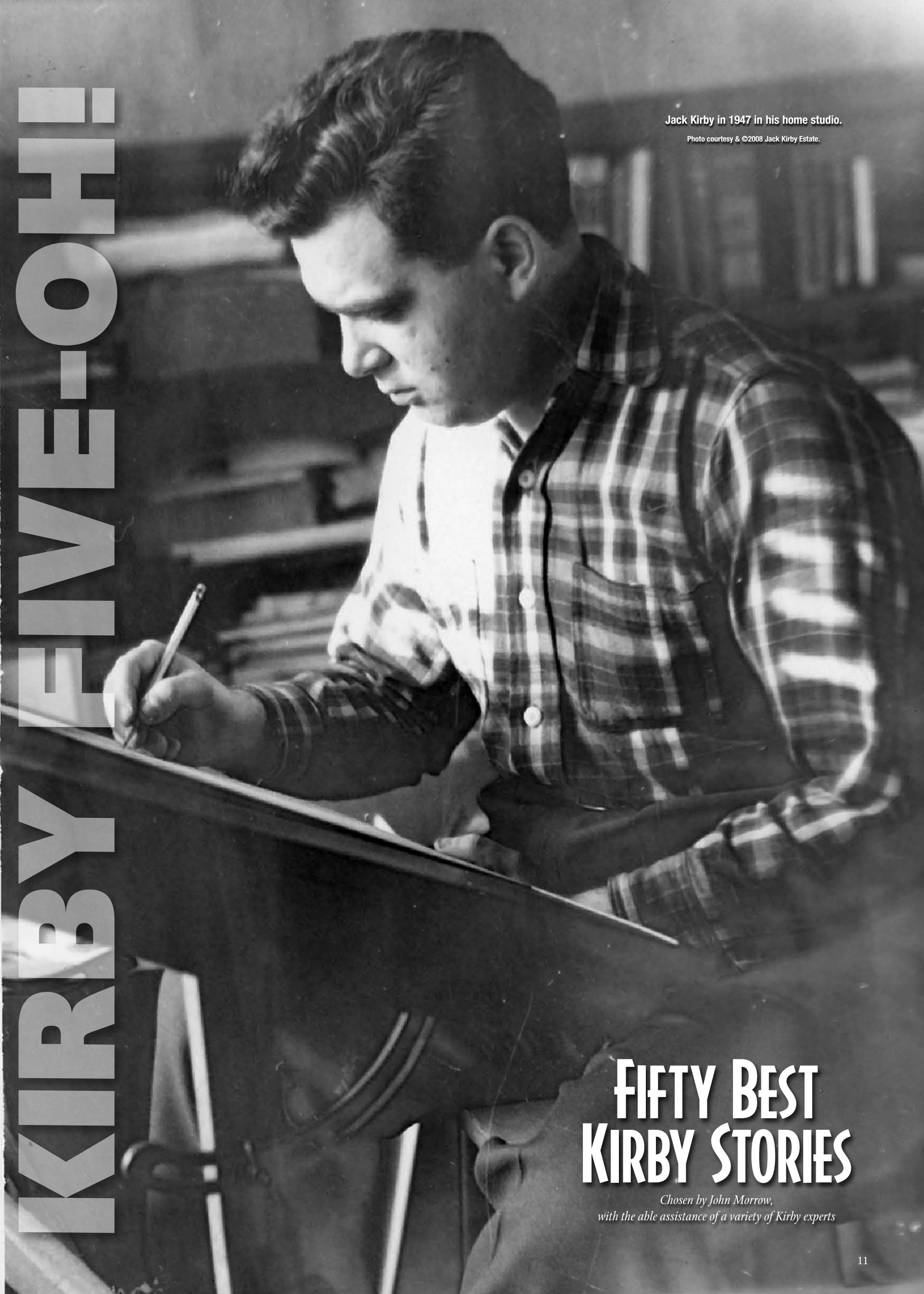
Fifty issues about Kirby?

Piece o' cake. There's just so much to say about the man, so much to write about the work.

And so much that remains to be said. Which is why I hope there'll be another fifty and another fifty and another fifty...

Jack Kirby: The gift that keeps on giving. ★

*(Mark Evanier met Jack Kirby in 1969, worked as his assistant, and later became his official biographer, resulting in his just-released full-color hardcover book *Kirby: King Of Comics*, published by Harry N. Abrams, Inc. He has written more than 500 comics for Gold Key, DC Comics, and Marvel Comics, several hundred hours of television (including Garfield) and is the author of several books including Mad Art (2002). He has three Emmy Award nominations, and received the Lifetime Achievement Award for animation from the Writers Guild of America.)*



Jack Kirby in 1947 in his home studio.

Photo courtesy & ©2008 Jack Kirby Estate.

KIRBY

FIFTY BEST KIRBY STORIES

*Chosen by John Morrow,
with the able assistance of a variety of Kirby experts*

On the surface it seems a simple question: "What's the best Kirby story of all time?" But when I posed that query to an esteemed panel of Kirby aficionados (and asked them to include a description of why), the most telling response I got was from Glen Gold, who said, "There's no answer to that question. And I bet that just about everyone who has an answer will look at the other answers when they're printed, and say, 'Oh yeah, I should have picked that one.' Might I suggest this is why *TJKC* has run 50 issues so far?" Indeed, almost every response began with some variation of, "That's like asking me which of my children is my favorite," but most everyone gave it a shot anyway.

Armed with their responses, I set out to compile a list of the best Kirby story from each year of his half-century career in comics. Needless to say, a lot of respondents' favorite stories were

from the same year (1966 and 1972 were especially popular), so I had to make the final call on what was that year's best story. I also factored in responses from our readers' poll done in *The Jack Kirby Collector* #13 (way back in 1996), and made my own choices for years that weren't represented by our guest judges, with plenty of help from Shane Foley and Adam McGovern—so if you don't agree with a given year's winner, don't just blame me!

The criteria for judging was simple: I'd allow story arcs as well as individual stories, and I included multi-year arcs in the year the first issue was dated. Also, I gave extra weight to first appearances and historically pivotal issues, but in some cases, a less key issue still won out.

On the next page is the final tally, narrowing it down to one story per year. But what, you ask, is considered *the* #1 best story of Kirby's 50-year career?

That, dear reader, is for you to decide, and considering the wide variety of choices listed, your #1 might very likely not even be on this list.

Still, what's compiled here is a great starting point for anyone who wants to know more about the best work of Jack Kirby. You can't go wrong with any story represented here, and since there were so many gems in Kirby's career, I've also included some of the commentaries about the winners and runners-up for years where it was a close decision.

Our panel includes:

SHANE FOLEY
regular contributor to
The Jack Kirby Collector

BARRY FORSHAW
columnist for *The Jack Kirby Collector*

MIKE GARTLAND
author of *TJKC's "A Failure To Communicate" series*

TOM ZIUKO
top pro colorist

DAVID SCHWARTZ
Kirby family friend

ADAM McGOVERN
columnist for *The Jack Kirby Collector*

RICHARD KOLKMAN
caretaker of *The Jack Kirby Checklist*

RAY WYMAN
author of *The Art of Jack Kirby*

CHRIS FAMA
comic art restoration expert

CHRISSIE HARPER
editor of *Jack Kirby Quarterly*

You can see examples of Jack's art from these stories in the gallery on page 45. But now, on to their erudite comments:



YEAR	COMIC	TITLE
1938	<i>Jumbo Comics</i> #1	"Diary of Dr. Hayward" and "Wilton of the West" newspaper reprints, first comic book work
1939	<i>Famous Funnies</i> #62	"Lightnin' and the Lone Rider" newspaper strip reprints
1940	<i>Blue Bolt</i> #2	"Blue Bolt", first Simon & Kirby story
1941	<i>Captain America Comics</i> #1	"Case #1: Meet Captain America"
1942	<i>Star Spangled Comics</i> #7	"Newsboy Legion", first mainstream Kid Gang
1943	<i>Star Spangled Comics</i> #19	"The Führer of Suicide Slum"
1944	<i>Detective Comics</i> #83	"Triumph of Cholly The Chimp"
1945	<i>Adventure Comics</i> #100	"Sweets For Swag", first post-WWII work, only actual story published in 1945
1946	<i>Boy Explorers</i> #1	"Talent for Trouble"
1947	<i>Young Romance</i> #1	"I Was A Pick-Up", first romance comic
1948	<i>Justice Traps The Guilty</i> #4	"Queen of the Speed-Ball Mob"
1949	<i>Young Love</i> #1	"Woman-hater"
1950	<i>Young Romance</i> Volume 4, #6	"Different"
1951	<i>Boys' Ranch</i> #3	"Mother Delilah"
1952	<i>Strange World Of Your Dreams</i> #1	"I Talked With My Dead Wife"
1953	<i>Captain 3-D</i> #1	"The Man From The World Of D"
1954	<i>Foxhole</i> #2	"Booby Trap"
1955	<i>Fighting American</i> #6	"Super Khakalovitch"
1956	<i>Astonishing</i> #56	"Afraid To Dream", first Silver Age Marvel work
1957	<i>Showcase</i> #11	"The Day the Earth Blew Up"
1958	<i>Challengers of the Unknown</i> #4	"The Wizard of Time"
1959	<i>Adventure Comics</i> #256	"The Green Arrow's First Case"
1960	<i>Tales of Suspense</i> #11	"I Created Sporr, The Thing That Could Not Die"
1961	<i>Fantastic Four</i> #1	"The Fantastic Four"
1962	<i>Fantastic Four</i> #6	"Captives Of The Deadly Duo"
1963	<i>Fantastic Four Annual</i> #1	"Sub-Mariner Vs. The Human Race"
1964	<i>Sgt. Fury</i> #13	"Captain America And Bucky"
1965	<i>Fantastic Four</i> #39-40	"A Blind Man Shall Lead Them", "Battle Of The Baxter Building"
1966	<i>Fantastic Four</i> #48-50	The Galactus Trilogy
1967	<i>Fantastic Four</i> #62	"And One Shall Save Him"
1968	<i>Fantastic Four Special</i> #6	"Let There Be Life"
1969	<i>Fantastic Four</i> #84-87	The Latveria Saga
1970	<i>Fantastic Four</i> #94	"The Return Of The Frightful Four"
1971	<i>New Gods</i> #6	"The Glory Boat"
1972	<i>Mister Miracle</i> #9	"Himon"
1973	<i>Kamandi</i> #11-14	The Sacker Saga
1974	<i>OMAC</i> #1	"Brother Eye And Buddy Blank"
1975	<i>Our Fighting Forces</i> #159	"Mile-A-Minute Jones"
1976	<i>Captain America</i> #193-200	The Madbomb Saga
1977	<i>Eternals</i> #8-10	The Karkas/Reject saga
1978	<i>Silver Surfer</i> Graphic Novel	"The Silver Surfer"
1979	<i>Satan's Six</i> #1	"Satan's Six" (not published until 1993)
1980	<i>Thundarr The Barbarian</i> newspaper strip	"Thundarr The Barbarian"
1981	<i>Captain Victory</i> #1-2	"Captain Victory", "Death Hive, USA"
1982	<i>Destroyer Duck</i> #1	"It's Got The Whole World In Its Hand"
1983	<i>Argosy</i> Volume 3, #2	"Street Code" (not published until 1990)
1984	<i>Super Powers</i> #5	"Spaceship Earth: We're All On It"
1985	<i>Hunger Dogs</i> Graphic Novel	"On The Road To Armageddon"
1986	<i>Super Powers</i> II #6	"Darkseid Of The Moon"
1987-on	<i>Fantastic Four: The Lost Adventure</i>	"The Menace Of The Mega-Men" (unused <i>Fantastic Four</i> #102 story, finally published in 2008)



(above) Private First Class Jack Kirby in Brighton Beach, NY in 1945, following his return from World War II service.

Photo courtesy & ©2008 Jack Kirby Estate.

1944

Kirby came back from World War II fairly tight-lipped about his experiences "over there", as did many other G.I.s who experienced the atrocities of battle. But later in life, he did open up, and managed to tell some fascinating war stories—not the ones on a comics page, but one-on-one with friends and family. I think these are more riveting than anything he ever drew, so Jack's own war stories get my vote. —John Morrow

1950

Unlike other romances that I've seen, the Simon & Kirby romances are gritty and hard hitting. "Gang Sweetheart" from *Young Romance Volume 3*, #11 is an amazing glimpse into the desperate efforts of a young lady to keep her boyfriend from 'the wrong side of the tracks' from descending like so many others into a life of crime. There is hope at the end, but no promise of an easy life together. —Shane Foley

1957

Showcase #11—the 3rd Challengers of the Unknown story: "The Day the Earth Blew Up." All the creative elements of his '50s work that would flower into what we see in Marvel were here in a story that would later take three or four issues to tell. Wild imagination spectacularly realized. Kirby was changing. —Shane Foley

1958

Original American comics were a rarity in the North of England when I first saw *Challengers of the Unknown* #4 ("The Wizard of Time") in all its full-colored splendor. The Challs' best-ever story leaps across the centuries from ancient Egypt (where the Challs are co-opted into a little hard labor on the Pyramids) to a wonderfully realized far future. Three of the strongest splash panels in the King's career, a riot of imaginative art, and (the icing on the cake) Wally Wood's impeccable inks bringing out the very best in Kirby's pencils. The very finest single Kirby story! —Barry Forshaw

1964

Fantastic Four Annual #2, "The Final Victory of Dr. Doom." Here, the FF and Dr. Doom all come of age and get to be as good as we all thought. Doom's status as a master villain was finally achieved, no longer running round like any old bad guy; now he truly sat behind the scenes scheming and effortlessly manipulating events around him. He'd come closer to being a true 'master villain' in *FF* #23 with his scheming, mastery of robotics and use of the 'solar wave' (what a terrifying concept that was), but here, he was brilliant. As well as focusing on his scientific wizardry, his status as a king was revealed in his origin. His past/future was shown to be shrouded in mystery and linked somehow to Rama-Tut (in an exchange that actually made no sense at all, but sounded creepily credible to this young reader). And his despair over his imperfect (scarred? grotesque?) face rose to new levels, with his admission to himself that even defeating the FF would not relieve his heartache. Indeed, his inability to accept his defect became the turning point in the story, and the outcome, contrived by Reed Richards, was truly satisfying. —Shane Foley

1965

Let's see: *FF* #48-51, #57-60, *Thor* #154-157, *X-Men* #11-16, *Cap (Tales of Suspense)* #72-74, #79-81, #92-94, *New Gods* #7, #11, *Forever People* #5-8, etc... There's too many, John—yer killin' me! But if you insist: *Journey into Mystery* #118-119. I'd have to say, page for page, a perfect blend of Kirby action, drama and suspense, with all of the main characters involved in their own crisis. One of those stories where Lee's scripting of a Kirby story definitely helps the drama; and for those who want to believe that this story came out of Lee's "fertile" imagination, well then... congratulate yourself; your imagination is just as fertile. 'Nuff Said, true deceiver! —Mike Gartland

1966

Fantastic Four #51 is my favorite Kirby story as well—because it touches on the timeless human themes of loss, greed, envy, sacrifice, honor, and ultimately redemption—and in doing so becomes the perfect synthesis of Stan and Jack at the peak of their powers. If you've read the story, you know what I'm talking about—if you haven't, I won't spoil it by going into the details. Find it. Read it. Long Live The King. —Tom Ziuko

My favorite Kirby story is "This Man, This Monster" from *Fantastic Four* #51. The humanity in that story had incredible depth to it. All of the elements to that story showed a deep emotional connection between the characters that I'd never seen before in comics, and have rarely seen since. —David Schwartz

Fantastic Four #57. Heavyweight guest stars by the ton (not walking in for bit parts, but with real lives and character); the day to day lives of the FF; the jail break by the Wizard and Sandman; Sandman's subsequent breaking into the Baxter Building to steal equipment, but his leaving the most valuable stuff behind because he didn't recognize it; and the magnificence and naivety of the Silver Surfer who became putty in the hands of the master manipulator Dr. Doom. By the issue's end, a truly terrifying scenario was set up. Kirby's art and inventiveness (together with Lee's scripting and Sinnott's inking) was never better. To me, this was the strongest of the story's four chapters and easily one of the strongest issues they ever did. Maybe the best? —Shane Foley

Thor #131-133: Amazing visuals and creativity by Kirby produced my favorite Thor story, with the character of the Recorder a typical Marvel/Kirby strong point of the time. Only the weak 'let's hurry up and go home' quick ending marred these beautiful issues. (A common problem, even for the great King, was the 'quick fix' finish, the worst being, in my book, *FF Annual* #3.) —Shane Foley

Journey Into Mystery #125: Who but Kirby would take a plot that's been developed for months and resolve it in a couple of panels, so that he could get on with one he found more interesting? Such was the fate of the Demon! At this stage in Marvel's life, it all worked wonderfully. —Shane Foley

FIFTY BEST KIRBY COVERS

*Intro written by and commentaries compiled
by Jerry Boyd (with assistance from John Morrow, Paul Sager,
John Fleskes, Mike Burkey, and Lee Hester)
Simon & Kirby cover images provided by Harry Mendryk*

Jack Kirby reviews cover proofs in June 1949.

Photo courtesy & ©2008 Jack Kirby Estate.

You dash up the stairs to your best friend's room and he proudly holds up a copy of *Fantastic Four Annual #3*—with a cover that shows an army of Jack and Stan's characters in mind-boggling battle. You tentatively finger through a convention box of old books to discover a time-worn edition of *Adventure Comics #78* depicting Manhunter, Sandman, and Sandy firing anti-aircraft guns aboard a carrier to meet an Axis air assault. You gingerly raise a copy of *Daredevil #43* from the spinner rack sheath, and are pleasantly surprised to see a Kirby rendition of DD and Cap facing you. The King's beautifully executed battle scenario of *First Issue Special #1* compels you to trace Atlas the Great over and over again because it's one of your favorite covers.

TOP VOTE GETTER:



Fantastic Four #12 (1963) chosen by Michael T. Gilbert, Mike Gartland, Chrissie Harper, and Steve Sherman

CHRISSIE HARPER
editor of *Jack Kirby Quarterly*

They say never judge a book by its cover. Well, this is a great book, but what the cover depicts, inside, is a tiny panel that precedes a 'battle royale' lasting about five seconds. All told in very nicely drawn panels, granted, but the word anti-climax springs to mind. However, the cover itself rocks in the biggest possible way. The composition is genius and what it gives us isn't a slug-fest or an explosion, but suspense and anticipation.

Noticing the compelling quality of a Kirby-designed cover that draws your immediate interest and makes you want to see more, not only shows favoritism but marks special moments on the timeline of your life.

In *Jack Kirby Collector #39*, eighteen fans and/or collaborators searched their memory banks and produced their ideas on the topmost covers by the King. Here are more opinions by TwoMorrows' regulars and comicdom's top talents, and the fifty top vote getters in our survey.

More terrific covers than we could possibly mention have also been done by many of the participants who contributed to this chapter, but we'd like to thank them all for sharing the memorable and sometimes magical moments in the timeline of their lives when they came across their favorite Jack Kirby covers.

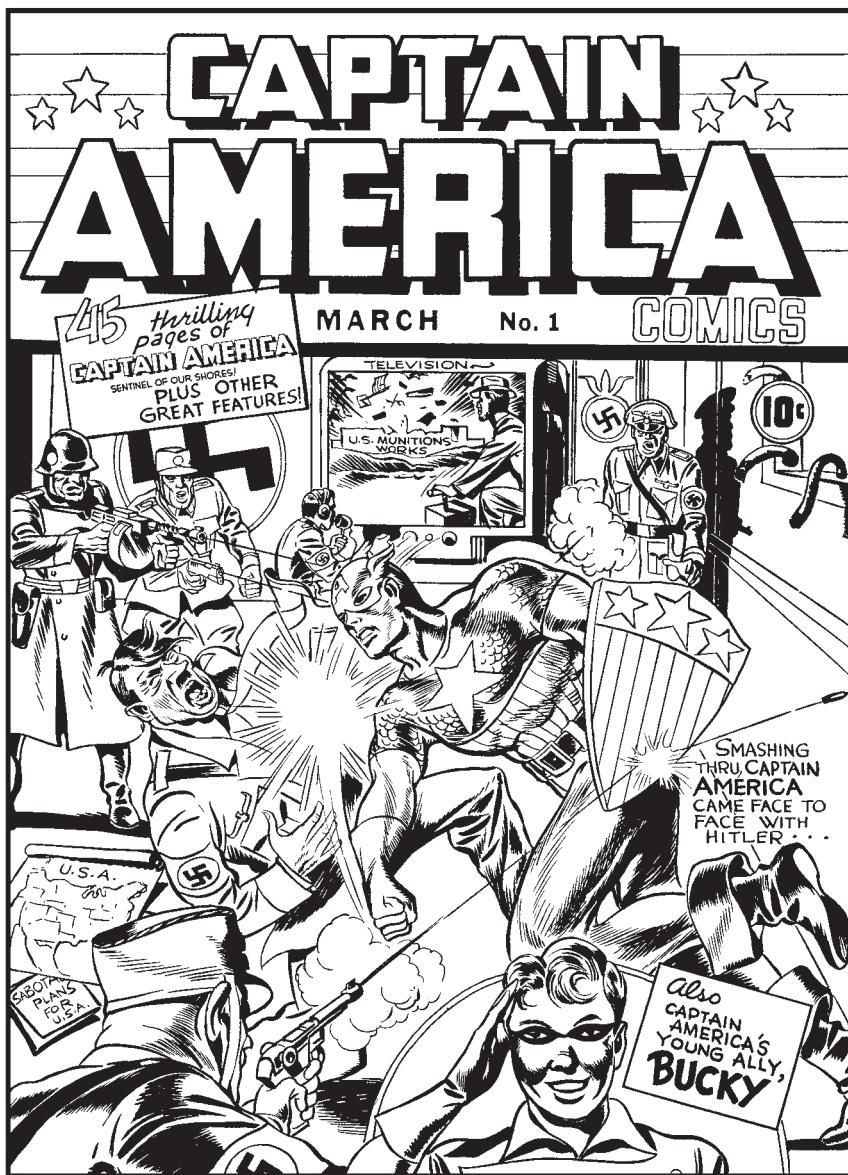
MICHAEL T. GILBERT
artist/comics historian/TwoMorrows contributor

I finally decided on the cover to *Fantastic Four* #12, featuring the first battle between the Thing and the Hulk. Part of it is the fact that I was 12 when I discovered it (my golden age!). This and issue #11 were the first *Fantastic Four* comics I bought, and they hit me like a brick. Beyond that though, the cover is beautifully constructed. The action hasn't happened yet, but in seconds... it will!

The spooky, grey-toned colors only add to the feeling of menace. As a long-time fan of Kirby's monster comics, I loved the fact that these two heroes were both monsters themselves. It was like having the best of both worlds. And 40 years later, my opinion hasn't changed!

MIKE GARTLAND
TJKC contributor

Fantastic Four #12 appealed to me not just out of nostalgia, but because it's an action cover without action. It's a suspenseful cover, highlighting that fraction of a second before all hell breaks loose, not to mention the two main antagonists that fans wanted to see meet are front and center in all their Kirby grotesqueness. Sure, there are tons of Kirby covers and we all have a list, but you asked for my fave and that's it.



Captain America Comics #1 (1941) chosen by Carmine Infantino



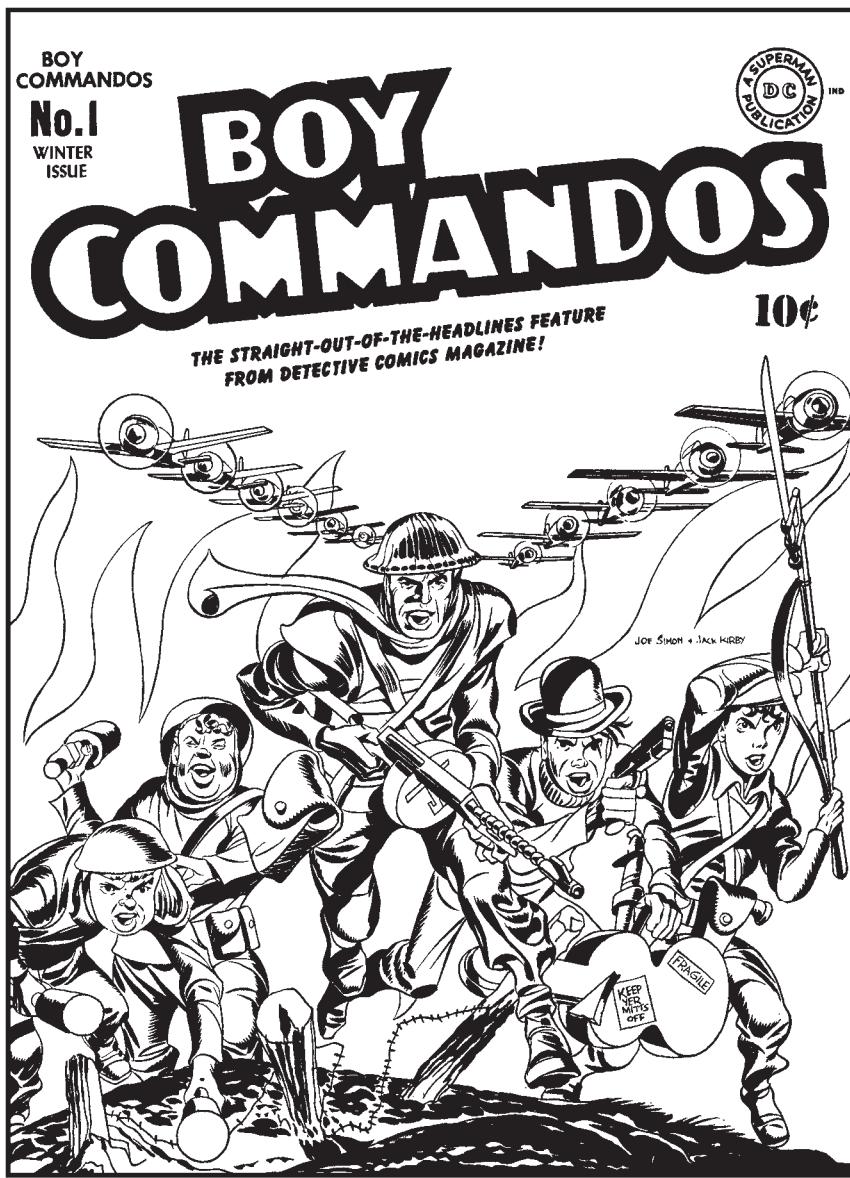
Captain America Comics #7 (1941) chosen by Bud Plant and Al Feldstein



Adventure Comics #76 (1942) chosen by R.J. Vitone



Adventure Comics #79 (1942) chosen by Roy Thomas



Boy Commandos #1 (1942) chosen by Gene Colan



Star Spangled Comics #13 (1942) chosen by Roy Thomas

CARMINE INFANTINO • exemplary artist/art director/editor

The original—*Captain America* #1. It made you buy it and that's the whole idea, right? The cover helps you sell magazines. And that one sold, what—a half a million copies? Jack's got a quality all his own. He sucked you in—his artwork's got that special quality to it that made you want to read his stories. He was a genius.

BUD PLANT • comics and art historian/retailer

Faced with decades of superlative work, I finally came up with a criteria to help me decide—something to epitomize everything that means Jack Kirby to me. That cover is *Captain America Comics* #7. Why? Cap is Jack's first great creation and certainly one of his finest, still popular after more than 60 years. Cap epitomized American patriotism during WWII and captured every young reader's imagination. For action, it's got it all—Cap swinging boldly into action in a classic Kirby pose. This bold, exuberant cover is pure Kirby and like nothing ever done in comics before. It's got Bucky, and sidekicks were a part of Jack's creations. It's got a beautiful, helpless girl to be rescued. There they are, all the elements and yet so early in Jack's career. Manhunter, Stuntman, Fighting American, Challengers, Incredible Hulk, the FF, Mister Miracle... Jack's artwork for each hero and group continues a unique and special style that traces right back to his first, very earliest comics work!

R.J. VITONE • TwoMorrows contributor

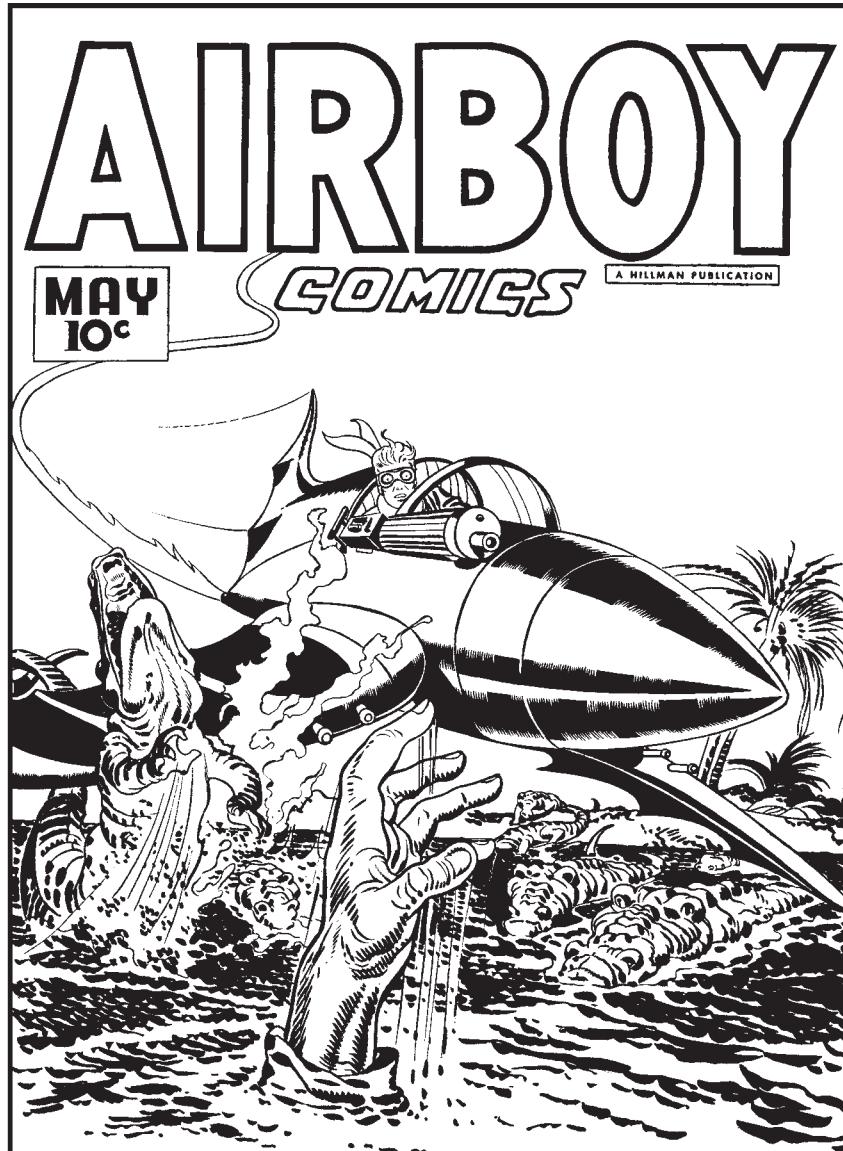
Adventure Comics #76, my personal favorite Kirby Golden Age cover, full not only of nice S&K art, but lots of subtle touches... Sandman and Sandy creep up on a band of bank robbers... but look at that gang! A vulture holding a tommy-gun, a man-ape, and an old guy casting a very devilish shadow. Add the projected "Sandman" motto on the wall, and this is just great! (By the way, why does Sandy carry that "motto-projector" around?)

GENE COLAN • creator/penciler without peer

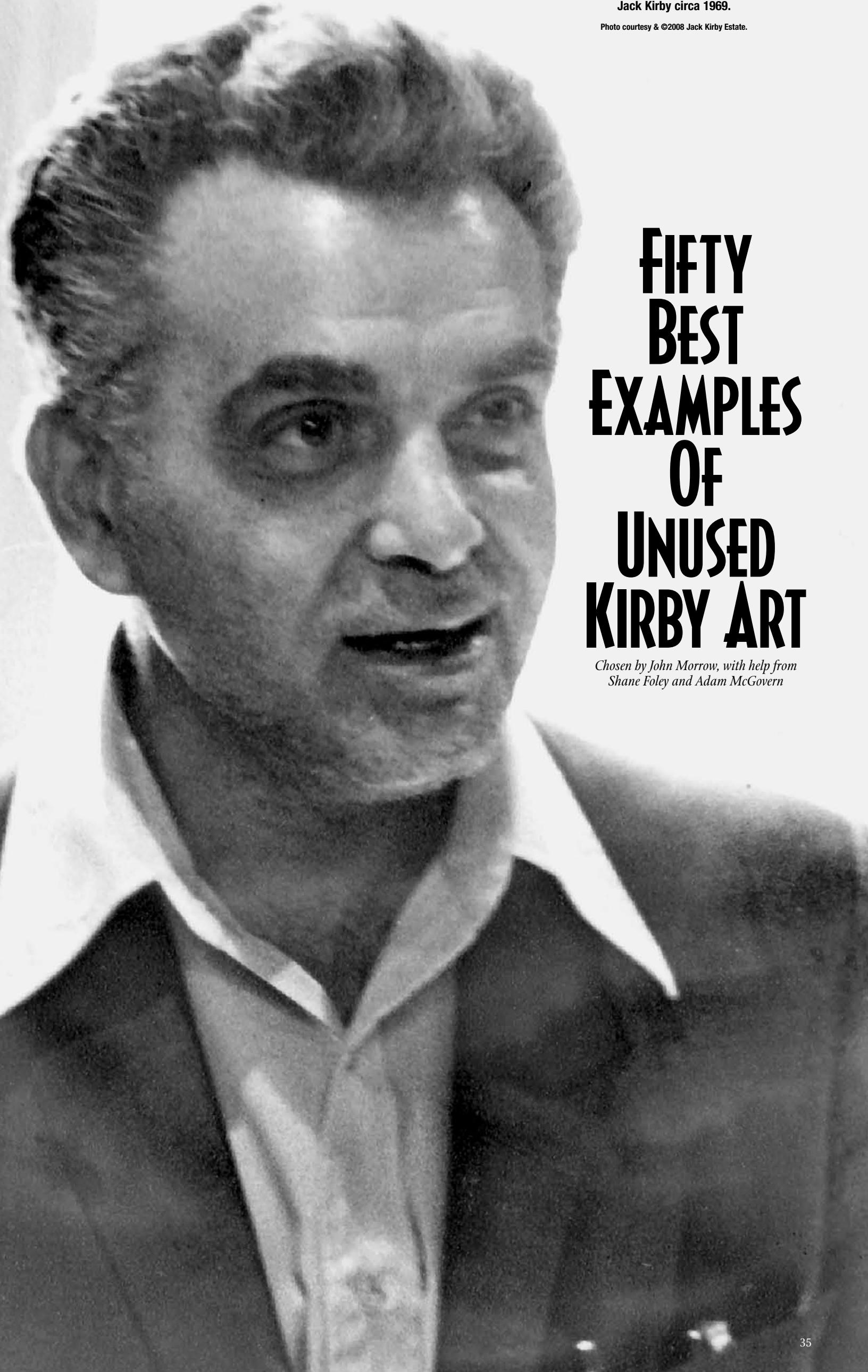
Boy Commandos. Pick any one of the early ones. I was about 15 years old when I saw that title and I wanted to break into comics. I felt if I could copy even one of those pages, it would help me to understand more of what I wanted to do.

AL FELDSTEIN • writer/artist/editor of the highest caliber

I was a Kirby fan back before the war (WWII). I heard some guy was making \$22 a page drawing in the early '40s and I was working at a bowling alley! I never



Airboy Volume 4, #4 (1947) chosen by Jim Vadeboncouer, Jr.



Jack Kirby circa 1969.

Photo courtesy & ©2008 Jack Kirby Estate.

FIFTY BEST EXAMPLES OF UNUSED KIRBY ART

*Chosen by John Morrow, with help from
Shane Foley and Adam McGovern*

KIRBY
LIVE
ART

Jack Kirby was the most prolific artist in the history of comics, producing more stories, pages, sketches, layouts, covers, merchandising illustrations, and just plain art than anyone in the field. So it was only natural that he would wind up with a huge stockpile of material that ended up not getting used, for one reason or another.

Over the course of fifty issues of *The Jack Kirby Collector*, I've had the luxury of enjoying a lot of Kirby's unused art—so many pieces that it was quite a task to narrow it down to his fifty best examples and rank them. To make the task more manageable, I had to establish some basic criteria to go by:

- 1) I would consider any art that was not published in its original venue, time period, or as originally intended, even if it was eventually published later
- 2) Except for exceptional cases, I would give more weight to stories than to individual pieces
- 3) Where possible, I would group together pieces that served the same purpose or intent (otherwise, I'd end up with closer to fifty thousand pieces)!

So here's my best shot at it. You'd think that unused art would be the bottom-of-the-barrel stuff that no one would bother to look at. But as you scroll through this assemblage, you'll find, more often than not, that Jack's unused work could rival some of the best published work of anyone in comics. (The Gallery on page 45 presents larger examples.)

The beauty of this list is, by the time it sees print, it's likely I'd have to alter it. That's the amazing, mysterious thing about Kirby; "new" unseen material seems to turn up when you least expect it, and never seems to run dry. That's a pretty remarkable feat for an artist that stopped drawing in the early 1990s! But until I find Jack's rejected sample pages for the first Spider-Man story, here's my top choices:

50 *Pulp Illos (1930s-1940s)*

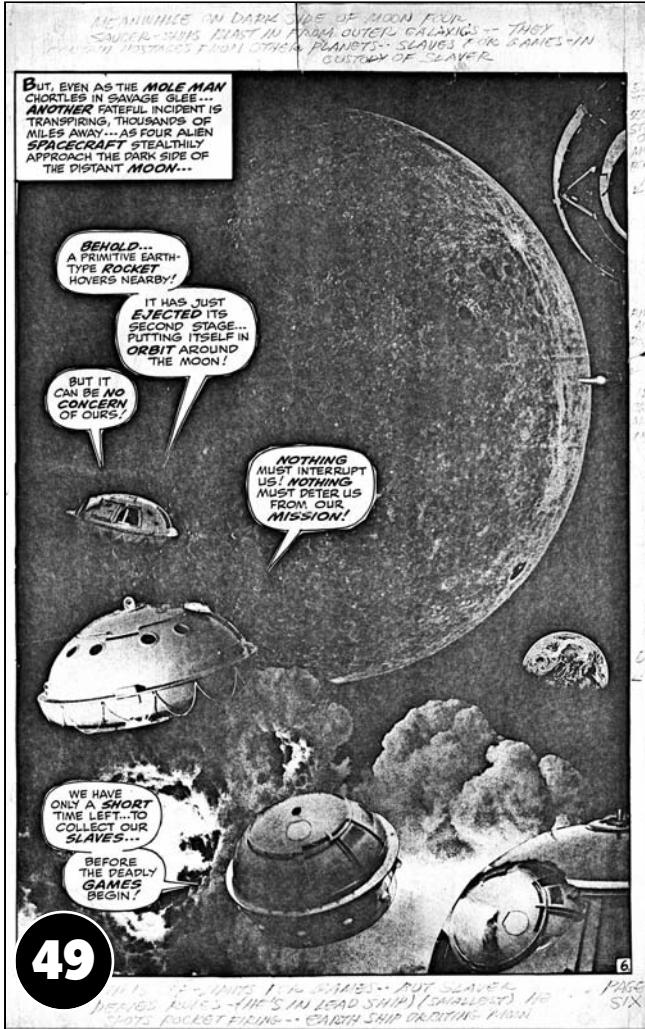
Okay, so I violated my first criteria! But while these aren't technically unpublished, they're so obscure that few collectors have seen them, so they might as well be. There are great spot illos to be found in the pages of pulps like *Marvel Tales* from the late 1930s and '40s, so seek them out.

49 *Collages (1960s-1980s)*

While not everyone's cup of tea, Jack made some amazingly complex works of art with only scissors, glue, and old magazines. He supposedly found it a relaxing diversion, and many of them ended up as backgrounds on key comics pages in the 1960s and '70s. But you can't fully appreciate their complexity until you've seen the originals in color. See page 104 in this volume for a beautiful full-color example.

48 "Astrals" (late 1970s)

More prized for its scarcity than its actual story quality, this unused four-page promotional comic drawn for a Chicago radio station is an interesting oddity, and nicely inked by Bill Wray. (For the complete story, see *The Jack Kirby Collector* #16 or *Collected Jack Kirby Collector Volume 4*)



49



Carole went down before the electric lash, screaming in agony!



48



47

47 What If? #10 female Thor cover (1978)

John Buscema got the nod for the published version of this cover, but it was fun seeing Jack revisit a character he co-created, even in female form.



46

46 Convention sketches (1960s-1980s)

Jack didn't draw at conventions often, preferring to spend his time meeting and greeting fans. When he did sketch, it was often at a "Chalk Talk" session, on stage in front of a crowd. So while these are usually by nature pretty loose, there are some gems to be found.



45

45 Commissioned Sketches (1970s-1980s)

These were a nice supplement to Jack and Roz's income throughout the 1970s and '80s, keeping him busy as his comics work waned. With plenty of time to work on each drawing, these are often remarkable pieces, even if they sometimes lack some of Jack's more spontaneous linework—perhaps due to laboring over them a little too much.



44

44 Thing Alter Ego sketch (1962)

A telling, historically significant pencil drawing done for Jerry Bails, showing what Jack's Thing character looked like at this early stage of the Fantastic Four's career, before an inker altered the work, and the character had evolved toward its current "rocky" look. An inked version of this pencil drawing first appeared in Jerry's 1962 mimeographed *Alter Ego* #4 fanzine, but didn't appear in its original pencil form until *Jack Kirby Collector* #9.



43

43 Pin-ups (various years)

There've been several of these over the years, which ended up as posters or were meant for fanzines or portfolios. All are worth a look, and the ones that appeared in 1971's *Kirby Unleashed* and 1979's *Masterworks* portfolio are especially nice. (*TwoMorrows Publishing* currently has a remastered version of *Kirby Unleashed* available.)



42

42 Toys for Tots unused poster art (1968)

Created for the U.S. Marine Corp's toy drive, Jack went through at least three versions before the final one was approved. They all look good to us! (For more examples, see *Jack Kirby Collector* #18 and #27.)



41

41 *Tribes Trilogy (1976)*

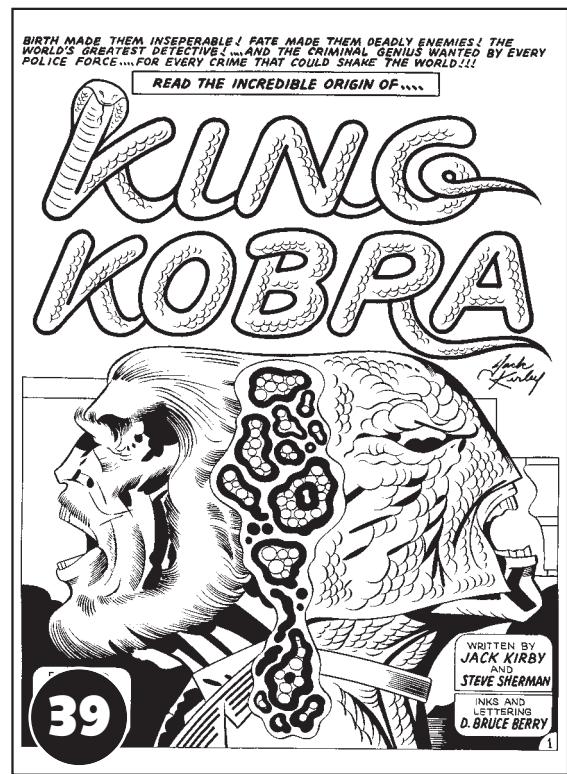
41 Like most of Jack's hand-painted color work, you've got to see them up close to really appreciate them fully. Some nicely designed head-shots that really come to life when the Dr. Marten's dyes were applied by Jack, these three illos beautifully demonstrate Kirby's flare for depicting ornate battle garb.



40

40 *Lord of Light art (1978)*

40 If you're planning to build a science-fiction based theme park, who better to call in to create concept art than Jack Kirby? The park itself never broke ground; unbeknownst to Jack, the project ended up being used as a front for the C.I.A. to help rescue hostages held by Iran during Jimmy Carter's term as President. (Kirby couldn't make up a story as amazing as what really went on, folks!) But these thirteen plates (inked by Mike Royer, with the one above hand-colored by Kirby) still thrill fans today. (See *Collected Jack Kirby Collector Volume 2*)



39

39 *Kobra #1 (1976)*

39 Kirby's last new DC Comics concept of the 1970s, and the only strip he ever conceived starring a villain (*Yellow Claw* was originated by someone else). Kirby assistant Steve Sherman contributed to the character's creation, and Kirby took the basics and ran with it. Unfortunately, DC Comics heavily altered the art and story for publication, having Pablo Marcos redraw characters' heads, and rearranging panels. (For more on Kobra, see *The Jack Kirby Collector #22*)

38 *Silver Surfer Graphic Novel cover (1978)*

38 Apparently to lend legitimacy to it as a bookstore item, Marvel Comics had Earl Norem created a painted version of Kirby's original inked cover (below). Fine on its own, the published version was a weird juxtaposition against the classic Kirby/Sinnott interior art. The powerful unused original version may not have met Marvel's marketing goals, but it certainly would've made us want to buy it! (See *Jack Kirby Collector #9* or *Collected Jack Kirby Collector Volume 1* for a full-size reproduction.)

37 *Starman Zero (early 1950s)*

37 Kirby was a lifelong fan of science-fiction, and he apparently had high hopes for this compelling sci-fi proposal, considering the amount of work he put into the concept art and initial set of Sunday strips. (See *Jack Kirby Collector #15* or *Collected Jack Kirby Collector Volume 3* for complete Sunday strips.)



38

36 *Mister Miracle #10 cover (1972)*

36 A far superior cover to the one that was actually published, and frankly, we can't think of any rationale for it being rejected. Many fans remember this piece from its eventual appearance as the cover of *The Buyer's Guide to Comic Fandom #19* (August 15, 1972).



37



36

FIFTY-PAGE KIRBY ART GALLERY

Presenting pencil and ink art from the Kirby Estate Xerox Archives



**Jack Kirby demonstrates his
penciling skills in 1979.**

Photo courtesy & ©2008 Shel Dorf.



Presented here are 50 pages of Kirby art, taken from the Kirby Estate Xerox Archives, representing many of Kirby's best stories and unused art as chosen in this book. Shown are both pencil versions of published comics pages, and inked versions of unused pages and stories. The image quality varies from scans (which reproduce Kirby's pencil quality very faithfully) to "thermal fax" copies (Kirby had this now outdated type of copier in his home starting in the early 1970s, long before copiers were commonplace), but all serve as a remarkable historical record of unseen work, and what Kirby's art looked like before it was inked.

BEST STORIES EXAMPLES

(presented here in chronological order from choices in the section beginning on page 11, showing the evolution of Kirby's art style from the 1960s-1980s):

(page 47) **Tales of Suspense #93, page 8, pencil** (1967)

This crisp photostat image serves as a good benchmark for Jack's level of penciling quality during his 1960s peak.

(page 48) **New Gods #6, page 5, pencil** (1971)

Kirby hits his storytelling stride during the Fourth World saga.

(page 49) **Forever People #6, page 11, pencil** (1971)

Energy and vitality surge throughout these pencils; even his handwriting is energetic.

(page 50) **Demon #1, unused page, pencil** (1972)

During this unused introductory sequence, note how the macabre character draws closer to the reader in each successive panel.

(page 51) **Kamandi #1, page 8, pencil** (1972)

A rough and tumble action page.

(page 52) **Mister Miracle #7, page 17, pencil** (1972)

The title character is caught up in a high-tech version of the ways of the old West.

(page 53) **Mister Miracle #8, page 4, pencil** (1972)

Kirby (literally!) brings strong female characters to comics in the 1970s.

(page 54) **New Gods #8, page 16, pencil** (1972)

You can feel the tension as these characters struggle in battle.

(page 55) **Weird Mystery Tales #2, page 10, pencil** (1972)

This story was actually drawn in 1971 (for the never-published *Spirit World* #2), but didn't see print until 1972.

(page 56) **Superman's Pal, Jimmy Olsen #147, page 7, pencil** (1972)

Superman's last Kirby-drawn connection to the Fourth World, as he finally travels to New Genesis through a Boom Tube.

(page 57) **Kamandi #9, page 14, pencil** (1973)

A frightening example of Kirby's penchant for large-headed protagonists.

(page 58) **OMAC #1, page 4** (1974)

Disturbing imagery, and a message that still applies over three decades later.

(page 59) **Our Fighting Forces #157, page 4, pencil** (1975)

The captivating Panama Fattie shows her stuff!

(page 60) **Our Fighting Forces #159, page 13, pencil** (1975)

Drama ensues as World War II rivals race for the ultimate finish line.

(page 61) **Captain America #195, page 1, pencil** (1976)

Part of the year-long "Madbomb" saga, which Jack launched upon his return to Marvel Comics.

(page 62) **2001: A Space Odyssey #6, cover, pencil** (1977)

"Everyman" Harvey Norton meets the aliens in this striking cover image.

(page 63) **2001: A Space Odyssey #8, page 17, pencil** (1977)

Mr. Machine/Machine Man is born, courtesy of the Monolith.

(page 64) **Captain America #212, page 15, pencil** (1977)

Two old adversaries in their final Kirby-drawn conflict.

(page 65) **Eternals #8, page 17, pencil** (1977)

Kirby leaves you asking which is the true monster in this battle.

(page 66) **Silver Surfer Graphic Novel, page 90, pencil** (1978)

A poignant parting in this beautifully rendered page.

(page 67) **What If? #11, page 31, pencil** (1978)

One last look back at the glory days of 1960s Marvel, as Jack draws the Fantastic Four (here, as members of the Marvel Bullpen, with Jack himself

posing as the Thing).

(page 68) **Satan's Six #1, page 3, pencil** (1979)

The actual date this partially finished story was drawn isn't certain, but we assume it was soon after he left Marvel Comics for good. Terry Austin inked this page when it was finally published in 1993 by Topps Comics.

(page 69) **Thundarr The Barbarian newspaper samples, pencil** (1980)

Kirby drew two weeks' worth of dailies and Sundays, to be scripted by Steve Gerber. Shown here are strips 5-9.

(page 70) **Captain Victory #2, page 6, pencil** (1981)

The first two issues of *Captain Victory* were drawn as one Graphic Novel circa 1978, and finally published in 1981; as Kirby drew new pages for #3 in 1982, you can see a marked drop in his penciling quality from the four-year hiatus.

(page 71) **Roxie's Raiders #1, page 7, pencil** (1982)

Kirby and writer Steve Gerber attempted to turn this animation concept into an ongoing comic book series, but work never progressed beyond the first issue.

(page 72) **Captain Victory #7, page 7, pencil** (1982)

Still solid penciling, and interesting character design.

(page 73) **Destroyer Duck #1, page 17, pencil** (1982)

Action, action, action (even though it involves a duck...)

(page 74) **Silver Star #1, page 12, pencil** (1983)

Lovely penciling, possibly done well before the publication date.

(page 75) **Super Powers #5, page 12, pencil** (1984)

It's not every day you see Kirby drawing Batman and Robin; enjoy!

(page 76) **New Gods reprint series #6, page 39, pencil** (1984)

This prequel to the *Hunger Dogs* Graphic Novel was actually drawn *after* his 1983 work on the core story that made up the bulk of the GN, but health problems in the interim caused a decline in Kirby's penciling.

(page 77) **Super Powers II #2, page 9, pencil** (1986)

A last hurrah, as Kirby pencils characters he'd rarely drawn before.

BEST UNUSED ART EXAMPLES

(presented here in descending order from the survey on pages 35-44):

(page 78) **Captain America & Bucky commission drawing, pencil** (1978)

(page 79) **Toys For Tots unused poster art, pencil** (1968)

(page 80) **Mister Miracle #10, unused cover, pencil** (1972)

(page 81) **Fantastic Four animated series storyboards, pencil** (1978)

(page 82) **Tales of Suspense #70, page 9, pencil layouts** (1965)

Kirby not only sets the artistic tone, he directs the story with his margin notes.

(page 83) **Death Fingers/Dingbats of Danger Street concept art, pencil** (1975)

(page 84) **Sandman #7, page 1, pencil** (1976)

(page 85) **Soul Love #1, cover, pencil and wash** (1971)

(page 86) **Dingbats of Danger Street #2, page 14, ink** (by Mike Royer) (1975)

(page 87) **Stuntman #3, "Panda" story, page 10, ink** (by Simon & Kirby) (1946)

(page 88) **Fantastic Four #102/108, page 1, pencil** (1970)

(page 89) **True Divorce Cases #1, page 17, "The Twin", pencil** (1971)

(page 90) **In The Days Of The Mob #2, page 34, pencil** (1971)

(page 91) **Boy Explorers #2, page 8, ink** (by Simon & Kirby) (1946)

(page 92) **Black Tiger animation concept, pencil** (1981)

(page 93) **Hulk #5, unused page, pencil** (1962)

(page 94) **Fantastic Four #49, page 1, pencil** (1966)

OTHER EXAMPLES

(page 95) **Fantastic Four #75, page 4, pencil** (1968)

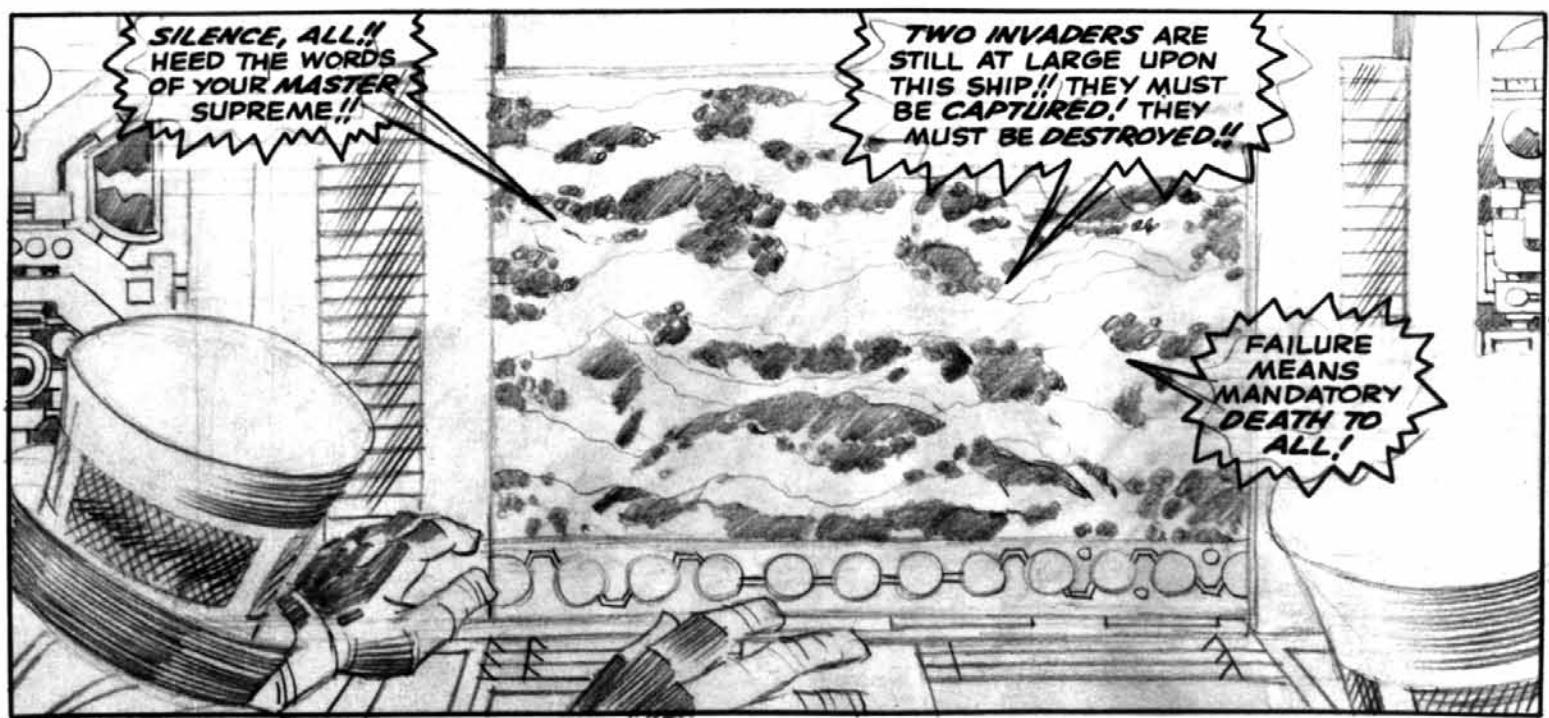
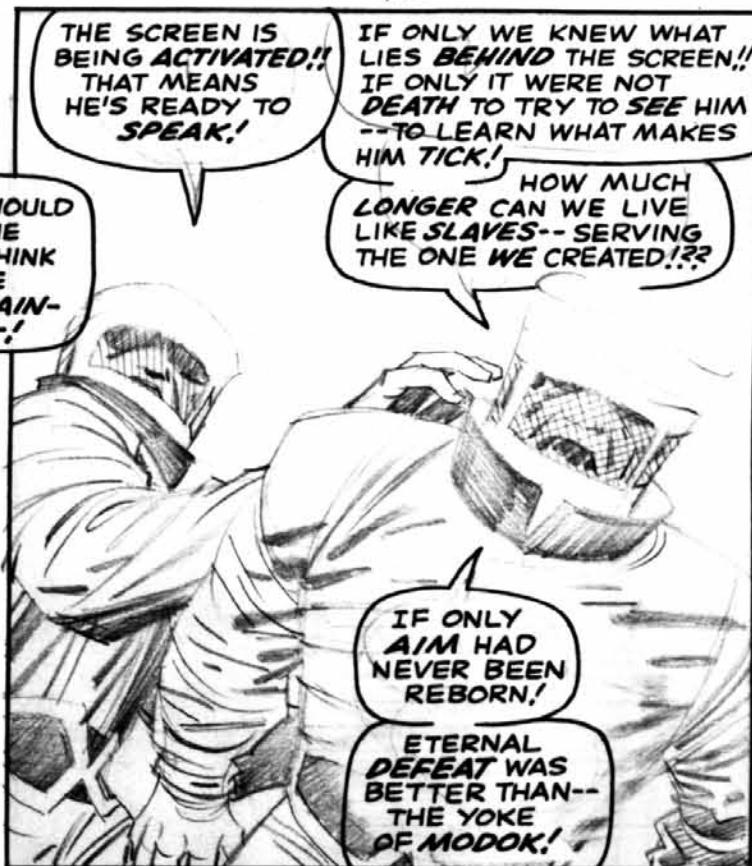
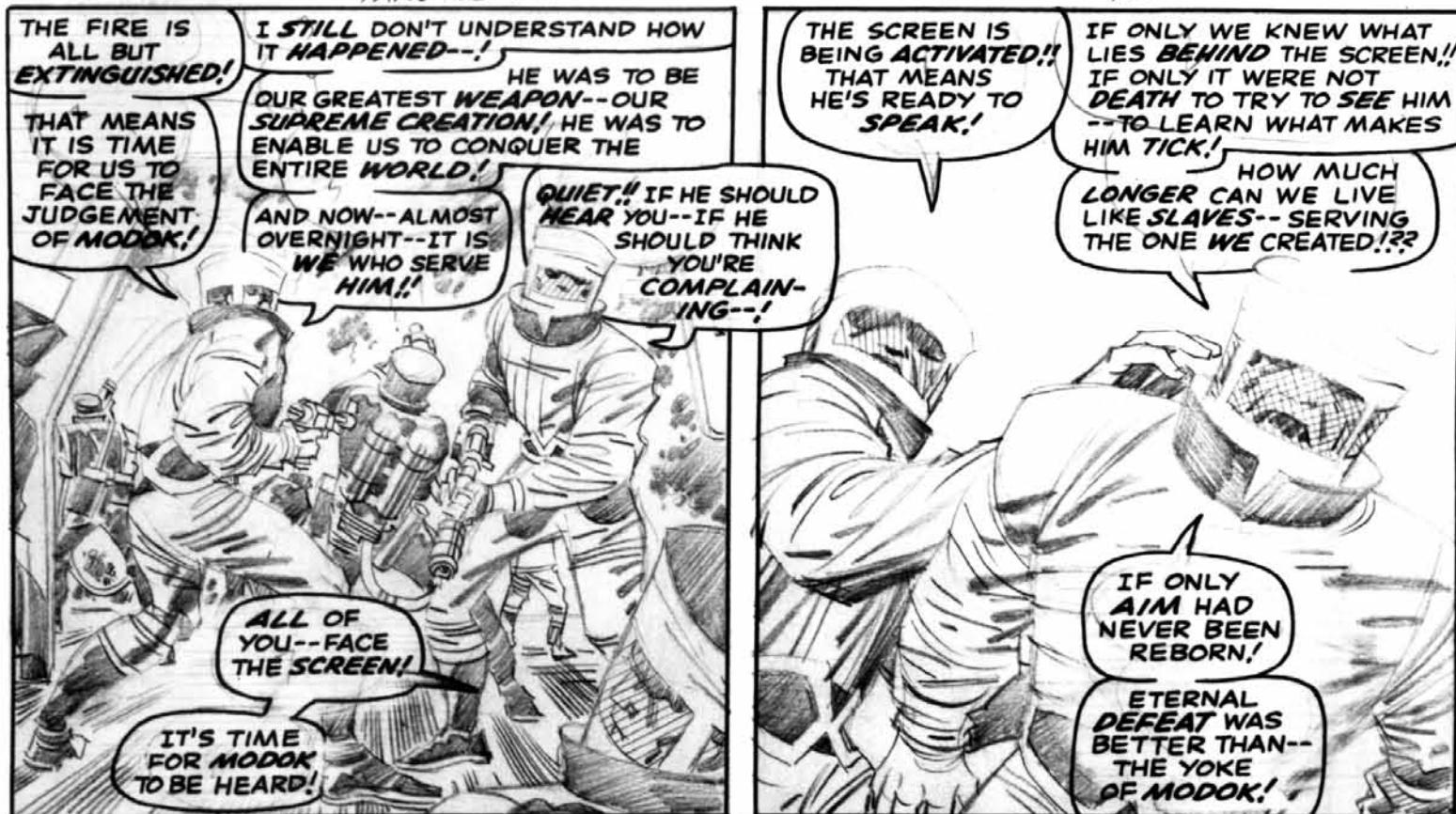
Galactus never looked more imposing. A great example of the full-pagers that populated Kirby's late 1960s work. From the Kirby Pencil Xerox Archives.

(page 96) **Superman personal drawing, pencil** (1984)

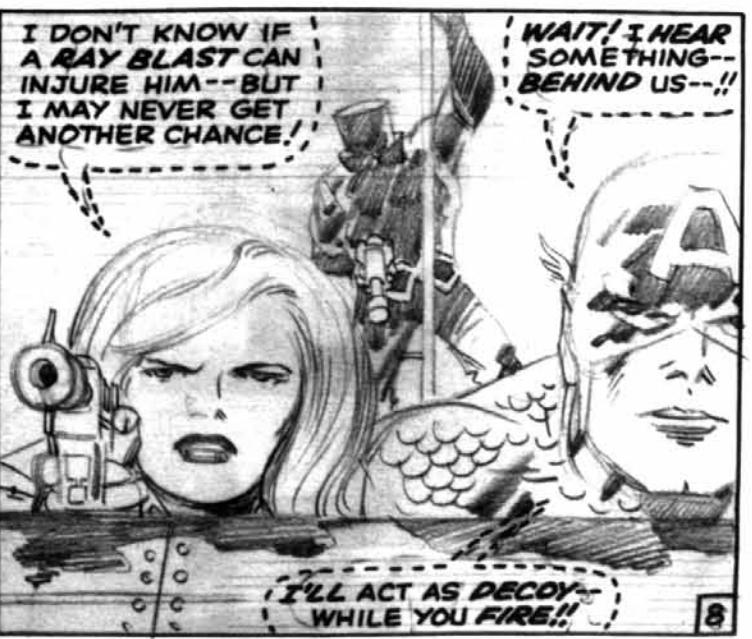
Thanks to Jack's daughter Lisa Kirby for sharing this personal image for this book's cover, and to Darwyn Cooke for his superb inking and coloring of it. ★

SAYS MODOK WILL BE SORE AS HELL--
IT WAS A DAD DAY FOR US WHEN WE
DEVELOPED HIM-- OTHER GUY--SAYS-- YEAH--
WE DIDN'T KNOW HE'D HAVE POWER TO
TAKE US OVER

PUPPETS-- IUG UNI
HIS YOKE-- OTHER GUY YELLS--
QUIET-- HIS SCREEN IS ACTIVATING
HE SPEAKS FROM HIS CHAMBER
IN WHICH IT MEANS DEATH
TO ENTE



SCREEN CRACKLE WITH STRANG FORCE
HUGE VAGUE FACE ON SCREEN
VOICE SAYS I WANT IN-TRUDER FOUND OR ELSE.



UP CHIN TO BIT

CAP SAYS-- WHAT IS THAT THING--
GAL SAYS -- THEY CALL IT MODOK --
SHIELD SUSPECTED ITS EXISTENCE--

THAT'S MY JOB -- TO GET INFO
TO SHIELD-- ITS POWERS COULD BE
DANGEROUS-- TO WORLD--

3 PEOPLE AT WAR WITH THEMSELVES,
DRIFT HELPLESSLY IN A RAFT--
TOWARD A RENDEZVOUS WITH **ORION**
AND THE INCREDIBLE, HORRIFYING
FINAL WAR BETWEEN THE

NEW GODS!

RICHARD! WHAT'S
HAPPENING NOW!!?
WHAT IS THAT!!

I-I THOUGHT
WE'D RUN INTO
A POLARIS MISSILE
FIRING--BUT
IT'S IT'S--

IT'S SOME KIND
OF NEW, NAVY
FROGMAN TYPE,
YOU FOOL!! WAVE
AT HIM!! GET HIS
ATTENTION!!

EDITED
WRITTEN AND DRAWN
BY **JACK KIRBY**
LINKED, BRUSHED AND
BLACKENED BY
MIKE ROYER



KIRBY



Photo courtesy & ©2008 Neal Kirby



Photo courtesy & ©2008 Steve Robertson



Photo courtesy & ©2008 David Folkman



Photo courtesy & ©2008 James Van Hise



Photo courtesy & ©2008 Kirby Estate



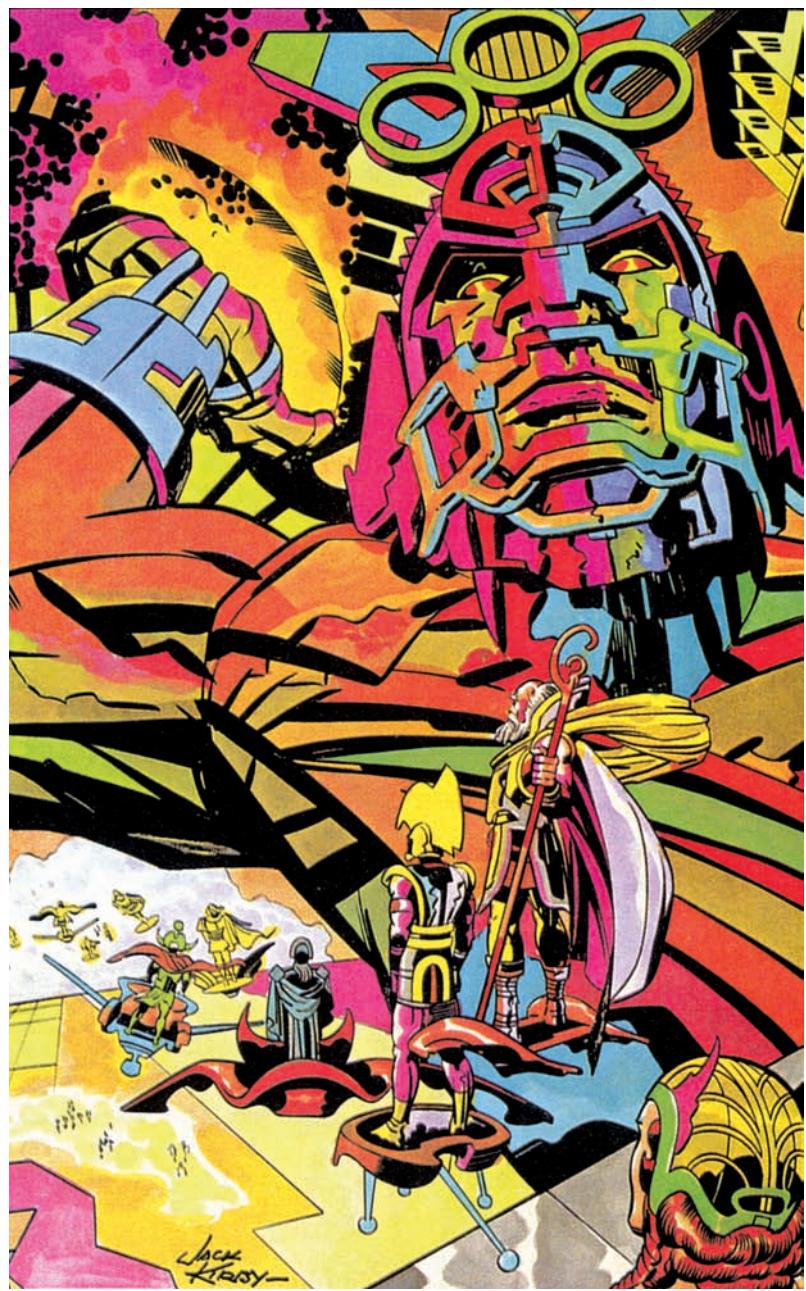
Photo courtesy & ©2008 Kirby Estate

(background) Jack Kirby in the early 1970s, hosting fans in his home studio in Thousand Oaks, California.



From the sub-lime to the red-iculous: Jack Kirby's sense of color was as individual as his art style. He could go subtle, as shown above (original color guide for the 1969 Fantastic Four Marvelmania poster, and the 1966 Black Sphinx concept drawing). But on some pieces (such as the 1982 Hulk commission at left, and the 1972 *NFL Pro* magazine illo at right), he would let loose with the Dr. Marten's dyes.

Fantastic Four, Hulk TM & ©2008 Marvel Characters, Inc. Black Sphinx, NFL Pro art TM & ©2008 Jack Kirby Estate.



HE WALKS! HE RUNS! HE LEAPS!
WHERE NO MAN DARES!

The

APE!



"The Ape", a previously unpublished 1973 concept, done in ink, marker and watercolor.

The Ape TM & ©2008 Jack Kirby Estate.
Courtesy the Jack Kirby Museum.

Jack
Kirby
'73

FIFTY BEST KIRBY CHARACTER DESIGNS

*Chosen by Sean Kleefeld, author of the
“Incidental Iconography” column
in The Jack Kirby Collector*



Jack Kirby at the 1983 San Diego Comic-Con.

Photo courtesy & ©2008 Jack Kirby Estate.

JACK KIRBY DESIGNS



Jack Kirby gives a “chalk talk” at the 1975 San Diego Comic-Con.



50



49

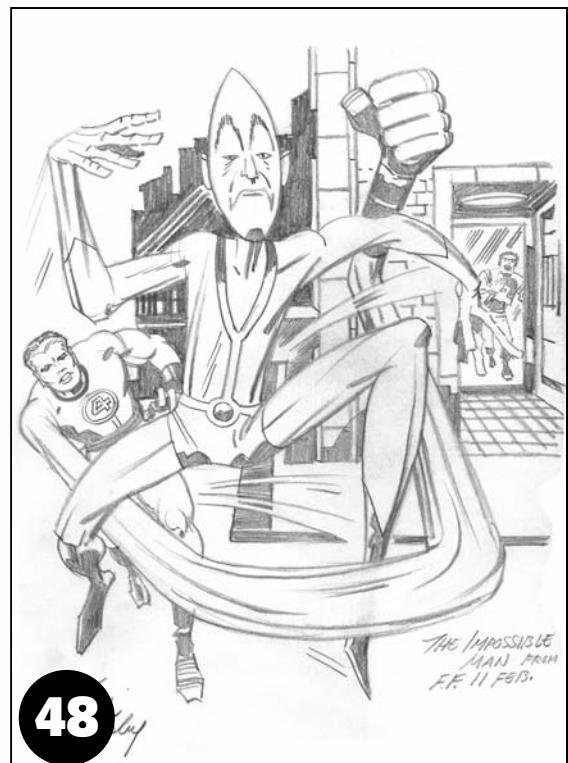
Originally, the prospect of coming up with Jack's 50 best character designs for this celebratory volume sounded exciting. But doing some research—because I certainly didn't want to exclude anyone due to a poor memory—I found a listing of characters Jack created for Marvel. (Special thanks to the guys at *MarvUnApp.com*) Not the ones everybody knows, like the Fantastic Four and the X-Men, but the ones who wouldn't warrant a footnote anywhere but in the most devoted and meticulous of fan web sites. Finding that list was invaluable, but it also scared the crud out of me since it listed over 600 named characters Jack created—for Marvel alone! And, like I said, that doesn't include the ones you already know about.

Needless to say, with that much output, there's a fair chance I've overlooked some potentially incredible designs, but rest assured that I made an active effort to at least look at all the periods of Jack's work. As they say, every character is somebody's favorite, so feel free to add your two cents if you think I've skipped over your favorite Kirby creation. It may or may not have been intentional! With that short intro done, on to Jack Kirby's 50 best character designs:

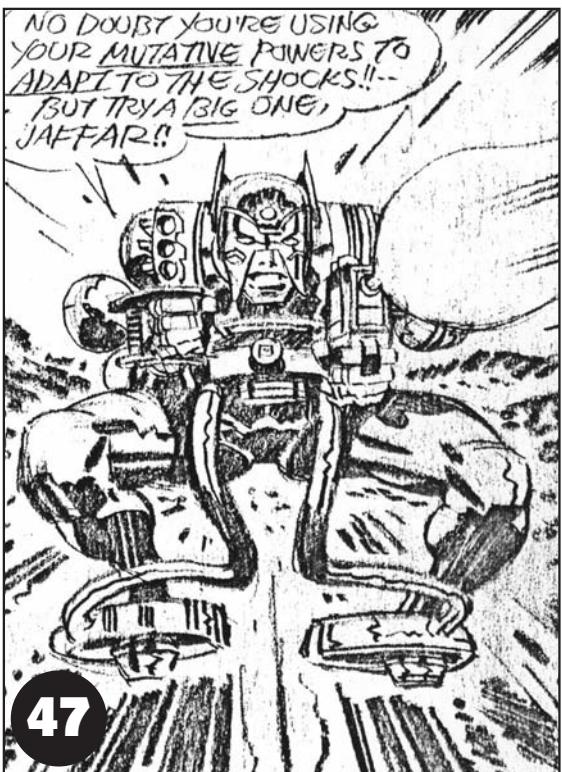
50 *Giganto, Mole Man's Monster.* I'm starting off the list with one of Jack's classic images, the cover to *Fantastic Four* #1. I have to admit that I'm not overly partial to the creature's design *per se*, but the cover itself is iconic in nearly every sense of the word, and much of that has to do with the monster clearly depicted in the center of it. I figure that warrants inclusion in the list in some capacity, but that's why he gets relegated to the end of it. For the record, this creature was not named Giganto until *Avengers West Coast* #54, long after that name had already been established for another giant monster that also fought the Fantastic Four. First appearance: *Fantastic Four* #1 (November 1961).

49 *Goozlebobber.* Definitely one of Jack's weird and wacky ideas, this guy I've got to include just for sheer inventiveness, even if the concepts and designs themselves are... unusual. (Don't worry, folks! The designs get more and more impressive as we go through this list.) First appearance: *Captain Victory* #4 (May 1982).

48 *Impossible Man.* Impy here falls somewhat in the same class as Goozlebobber; it's just too inventive to not mention. That said, though, I'm somewhat reluctant to list him because of a decidedly unproven theory I have about his inception. But that's a column by itself that I'll save for the future! First appearance: *Fantastic Four* #11 (February 1963).



48



47

47 *Orion*. I have to admit to having problems placing Orion on the list. Jack's initial drawing of him is spectacular, but I find that has more to do with his Astro-Harness than anything else. And while that is an accessory unique to Orion, he doesn't always wear it. The spandex and spiked helmet don't really seem to work nearly as well visually without the Astro-Harness so, while I see why Jack designed the character the way he did—that original design is very slick—the practical upshot of it in the storytelling leaves the character looking a little too visually top-heavy much of the time. First appearance: *New Gods* #1 (February 1971).



46

46 *Giganto*, Sub-Mariner's Mutant Whale. This Giganto I think is one of Jack's more well-executed monster designs. It's most easily described as an anthropomorphic whale, but the actual implementation works much better than it should. A whale's natural body shape is decidedly not conducive to walking upright, but Jack was able to make this look surprisingly natural. First appearance: *Fantastic Four* #4 (May 1962).



45

45 *Metron*. A character that really could only have been created by Jack, incorporating oversized computer circuits into a chest and headpiece design, naturally suggesting the character's prime motivator: knowledge. Like Orion, Metron is frequently associated with a large piece of equipment: his Mobius Chair. I think that he visually integrates with it very well, but loses much of his impact without it. First appearance: *New Gods* #1 (February 1971).



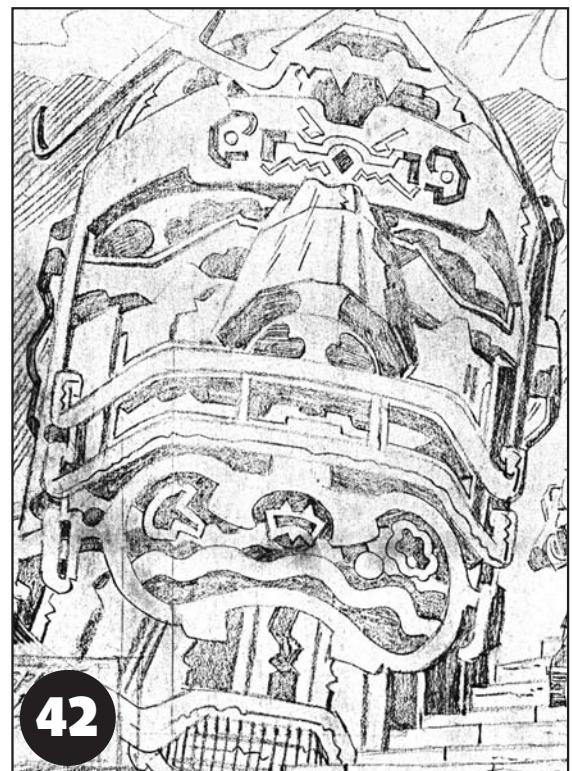
44

44 *Prester John*. As much as Metron is a character that had to come from Jack, Prester John is, too, in his own way, bearing no real similarities to most traditional images of the character. Flowing, fur-lined robes and a completely impractical helmet, and it somehow still works. I might have to do an "Incidental Iconography" on him just to give myself an excuse to research where that helmet design came from! First appearance: *Fantastic Four* #54 (September 1966).



43

43 *Thing, circa 1961*. Ben Grimm is one of the characters most closely identified with Jack, but his earliest appearances belie that connection by portraying the Thing as a monstrous lump. Despite Dick Ayers claiming to have difficulty in figuring out how to ink Jack's early Thing, the pile of somewhat amorphous rock is an interesting interpretation of a Jewish golem, minus the obvious inscription needed to traditionally activate one. Joe Sinnott helped refine the character's look significantly once he began regularly inking *Fantastic Four*, and it's noteworthy that Jack changed how he drew the character based on Sinnott's inks. First appearance: *Fantastic Four* #1 (November 1961).



42

42 *Jemiah the Analyzer*. The Celestials on the whole are pretty cool designs overall—not unlike the living machine approach Jack took with Galactus. I've singled out Jemiah specifically because he strikes me as the quintessential Celestial from a visual perspective: vaguely human, but lots of funky Kirby-ness to look strange and menacing. First appearance: *Eternals* #7 (January 1977).

Jack Kirby—he's not for everybody, but everybody seems to have taken something from him. And not just everybody in comics. The "King" not only set the terms by which all comics afterward would be defined, but foresaw how a number of other artforms would evolve, from ambitious architecture to extreme fashion to blockbuster cinematic special effects. He also tapped classic roots of storytelling that run so deep many creators miss them, and which later artists in all media have followed to heights and complexities even he couldn't imagine. On the following pages creators and thinkers from the worlds of comics, animation, design, prose literature, academia, criticism, gallery art, music and theatre describe how all their efforts connect in Kirby's universe.

Michael Allred is comics' king of neo-pop, channeling the graphic simplicity and dynamic cheer of midcentury Kirby-hero and teen-romance comics through cosmic rays of contemporary sensibility on books like the media satire *X-Statix at Marvel* (with writer Peter Milligan) and Allred's own *The Atomics*. He also is to inner space what Kirby was to galactic travel, with mindbending compositions and metaphysical quests in Allred masterworks like *Red Rocket 7* and *Madman* (not to mention handling heaven itself in his ongoing graphic adaptation of the Book of Mormon, *The Golden Plates*).

You've built the dynamic scale and manic energy of Kirby into your compositions, yet your work has the innocence and specific human detail more common to comics from between the Golden and Silver Ages—did you feel those looks could use a little of each other, or is it just more of an intuitive mix that suits your personality?

I'd love to declare my genius, but honestly, it would have to be more intuitive. There have been phases in my work where I've intentionally, consciously, tried to bring my influences more forcefully to the surface—mostly because I didn't think I even had a style of my own. I look back on those efforts now and shudder a little. When I've just relaxed and drawn with the love of drawing and telling stories, I've done my best work. And I acknowledge that my work, my style, is most definitely the sum of my influences mixed in with what uniqueness I bring to the party. Everyone stands on the shoulders of those who came before. It just so happens that I feel at home getting that boost from Jack Kirby. He created a language that I can understand and get excited about. And it took him decades to define it for himself as well.

Kirby's known as the definitive special-effects artist in comics, but in all his best cosmic 'n' quantum epics people encounter all these spectacular secrets of the universe, but really end up confronting their hidden selves—did any of that dynamic find its way into the spiritual odyssey of *Madman Atomic Comics*, or is it from other sources?

I think that it's all part of being a progressive artist. You have to ask the big questions. Kirby always asked the big questions. And

as big and cosmic as all existence is, it ultimately has to come back to the self. Who am I? Why am I here? Where am I going? Do I have a purpose? Am I all there is? Is everything around me a detailed figment of my imagination? Is the greatest path to happiness serving others? It all begins and ends with the individual. The greatest art comes from the musician, the filmmaker, the painter, the sculptor, the writer, the illustrator,

who confront their hidden selves and work to find the best way to express that. Kirby did it with comic books and we're all the better for it. Even though the comic book medium is still very much in the ghetto, I'm not sure it would even exist today if not for Jack Kirby.

One source of this kind of storytelling, since we're speaking cosmically, could of course be faith. Kirby was very conscious of his Jewish identity and you're well into a graphic Book of Mormon—though only those who know this might see it in his work and your other stuff. And for some people their beliefs give them a cosmic perspective while for others it makes them hold off on questions or interpretations beyond their own holy text, so the two interests could be completely separate, but... are they?

We all have our filters. Me, I'm always fascinated with what makes someone tick, what they believe and why. Or why someone lacks any intellectual curiosity. What makes our differences so... different. You could take any song, movie, book, etc., and it will have a personal impact on you through your own perspective or mood. If you make a study of the artist, you lose that personal interpretation as you see the inner workings of the artist. This can be disillusioning, or enlightening. I'm often torn between taking creative things at face value, and the mad urge to look behind the curtain.



Jean-Marie Arnon (www.arnon.fr) is a gifted sculptor and visual artist in France who produces vivid works based on prehistory, and memorable graphic albums and stories evoking comics creators' common ancestor, Kirby.

With the passing of time, it becomes more and more clear that Jack Kirby's art is a huge monolith in the field of 20th century popular culture. Here are my personal Top Five aspects of his work, which explain why he still is a big influence on me (and I guess a few thousand others):

1. Cosmic Landscapes & Alien Technology

Think about it. It's somehow frustrating to realize that the cosmic visions depicted in Kirby's '70s work such as *2001* or *Eternals* seem more alien and futuristic than anything done today, which mostly looks like ersatz *Star Wars* (which was ersatz Kirby anyway).

2. Primitive Life Forms & Prehistoric Tribes

Being born in the southwest of France, which is maybe the most important place for prehistoric sites in the world, I'm a fool for anything prehistoric. I was always excited to discover, lost somewhere in a corner of a Kirby story, a picture of prehistoric people or animals (and it happens quite frequently). Of course, nowadays we know that prehistoric men didn't look like that, but the feeling of savagery, primitive urge and sheer bestial brutality expressed in these Kirby drawings makes it work in a curious and iconic way, typical of his art. More real than the real thing, in short.



3. Sensual Women

The sensuality of Kirby's drawings has never been praised enough. For example, take the *Young Romance* story from the '40s, done with Joe Simon, entitled "The Girl Who Tempted Me". All the pages are literally dripping with eroticism. Female sensuality is shown as a primordial force, perturbing and transforming the characters' lives beyond moral boundaries, beyond good and evil. Look at the girl dancing, the voluptuous hair, the curves... let's move on to the next subject.

4. The Bodies in the Crowd

Kirby was a great crowd-drawer. Take most of today's comics: there are no crowds, or they are at least very abstractly and hastily drawn. Today's artists seem to have forgotten how the human background is important. Be it in a fight, a party or a disaster, Kirby's crowds are very accurately drawn. The bodies' attitudes are precise and there are lots of details, which reinforces the impact of a scene and the credibility of a story. The Devil is in the details, but not here.

5. The Aesthetics of Deflagration

You've probably noticed Kirby's rubble, veritable works of abstract art bursting in every direction in his characters' rumbles. The drama of this terrible destruction, as if real buildings (and their inhabitants) were annihilated, is given a greater impact and pathos from an artist who experienced WWII's bombed battlefields. Nevertheless, in the end, they look like a healthy surge of energy! Fun and drama at the same time—quite disturbing, isn't it? This visual trait proved sufficiently entertaining and dynamic to be swiped by the '90s' major blockbusters, throwing blocks of rocks at a protesting Bruce Willis with endless effects. Needless to say, it has inspired me too!

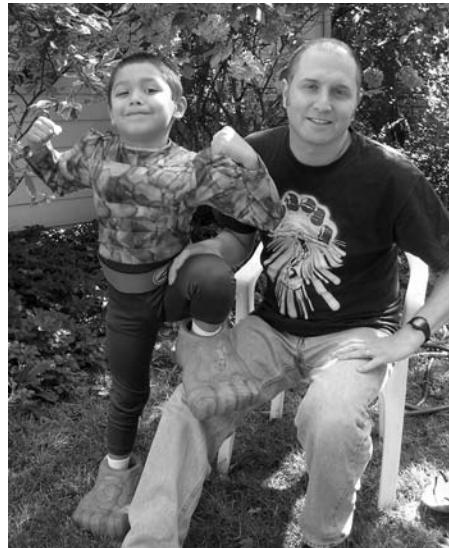


Photo: Silvia Acosta-Bendian

Composer/percussionist **Gregg Bendian**

(www.greggbendian.com) is widely known for his innovative work in the arenas of jazz, classical, and rock music. He has collaborated with some of the strongest personalities in contemporary music including Ornette Coleman, Cecil Taylor, Pat Metheny and John Zorn. Gregg leads the ensembles Interzone (with whom he recorded Requiem for Jack Kirby), Trio Pianissimo and The Mahavishnu Project, and is featured in the book *Percussion Profiles: Interviews, Articles & Discographies* of 25 of the World's Most Creative Percussionists.



Jack Kirby, Composer

Ever since my early childhood, the world of the imagination has been my preferred locus of residence. As a pre-teen living inside the vibrant 1970s, I was torn between ambitions of becoming a musician, a superhero, or a comic book artist. I spent long hours working at all three, but in the end it became obvious to me that I had little talent for drawing and no measurable superpowers, so ultimately musical talent won out. However my love of comic art continued and without a doubt the biggest inspiration for me both as an artist and yes, as a musician, would be the great Jack Kirby.

I think that Jack Kirby would have made an amazing musician.

He certainly possessed the vision, work ethic and "can-do" attitude of what I call "The Rugged American Individualist Composer." Jack had much in common with self-made New York geniuses like Charles Ives or Edgard Varese, men who nearly single-handedly gave birth to Modern American Classical Music in the 1920s and '30s—much the same way Jack gave birth to the world of comic books around the same time. As well, Jack's groundbreaking, adventurous work at Marvel rivaled that of a Modern Jazz-man, hitting right within the same time period—the early 1960s. Surely Jack's fluid technique; his timing; his use of color

(above) Resistance is futile: Simon & Kirby invent romance comics (1950).

©2008 Joe Simon & Kirby Estate.

(left) Every kid needs his cosmic rays: Bendian and son Olias.

(previous page, center) Exclusive to *TJKC*, Arnon gives a possible peek at what Kirby's been up to.

©2008 Jean-Marie Arnon.

(previous page, bottom) Body by Kirby: Allred fills the King's formidable shoes.

Madman TM and ©2008 Michael Allred.



(above) Kirby untold: Some of Jack's FF #102 pencils, reconstructed with John Buscema's, for FF #108 (March 1971), which appear with Kirby's restored version in the Tom Brevoort-helmed *Fantastic Four: The Lost Adventure* (2008).

(right) Space Jam: Bendian and Kirby collide on the cover of the *Requiem*, with upper-left inset by Duncan Rouleau.

Fantastic Four TM & ©2008 Marvel Characters, Inc. CD cover art ©2008 DC Comics.

and texture; his innovative manipulation of motion and stasis; and his effortless ability to work intricately, quickly and spontaneously, rivaled that of the finest improvising jazz artists of his day.

Now that we've hit the 21st Century, it's easy to look back and see that these qualities, coupled with his unbridled industriousness, allowed Jack to create what were essentially "feature films" on

four-color newsprint. These explosions of creative imagination would go on to inspire a New Jersey composer-man to brazenly cull a symphony from a mere jazz quartet



of vibraphone, guitar, bass and percussion. And so I composed *Requiem for Jack Kirby* (Atavistic Records, 2001) not merely as a tribute to Jack's genius, but also as an *affirmation* that great comic book art—and the world of the imagination that Jack spawned—can and does live on to inspire ambitious art in other realms of endeavor.

Thanks to the folks at DC, I was lucky enough to have Kirby's atmospheric "Fourth World" artwork laced throughout the *Requiem*'s CD cover, booklet and disc face—a collaboration with the King that I will cherish forever.

Tom Brevoort is one of the leading keepers of the Kirby legacy in both the content and flavor of the mainline Marvel superheroes comics in his editorial domain. He spoke about the Kirby-esque feat of both building on the past and breaking with it.

As the editor of some of Marvel's most classic properties, you have to have a keen interest and knowledge of the canon you're carrying forward. How do you see Jack Kirby's role in that legacy?

Jack Kirby is one of the foundational pillars of the entire Marvel mythos, and virtually every book in the line reflects some aspect of his creative vision to one extent or another. Jack was an innovative giant when it came to creating characters whose continuing stories and adventures readers remain interested in to this very day, and that's not likely to change any time soon.

The Lee-Kirby era of Marvel defined much of how comics would be made from then on. They were always innovating as well, so the trick is to keep the kernel of what made their books artistic and sales successes while not standing still or just recycling. What's the equation you encourage your writers and artists to work from?

Reputedly, Kirby was much more interested in seeing young talent go forward and explore their own styles and their own voices than in trying to emulate his approach. There's a quote in reference to an interview given by a creator who had taken over a title that Jack had helped originate, and indicated that he intended to do the series in the Kirby tradition. Jack's response was, "He doesn't get it. The Jack Kirby tradition is to start a new book." So that's a valuable point of view to hang on to—that trying to preserve these characters in amber doesn't honor them so much as it chokes the air out of them, and turns them into something cold and plastic. The characters need to be able to live and grow and move in new directions—that's what

keeps them vital. There are probably some lines you shouldn't cross, but even those aren't cut-and-dried. Even I would have argued at a certain point that bringing Bucky back in *Captain America* would be a mistake, but we've found a way to tell that story that most readers found enjoyable and additive. So the lesson is that you need to examine even the taboos, to make sure that the reason that they're taboos still holds water.

Each generation builds on the innovations of the ones before them. And advances in technology have made things possible that Jack could only dream about. His comics were limited to a 64-color palette, very simple four-color press printing, and the cheapest paper imaginable. Within those limitations, he worked wonders and pushed the boundaries (with things like his integrated collages). But imagine what Kirby could have done with the range of colors and the printing techniques we have today, not to mention the advantages that programs like Photoshop give us in terms of integrating computer-generated or computer-modified images into the work. I have to believe that, were Jack alive today, he'd be all over this stuff—he was a very forward-thinking individual.

Marvel and the Kirby memory seem to be on much better terms these days—after the legal feuds of the '80s and '90s, Kirby's credit is a point of prestige in the Gaiman/Romita Jr. *Eternals*, the family has come back to the fold with *Galactic Bounty Hunters*, and projects like the “lost” FF issue have the full cooperation and good compensation of all concerned. Do you think this is a new era for Marvel embracing its architects, and what is the thinking behind it?

Well, there are always two elements to this issue; there's the creative side and the business side. And even during all of the craziness of the '80s and '90s, I think you'd find that the creative side always loved and appreciated Kirby and his accomplishments. It's just that those people may not have been in a position to affect the business side materially. For instance, I don't really know Jim Shooter, but Jim maintains that during the controversy surrounding the return of Jack's art, he was working behind the scenes within Marvel to reach a settlement that would be acceptable to all parties. Having seen how a company like Marvel functions (and having been a part of the Marvel that existed shortly after Jim's departure) I completely believe that.

That all said, probably the biggest unsung hero in terms of rebuilding a relationship with the Kirby family is publisher Dan Buckley. More than anybody realizes, Dan's been instrumental in ways to work through the bureaucracy to make change to happen. And I think Dan fulfills his responsibility to Jack and the other creative past who laid down the foundation for what Marvel is today.

One of comics' most popular mavericks, Joe Casey has lent his headlong, pop-savvy energy to everything from classic projects like X-23 to syncratic personal creations like The In-Betweens. His work outdoes Kirby—and offers uncommon insight into King as a wordsmith and not just an icon. In addition to the cult phenomenon Gødland (with co-creator Tom Scioli), Casey helped us decipher cosmic glyphs.

As a writer, you must have been conscious of Kirby's influence, not just his signature visuals, when you convened to do *Gødland*. You seem to have found a hyperbole and grand scale of Kirby's language in the energized structure of his storytelling. Is it a lot less controversial than the form of writing you see Kirby's writing serving his overall concept? What do you think is the proper standard?

When Kirby finally began writing his Fourth World material, it was really like he was writing directly into his brain. Uncut Kirby is really the best kind of Kirby. Personally, dialogue like “Be content with your ‘Mobius Chair’ which rides the dimension winds of space-time!” is pure genius. A line like, “I jammed Mother Box into the torment-circuits—felt her power race

with vengeance toward their insidious source!” is technicolor poetry. I couldn't get close to that kind of direct-from-the-id style of writing that Kirby excelled at. That was his voice, and I just don't think you can judge an artist's true voice when it finally emerges. I don't think anyone *should* judge it... we should simply enjoy it.

Was the Kirby voice always something you were waiting for a vehicle to unleash, or is *Gødland* just another step in a direction you were already traveling? Certainly *Automatic Kafka* and *The Intimates* had something of Kirby's breakneck rhythm and information barrage, even in forms far afield of his.

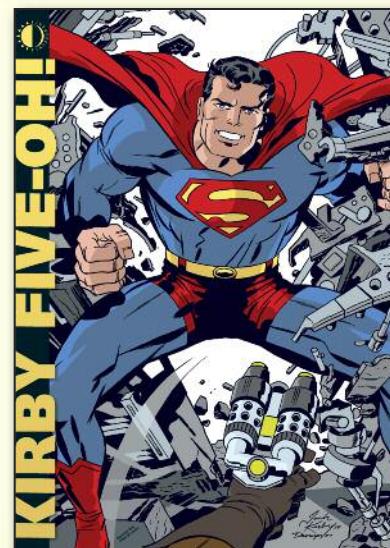
I'm not sure I think of it as the “Kirby voice” in my own work; I'm just following his example of leaving it all out on the field. Kirby had his voice, Tom Scioli and I have ours. Kirby's legacy is for all of us swimming in his wake to bring it, 100%, in every story, on every page, in every panel and every line. For me, as I get older and experience more and more in this industry, Kirby's directness, the way his storytelling cuts to the heart of things with laser precision... that is definitely something I strive for in my own work.

It's not often remarked that Kirby was to writing what Ditko was to drawing—there was this psychotropic free-association that Kirby

IF YOU ENJOYED THIS PREVIEW, CLICK THE LINK BELOW TO ORDER THIS BOOK!

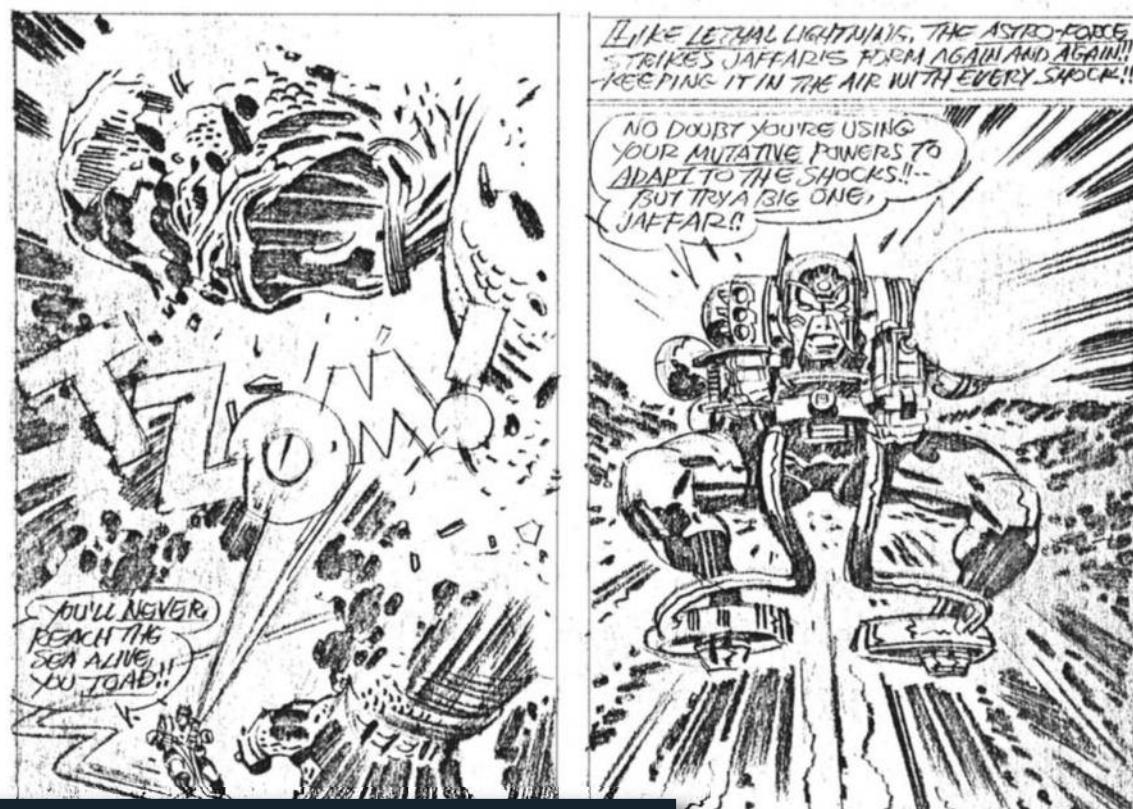
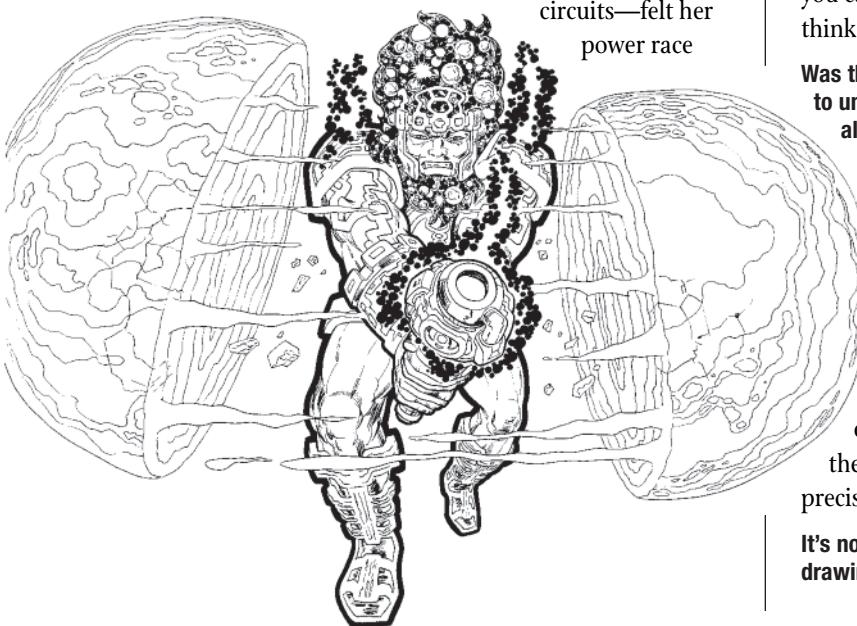
KIRBY FIVE-OH!

KIRBY FIVE-OH! looks at the best of everything from the 50-year career of Jack “King” Kirby, co-creator of the Marvel Comics universe! The regular columnists from The Jack Kirby Collector magazine examine: The best Kirby story published each year from 1938–1987! The best covers from each decade! Jack's 50 best unused examples of art! His 50 best character designs! And profiles of, and commentary by, 50 people from all media 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. This tabloid-sized trade paperback features a Kirby cover inked by DARWYN COOKE, and an introduction by MARK EVANIER!



(168-page Trade Paperback with COLOR) \$19.95
(Digital Edition) \$6.95

http://twomore.com/index.php?main_page=product_info&products_id=633



(above) From Jack's id to our ears: *New Gods* #6 (December 1971).

(left) The Bigger Bang: Space-deity Iboga breaks through, from the first *Gødland* hardcover.

New Gods TM & ©2008 DC Comics. Gødland TM and ©2008 Joe Casey & Tom Scioli.