



THE

Stan Lee

# UNIVERSE

Interviews with and mementos from **"THE MAN"** who changed comics and pop culture



Includes rarities from **THE STAN LEE ARCHIVES!**



edited by  
Danny Fingeroth  
and  
Roy Thomas



**THE**  
*Stan Lee*  
**UNIVERSE**

Danny Fingeroth and Roy Thomas  
Editors

# THE *Stan Lee* UNIVERSE

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Some of this book's contents originally appeared in TwoMorrows' *Write Now!* #18 and *Alter Ego* #74, as well as various other sources. This material has been redesigned and much of it is accompanied by different illustrations than when it first appeared.

Some material is from **Roy Thomas's** personal archives. Some was created especially for this book.

Approximately **one-third** of the material in the **SLU** was found by **Danny Fingeroth** in June 2010 at the **Stan Lee Collection** (aka "**The Stan Lee Archives**") of the **American Heritage Center** at the University of Wyoming in Laramie, and is material that has rarely, if ever, been seen by the general public. The transcriptions—done especially for this book—of audiotapes of 1960s radio programs featuring Stan with other notable personalities, should be of special interest to fans and scholars alike.

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## Dedications

*To the memory of Blanche S. Fingeroth, who, above and beyond the call of maternal duty, bought comic books for me, per my detailed written instructions, during those sweltering Julys and Augusts.*

*And to Stan Lee, who wrote and edited the best of those comics, and continues to amaze to this day.*

—DF

*To Stan—  
for being an inspiration and often mentor for the past half century:*

—RT

# Introduction: Who is Stan Lee

## ... and why does he have a Universe when you don't?

by Danny Fingeroth and Roy Thomas, editors

If you're reading this book, odds are you know who Stan Lee is. But the Universe is a strange and mysterious place, and perhaps you *don't* know who Stan Lee is. It's a good bet, though, that, if nothing else, his name is familiar to you, even if you're not sure why.

So if you just have a few seconds, here's the lowdown:

**Stan Lee is the co-creator of some of the most significant popular culture characters in existence. Among those are Spider-Man, the X-Men, Iron Man, Thor, and the Incredible Hulk. Beyond that, Stan Lee made sure that the whole world knew about the characters, about the Marvel Comics Group, and about the medium of comic books in general.**

To get more specific: Stan was the writer, editor, and art director of Marvel Comics who, with artist-collaborators, conceived those characters and chronicled their earliest adventures in the pages of said comics. He created most of those characters with Jack Kirby, some of them with Steve Ditko, and a bunch of others with artists like Don Heck, John Romita, Sr., Gene Colan, and Bill Everett. Together, they created characters people the world over know and love.

Stan was also the guy who spread the word about Marvel and about comics in general to the world. He spoke at colleges and on radio and TV shows. He was interviewed for countless publications, from the most obscure local pamphlets to internationally known newspapers and websites. For many decades—up to the present, actually—Stan promoted a feeling among his readers that comics were great, Marvel was great, the artists and writers (the “Bullpen”) were great, that YOU were great just for reading those comics—and that he, himself, wasn't so bad, either.

And then he went back to his desk and made sure the comics he wrote and edited were so good that they lived up to the publicity he was scoring for them.

In the course of all the above, Stan (a classic “overnight success” who took 20 years of hard work and craft-honing to get there) became arguably the most well known practitioner of comic books in the world. As such, he came into contact with accomplished, famous, and prominent people in media, entertainment, and politics. The kid from DeWitt Clinton High School would hobnob with culture makers and big shots—while never forgetting the folks whose twelve-cent comic book purchases put him on the map.

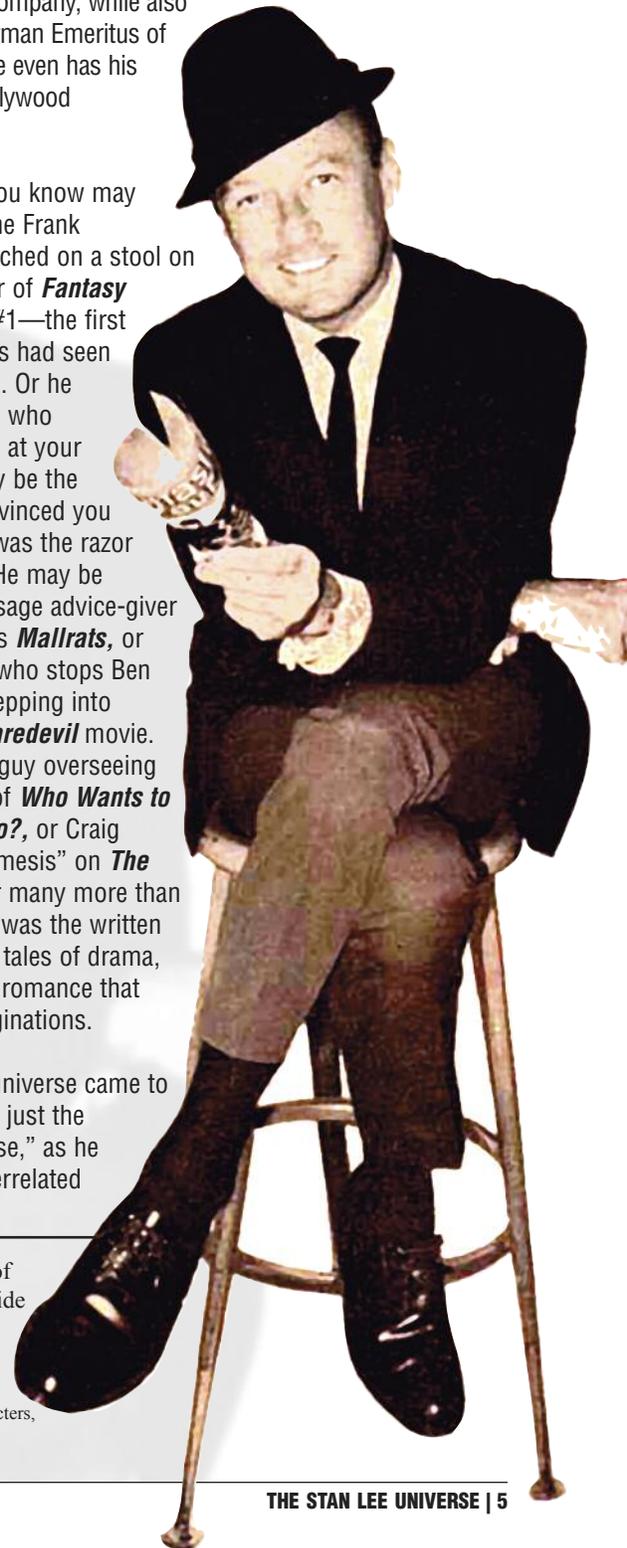
And then, Stan went on to become a major force in the translation

of Marvel's characters into TV and movie and gaming adaptations, and today—after more than 70 years as a professional storyteller—is still the moving force behind a seemingly endless stream of new characters and concepts through his own Pow! Entertainment company, while also serving as Chairman Emeritus of Marvel. Heck, he even has his own star on Hollywood Boulevard now!

The Stan Lee you know may be the guy in the Frank Sinatra hat, perched on a stool on the inside cover of *Fantasy Masterpieces* #1—the first time many of us had seen a photo of Stan. Or he may be the guy who came to lecture at your college. He may be the fellow who convinced you that Personna was the razor blade for *you*. He may be familiar as the sage advice-giver in Kevin Smith's *Mallrats*, or the gentleman who stops Ben Affleck from stepping into traffic in the *Daredevil* movie. He may be the guy overseeing the goings on of *Who Wants to Be a Superhero?*, or Craig Ferguson's “nemesis” on *The Late Show*. For many more than a few of us, he was the written voice telling us tales of drama, adventure, and romance that fueled our imaginations.

So Stan Lee's universe came to encompass not just the “Marvel Universe,” as he dubbed the interrelated

The classic shot of Stan from the inside cover of *Fantasy Masterpieces* #1 (February 1966).  
[©2011 Marvel Characters, Inc.]



world of his characters, but also the wider universe of people whose lives were—and continue to be—somehow affected by Stan the creator, the icon... and “The Man.”

This book, then, is a collection of items by, with, and about Stan. They range from reminiscences of working with him from people from the 1940s through today, to transcripts of “lost” radio interviews with him and other key figures in the history of popular culture such as Jack Kirby and Hilde Mosse (more on her later)—to a letter he wrote in praise of a helpful flight attendant! Some of the items herein appeared a few years back in the Stan 85<sup>th</sup> birthday tribute issues of TwoMorrows’ **Write Now!** and **Alter Ego**, but that material has been combined with lots of other amazing stuff—more than 50% of the book—some never before seen, or not seen for decades. Together, it makes for an incredible compendium of writings and visuals about the phenomenon that is Stan Lee. Some of the highlights of this book are the rare gems found in Stan’s archives housed at the University of Wyoming. (Why there? Because Jack Benny’s archives are there, and Stan figured, “Good enough for Jack Benny? Good enough for me!” As for why Benny’s archives are there... your guess is as good as ours!) Archives highlights include the transcript of a 1968 **Barry Farber Show** of Stan debating anti-comics psychiatrist

Frederic Wertham’s research partner, Dr. Hilde Mosse, which is worth the price of admission all by itself. It’s from a radio program that was aired once and never heard since. Then there’s Stan’s script from the screenplay he wrote for Alain Resnais; Woodstock rockers Country Joe and the Fish’s recollections of their visit with Stan at the Bullpen; script, pencil art, and personal notes from Lee and Kirby’s 1978 **Silver Surfer** graphic novel; and so much more.

Dean Martin once famously said of his ratpack cohort, regarding his effect on the world’s popular culture, “It’s Sinatra’s world. We just live in it.” That may or may not be true. But one thing’s for sure:

It’s Stan Lee’s universe. We just *dream* in it.

Danny Fingeroth

*DANNY* and *Roy*

Roy Thomas  
May, 2011

Photo: Peter Nelson.



**Danny Fingeroth** was a longtime editor and writer at Marvel Comics, where he was Group Editor of the Spider-Man line, and where he worked with Stan on a variety of projects, including **Amazing Spider-Man Annual #18**, which featured the wedding of J. Jonah Jameson, **Amazing Spider-Man #s 363** (the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary issue), and the milestone issue #400. After he left Marvel for Byron Preiss Multimedia, Danny worked with Stan on the comics version of the **Stan Lee’s Riftworld** book series. Over the past decade, Stan has generously given Danny his time for various interviews and has been gracious enough to write introductions to several of Danny’s books, including **Superman on the Couch**, **Disguised as Clark Kent**, and **The Best of Write Now**, the latter culled from the magazine that Danny produced for TwoMorrows and which Stan was interviewed for several times. While Danny has worked with many talented creators over his career, the times he’s worked with Stan are the unquestioned highlights. Danny has spoken about comics and superheroes at Columbia University, the Smithsonian Institution, and The Metropolitan Museum of Art. These days, Danny is Sr. V.P. of Education at New York’s Museum of Comic and Cartoon Art (MoCCA), where he also teaches comics writing, trying to pass on the elements of the art and craft that Stan so remarkably advanced.

Photo: Alan Waitte



**Roy Thomas** became perhaps Stan Lee’s first real “protégé” in mid-1965, when he was hired by Stan (15 minutes after they met) to be a staff writer, a position which quickly evolved into that of editorial assistant. For years he stood at Stan Lee’s left hand several mornings a week, getting an impromptu lesson in writing and editing comics as Stan explained the script and art pages that he (Stan) had written the day before—or applied an editorial pencil to work Roy or others had written—or expounded the strong points (or decried the weak ones) of artwork turned in by artists from Jack Kirby to the veriest beginner. Over time and under Stan’s tutelage, Roy became one of Marvel’s foremost writers, inheriting directly from him the scripting of such titles as **Amazing Spider-Man**, **The X-Men**, **The Avengers**, **Daredevil**, and others. From 1972 to 1974, after Stan was promoted to publisher, Roy served as Marvel’s editor-in-chief. In 1978, he wrote a number of scripts for Stan for DePatie-Freleng’s **Fantastic Four** animated TV series. Even after Roy left Marvel in 1980, the two remained on friendly terms, and in the past decade or so he has interviewed Stan for TwoMorrows magazines such as **Comic Book Artist** and his own **Alter Ego**. Since 2000 Roy has worked with Stan on the daily-and-Sunday **Spider-Man** newspaper comic strip, and considers his association with Stan Lee the highlight of his more than 45 years in the comics field.

# Cub Scouts' Strip Rates Eagle Award

Interview with Stan Lee and Joe Maneely

From *Editor & Publisher* magazine, December, 1957

via *The Menomonee Falls Gazette*, 1972



Joe Maneely at work. [Photo courtesy of Nancy Maneely.]

**Joe Maneely** was a remarkably gifted and fast artist who was Stan's "go-to" guy in the 1950s for everything from crazy humor to deadly serious adventure stories. In addition, Joe and Stan were close friends. Tragically, Maneely died in a 1958 commuter-train accident. One of the big "What ifs" in comics history is "What if Joe Maneely had lived to help create the Marvel Universe of the 1960s?"



Stan Lee and Joe Maneely as drawn by Joe to promote *Mrs. Lyons' Cubs*. [©2011 the copyright holders]

The article reprinted here, "Cub Scouts Strip Rates Eagle Award," first appeared in *Editor & Publisher* magazine in December, 1957, but the version seen is adapted from a reprint of it that appeared in the *Menomonee Falls Gazette* in 1972. It's a profile of Stan and Joe that spotlights their syndicated strip **Mrs. Lyons' Cubs**, that was distributed by the *Chicago Sun-Times* Syndicate. (And "Eagle Award" here refers to the Cub Scouts honor, not the British comics fan award.)

The conversation piece mostly concerned everything but their work. The protagonists spoke of alley cats, books that could be written on photography, children, Irish coffee, newspapers, interviewing the interviewer.

It was difficult pinning these two witty fellows down. They laughed hard in their excitement, and words rippled like water in a fast-moving brook.

They are young. This is the moment, the opportunity. You do it now or else. You understood how Stan Lee, writer, and Joe Maneely, artist, felt.

Out of the confusion of the spirited chitchat came these facts, finally: On Feb. 10 the *Chicago Sun-Times* Syndicate will release their daily and Sunday humor strip, **Mrs. Lyons' Cubs**, timed to coincide with Boy Scout Week.

"Let me tell you about our purpose," Stan, 35, said. "It's to furnish a vehicle for the countless humorous situations which occur to Cub Scouts and those associated with them, as well as those situations which occur to all youngsters in

the age group of 8-10, and the effect on those who have contact with these youngsters."

He said there is no more closely-knit family than the family in which there are Cubs.

Stan is tall, Madison-Avenue-ish in appearance, with a smile that reaches across the room. He smiled: "It's a source of very great satisfaction to me to know that our strip has been approved by the chief Scout executive, Dr. Arthur A. Schuck."

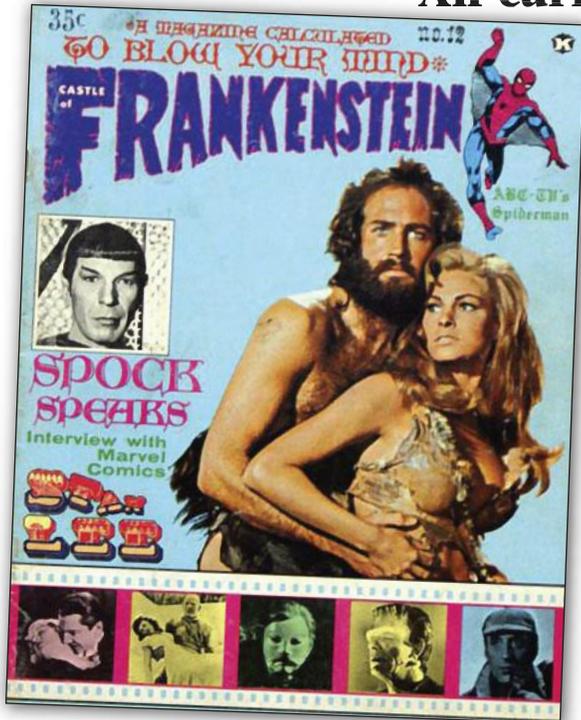
He said he has spent months studying Cub Scout manuals and various scouting publications, and talking with scout leaders, den mothers, Cubs themselves.

"But," he explained, "there will be nothing pedantic about the strip—nothing dry, nothing self-laudatory. For I deeply believe that the best way to reach the vastest audience is through the medium of humor. We hope 'Mrs. Lyons' Cubs' will be humor with a heart, with warmth and feeling."

"I suppose we shouldn't admit this," Joe said, "but this is

# Stan Lee Meets [Castle of] Frankenstein

An early Marvel Age interview with Stan,  
conducted by Ted White



This interview first appeared in 1965's *Castle of Frankenstein* #12. Note how it was so early in the Marvel Age that the cover bills it as an "Interview with Marvel Comics." [Castle of Frankenstein and non-Marvel characters ©2011 the copyright holders. Spider-Man ©2011 Marvel Characters, Inc.]

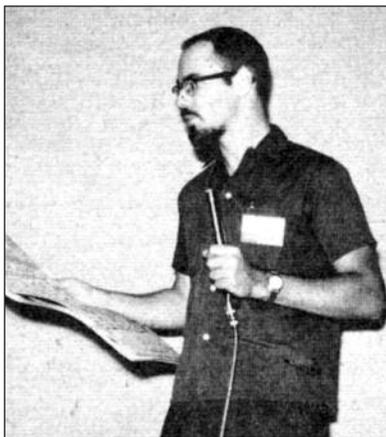
"A Conversation with the Man behind Marvel Comics: Stan Lee," as this piece was called when it first appeared, was one of the earliest Stan interviews of substance ever done. This is only to be expected, since the 1965 interviewer was Ted White, a sophisticated science-fiction and comics fan. Ted's early-1950s one-shot fanzine **The Facts behind Superman** was, as Bill Schelly writes in his 1997 book **The Golden Age of Comic Fandom**, "one of the earliest known attempts to write an authoritative in-depth article about a comic book superhero." In 1960 he wrote the second installment of [the fanzine] **Xero's** innovative "All in Color... for a Dime" series—and in the mid-1960s and after, he was becoming a published science-fiction author (**Phoenix Prime**, et al.) and would soon be the editor of the sf magazine **Amazing**.

Here's what Ted said about the interview in 2007, with several decades' perspective:

"I have very few memories of the actual interview... but looking back on it, and rereading it, I think it went well and opens a window into Stan before he was the darling of the college lecture circuit and a media celebrity in his own right."

—DF & RT

[A version of this interview appeared in **Alter Ego** #74.]



Interviewer Ted White circa 1966, acting as auctioneer at an early comics convention. This photo originally appeared in Larry Ivie's magazine *Monsters and Heroes*, and later in *Alter Ego* #58. [©2011 the respective copyright holders.]

**TED WHITE:** You've been with Marvel since what...1944?

**STAN LEE:** I'm pretty rotten at dates. But it's been about 25 years, 27 years ... something like that. [NOTE: Actually, as is now well known, Stan came to work for Timely Comics in 1941. —DF & RT.]

**TW:** But the new look in Marvel occurred relatively recently. To what do you attribute this?

**LEE:** Well, I guess it started with the first

**TW:** What led you to do those? Up until then there had been no superheroes for about five or six years in this company.

**LEE:** Before I answer... would anybody like a sourball?

**TW:** Thanks... .

**LEE:** What color? I seem to have red, yellow, orange... couple of greens.

**TW:** I feel very strange conducting an interview with a sourball in my mouth.

**LEE:** Well, I guess we were looking for something to hook some new readers. Also, I think boredom had a little to do with it. We had been turning out books for about 20 years. Same old type all the time... so I figured, let's try something a little more offbeat. Let's try to... I think the big policy was to avoid the clichés. For example, in the **Fantastic Four**, the first cliché was: all superheroes wore costumes [so we didn't use them]. We soon learned that was a mistake because, much as the readers like offbeat things, there are certain basics that we must have, and apparently superhero fans do demand costumes, as we learned in the subsequent mail.

**TW:** They've been after you to change costumes around ever since.

issue of **Fantastic Four** about five years ago. They were our first real offbeat superheroes. They sort of started the trend.



Sub-Mariner, who Stan here refers to as “sort of a hero-villain,” battling the original Human Torch in the July 1940 *Marvel Mystery Comics* #9. Pencils by Sub-Mariner creator Bill Everett, inks by Alex Schomburg. [©2011 Marvel Characters, Inc.]

**LEE:** Yes. In fact, they... costumes were nothing that I ever worried much about, but I see that the rabid fans are tremendously interested in the attire of their superheroes. The other cliché that we... I think we were probably the first outfit to break... was the cliché of all the superheroes being goody-goody and friendly with each other. If they're members of a team, they're all nice and polite, and... We had our Fantastic Four argue amongst themselves. They didn't always get along well and so forth. And this seems to have caught on very well.

**TW:** Actually, doesn't this go back to company policy back in the days in the '40s, when *The Sub-Mariner* and *The Human Torch* were fighting with each other?

**LEE:** Well, the only thing is... then, *The Sub-Mariner* wasn't that much of a good guy. It was sort of his personality that he would not get along well. They were natural enemies. Fire and water.

**TW:** Well, this was pretty unusual. I guess we can say that, in the comics, Marvel pioneered the whole idea of the anti-hero... the superhero who isn't really a hero.

**LEE:** Yes, I think you could say that, because I think certainly *Sub-Mariner* is the first one that I... that I can remember. Bill Everett did the first “*Sub-Mariner*”... he was sort of a hero-villain. He was really more hero than villain... but he wasn't 100% hero in the sense that the heroes are today.

**TW:** The readers would see things from his point of view, of course. Now you've got a full-fledged line, and you're doing very little besides the superheroes. Of course, you have branched out a good bit. You've got **Sgt. Fury**, which is about 50% superhero and about 50% non-superhero, depending upon whether you read his adventures in World War II or his adventures today. And the newest thing you're doing is the TV series. Can you tell us a little about that? How much work do the animators do on the original art?

**LEE:** Well, quite a bit. They use the actual story and art from the magazines. Basically, it's using our still figures, our still pictures, our panels, and then animating the panels.

**TW:** They go back to your original black-&-whites?

**LEE:** Yes. [phone buzzer interrupts] Excuse me. Yeah?... Why, sure... Just one little interruption. Would you mind opening the door? I think it locks automatically, and Sol Brodsky is coming in. Thanks, yeah. He'll be in in a minute. [BUZZ] Whoops! [into phone] Yeah? I'll give Sol something, something to look at. [Production manager Sol Brodsky enters stage left and confers with Stan over a comics page]

**SOL BRODSKY:** Stan, he's supposed to be catching him here on the rebound?

**LEE:** Or reaching for him.

**BRODSKY:** Reaching for him...

**LEE:** He doesn't have to be actually catching him...

**BRODSKY:** Now he's flying by this way... and the hand like this looks as if he's throwing.

**LEE:** I thought the hand could just be like that, as if it's going to...

**BRODSKY:** Like this...

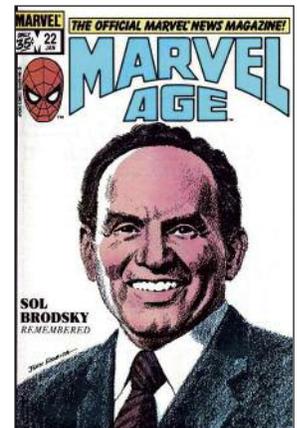
**LEE:** Sure. just reaching. Any way that will make sense... see ... 'cause here he grabbed him. Instead of it being this way, we'll turn it that way... and now he's reaching to grab him, see?

**BRODSKY:** Yeah... we just drew it wrong.

**LEE:** Right. I just want to give you something. I understand Steranko is here. I'll probably be another 20 minutes... so possibly he might want to look this over and then I'll talk to him. [Brodsky exits]

**TW:** We're curious to know the exact procedure you follow when you brainstorm a story, especially one that will continue over several issues.

**LEE:** Well, what we usually do is, with most of the artists, get a rough plot... I mean as much as I can write in longhand on the side of one sheet of paper... who the villain will be, what the problem will be, and so forth. Then I call the artist— whoever's going to draw the strip... I read to him what I've written down, these few notes... and we discuss it. By the time we're through talking for about 20 minutes, we usually have some plot going. And we talk it out. Lately, I've had



Stan's 1960s right hand man, Sol Brodsky, portrayed on the cover of the January 1985 *Marvel Age* #22, published shortly after Brodsky's 1984 death. By that time, the talented artist had become a VP of Marvel. Art by John Romita, Sr. [©2011 Marvel Characters, Inc.]

# Tell It To The Doctor

## Stan's correspondence with comics fandom pioneer Dr. Jerry G. Bails

by Roy Thomas and Danny Fingerroth

Along with Roy Thomas, **Jerry Bails, Ph.D.** was one of the founders of comics fandom, including, in 1961, founding *Alter Ego* magazine, which was later published by Roy. Jerry also became one of comics' greatest indexers, compiling the first *Who's Who of Comics Creators*. Here, from Roy's archives, are some letters Jerry exchanged with Stan in the early days of Marvel. They're a fascinating glimpse into the thought processes of both men. Sadly, Bails passed away in 2006 at age 73.

### MAGAZINE MANAGEMENT COMPANY

655 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK 21, N. Y. • TELEPHONE 8-7900

SEP 1 1961

8/28/61

Dear Jerry:

Enjoyed reading ALTER-EGO and the COMICCOLLECTOR, and got a kick out of your little critique of THE FANTASTIC FOUR, written by Roy Thomas.

Just to correct a few small inaccuracies though, I'm not a "former" editor of *Timely*— I've been editor and art director of that redoubtable institution for the past 21 years, and hope to continue ad infinitum. Also, it is doubtful that Mr. Thomas is the "only person who bought a copy" (although he said that humorously, of course) because judging by early sales reports, I think we have a winner on our hands!

As for the future of the F.F., we WILL have :  
COSTUMES  
A DIFFERENT TREATMENT (art-wise) OF THE TORCH  
ADDITIONAL NEW CHARACTERS IN MONTHS TO COME  
(Don't be too surprised to meet Sub-Mariner again, or Captain America! Who knows??)  
AND A FEW MORE SURPRISES... so stay with us, pal!

Would be interested in your opinion of another new mag due to go on sale soon— *AMAZING ADULT FANTASY*. We think it's a smash.

Regarding some of the various comments concerning the F.F., we have purposely refrained from letting invisible girl (oops, sorry!) Invisible Girl walk thru walls, and from giving TOO MUCH super powers to our characters, as we feel that effects like those are chiefly of appeal to the YOUNGER readers, and we are trying (perhaps vainly?) to reach a slightly older, more sophisticated group.

Enough for now— keep up the good work.

Regards,



Jerry Bails and Roy Thomas at the Fandom Reunion luncheon, Chicago, 1997. [©2002 Complex City]

Dr. Jerry G. Bails in 1965  
[courtesy interfan.org]



August 31, 1961  
Dear Mr. Lee: (Aw, that's too formal for someone who has followed your work so closely for 21 years. I'll start this letter again.)  
Dear Stan,

(Now that's better.) Thanks very much for your letter. I'm glad you liked ALTER-EGO and the COMICCOLLECTOR. I'm sorry about referring to you as a "former" editor; I was trying to identify you for my readers who had seen Roy Thomas' article on the ALL-WINNERS SQUAD, but I ran out of space at the bottom of the page. (By the way, how many appearances did the SQUAD make? I have only one of their adventures in my collection, but seem to recall a second. I'd pay anything to get a hold of the other issues.)

I'm glad to see that the F.F. will have the changes that you mentioned. Most of my correspondents clamored for these changes even before seeing Roy's review. *Namor*, as friend or foe (or both), will be a welcomed addition.

*AMAZING ADULT FANTASY* is excellent, and will probably sell well; however, fans are complaining that they can't find your mags at local stands. I don't know much about the distribution of comics, but your comics aren't being circulated among all your potential buyers. I know that for a

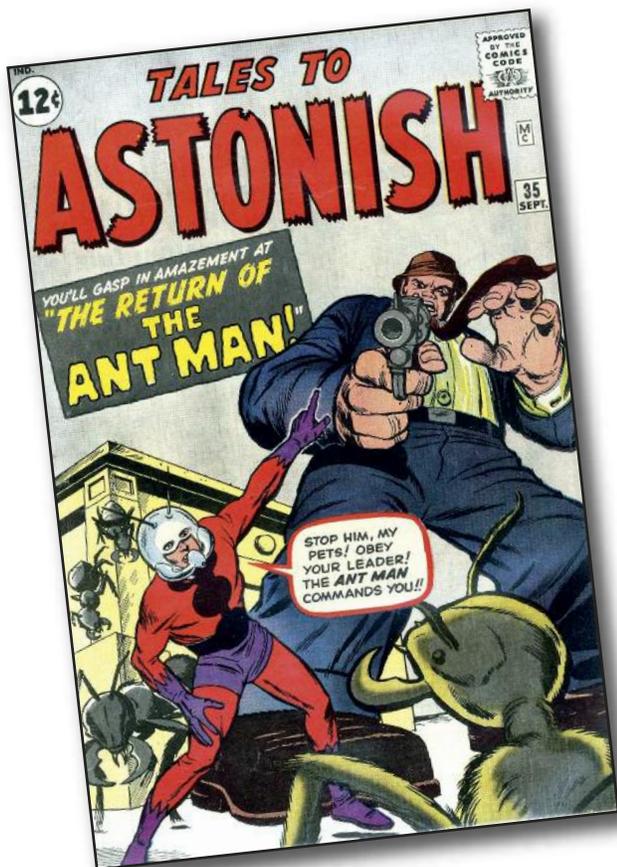
Just before I put the next issue of the COMICCOLLECTOR to bed, I'll write to ask you for news items for "On the Drawing Board." I hope that you will help us out. There are some 500 active fans who will greatly appreciate it. By the way, the COMICCOLLECTOR will go out free to all the names and addresses you might care to supply. Also I'd like to send sample copies of ALTER-EGO to any artists and writers on your staff who would be interested. A card with their names and addresses is all I need.

As a comics collector of long standing and an enthusiastic fan of the current revival of old heroes, I am always looking for rare old comics and original art. It would be a great pleasure and honor to have the original art for the first issue of the FANTASTIC FOUR to mount on the walls of my den. If these original panels are just destroyed (Heaven forbid!) I would happily pay to have them mailed on to me.

Best wishes,

Jerry Bails

P.S. I sincerely hope that you will continue to be the editor of *Timely* (?) comics ad infinitum.



The cover spotlighting the second appearance of the Ant-Man—but his first in costume—from *Tales to Astonish* #35 (September 1962). Pencils by Jack Kirby, inks by Dick Ayers. [©2011 Marvel Characters, Inc.]

Here are some fascinating excerpts from a letter from Stan to Jerry dated January 9, 1963.

FF is easily our favorite book here at the Marvel bullpen. It's my baby and I love it. People have asked for original scripts- actually, we don't even HAVE any. I write the story plot- go over it with Jack- he draws it up based on our hasty conferences- then, with his drawings in front of me, I write the captions and dialogue, usually right on the original art work! It seems to work out well,

As for SPIDER-MAN, I wouldn't be surprised if he turns into a real winner, judging by the mail ~~xxx~~ we're receiving-- tremendous enthusiasm from the readers.

Mail-- that's my biggest problem. I take it too damn seriously- read each and every letter- wish I could answer 'em all- we get over a hundred a day- sometimes over 500!!! (after a long week-end). Can't keep up with it. Fans keep asking for MORE letters pages- wish we didn't have ANY! It's like a tiger by the tail- can't let go-

From *Fantastic Four* #7 (October 1962), a beautiful Lee-Kirby-Ayers full-page illustration.



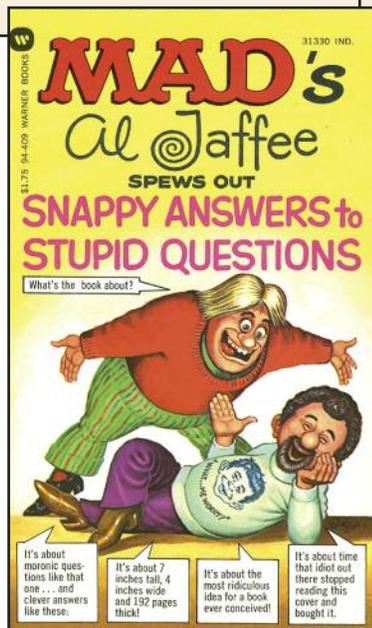
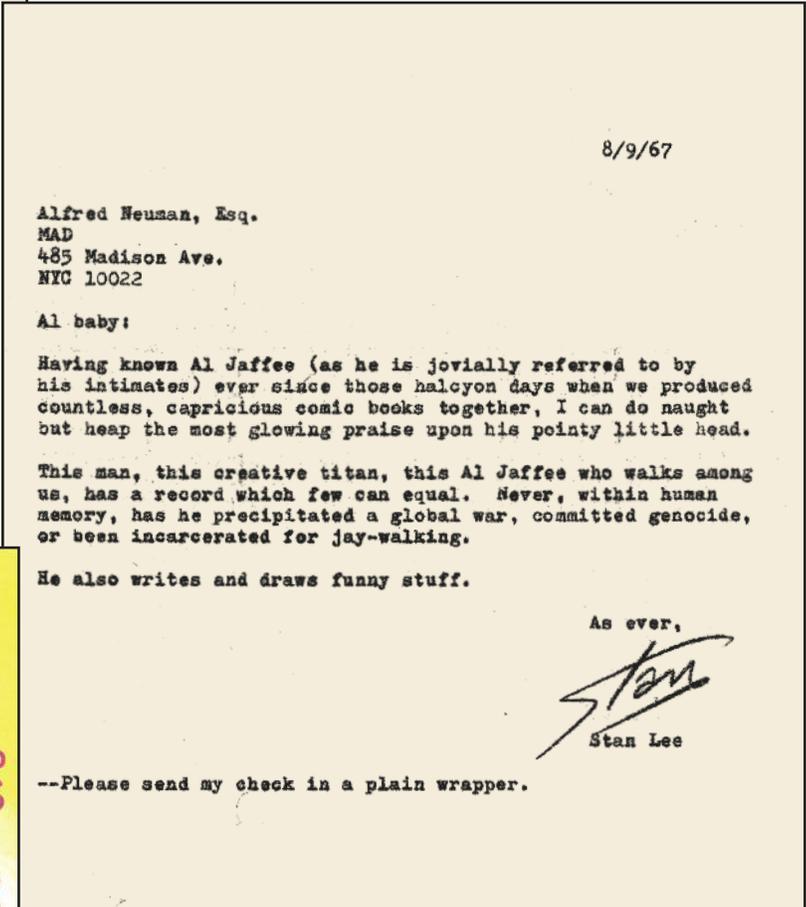
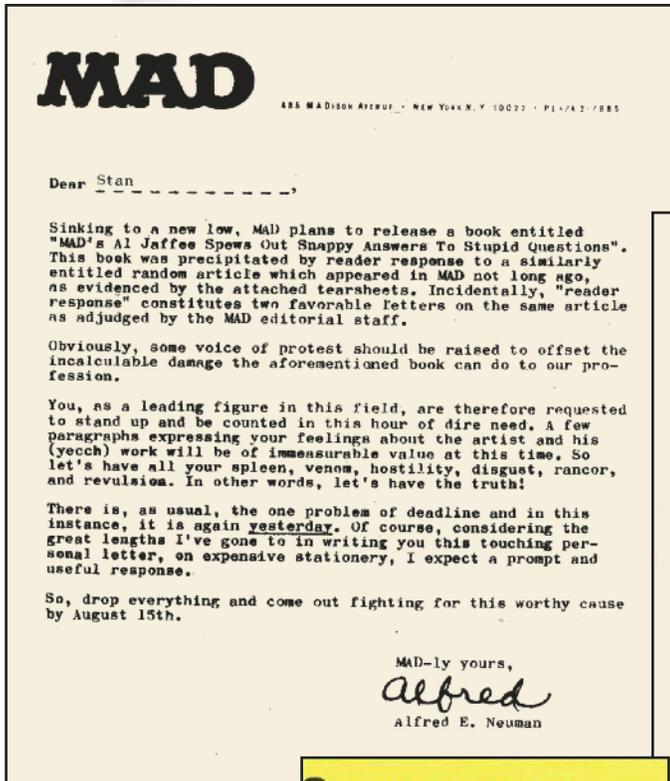
FINALLY, AFTER HOURS OF VOYAGING THRU SPACE, THE WHIRLING STAR SHIP REACHES PLANET 'X'. THEN, A HATCH SLOWLY OPENS AND BEFORE THEY KNOW IT, THE FANTASTIC QUARTET FIND THEMSELVES FLOATING TOWARDS THE SURFACE... DESCENDING GENTLY ON AN INVISIBLE BEAM OF ANTI-GRAVITY MATTER!

# Are These Letters About Al Jaffee?

## Stan's correspondence with "Alfred E. Neuman"

FROM THE  
**STAN LEE**  
ARCHIVES

**Al Jaffee**, whose interview about his years working with Stan appears elsewhere in this book, went on, of course, to become one of the legendary stalwarts of *Mad* magazine, famous for his "Mad Fold-Ins" and "Snappy Answers to Stupid Questions." When the first book collection of "Snappy Answers" was being prepared, someone using the nom de plume of *Mad's* mascot "Alfred E. Neuman" (probably editor Jerry DeFuccio) sent out a call for tributes to Al. Herewith, "Neuman's" letter—and Stan's response, which was printed as part of 1968's *Mad's Al Jaffee Spews Out Snappy Answers to Stupid Questions*.



Stan's letter to "Alfred E. Neuman" was printed as part of the introductory text to the 1968 *Mad's Al Jaffee Spews Out Snappy Answers to Stupid Questions*, the first of many such compilations. Cover by Al. [©2011 E.C. Publications, Inc.]



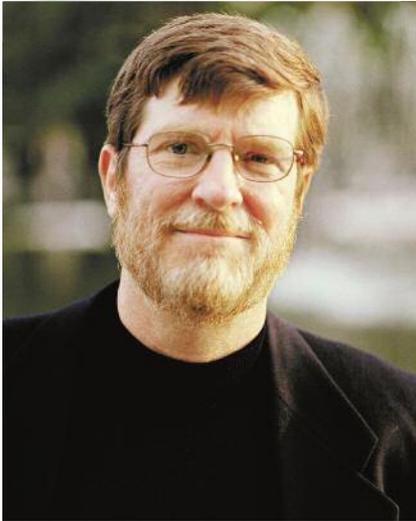
# Stan the Man meets Conan (but not the Barbarian), 1968

## Interview with Neal Conan, August 12, 1968

Transcribed by Steven Tice

Copyedited by Danny Fingerroth

FROM THE  
**STAN LEE**  
ARCHIVES



*Neal Conan is the award-winning host of **Talk of the Nation**, the national news-talk call-in show from National Public Radio News. Beginning his journalism career as a freelance reporter and writer in New York, Conan joined NPR in 1977, specializing in foreign affairs and national security issues.*

*You can hear or read a transcript of the 2010 interview at this link:*

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=130862700>

*But here in these pages, we present Neal Conan and Stan Lee on August 12, 1968...*

**NEAL CONAN:** My name is Neal Conan and I'm in the studio with Stan Lee, the single person most responsible for what many thousands of people call "the Marvel Age of comics." Stan, at this point you're the editor as well as writing several of the magazines yourself, isn't that right?

**STAN LEE:** That's right, Neal. I think I'd rather you had said millions of people. We tell ourselves we have millions of readers.

**NC:** What is your circulation?

**SL:** Actually, it's sixty million a year. Now, I don't know that that's sixty million different people. There may be a couple of repeat sales there, but that's how many magazines we sell, approximately.

**NC:** Does that make you number one in the field?

**SL:** Oh, well, we think we'd be number one in the field if we sold two. No, from point of view of quantity, I think there's another company—who shall be nameless, as far as I'm concerned—that sells a few more, but they print a lot more. We sell more of what we print than anybody else.

*The network's **All Things Considered** won numerous awards during Conan's tenure as producer and executive producer, and he has received many personal awards as well. A comics fan, Conan has actually appeared as himself in Marvel's comics over the years.*

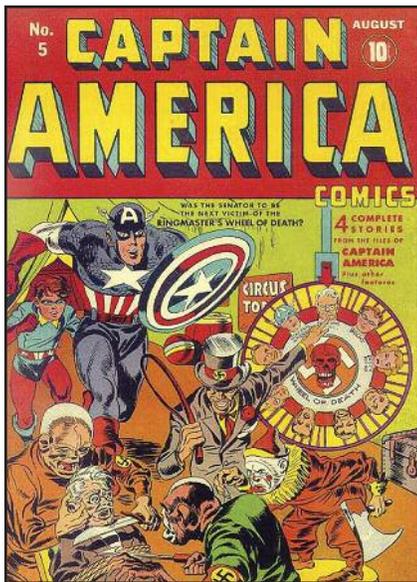
*In 1968, very early in his career, Conan interviewed Stan Lee on New York's WBAI-FM. An audio copy of the interview was found in Stan's University of Wyoming archives, and we have transcribed and lightly edited it for presentation here.*

*When informed of our plans to run the interview, Conan was inspired to again interview Stan, which he did on October 27, 2010 on **Talk of the Nation**. Introducing Stan, and referring to the '68 interview, Conan, tongue placed firmly in cheek, said:*

*"Forty-two years ago, a devilishly handsome young man recorded one of his very first interviews with a legend in the comic book business... . In those days, I thought Stan Lee was old. Today, we all know he's immortal."*



A Marvel Universe version of Neal Conan has actually appeared in several comics. Here, we see Neal in *Uncanny X-Men* #226 (February 1988) in a story written by Chris Claremont, with art by Marc Silvestri and Dan Green. [©2011 Marvel Characters, Inc.]



Stan's first Timely comic book (as opposed to prose) story, "Meet 'Headline' Hunter—Foreign Correspondent," appeared in *Captain America* #5 (August 1941). Here's the cover to the issue by Jack Kirby and Syd Shores. [©2011 Marvel Characters, Inc.]

**NC:** In other words, magazine for magazine.

**SL:** Mm-hm. I think *Life* may beat us.

**NC:** [laughs] Okay, would you like to give us some of your background, and I guess incorporated in that would be the background of Marvel.

**SL:** I'd like to think they're almost

synonymous. [laughs] I'm just, I'm not terribly important as an individual. Everything I do seems to involve Marvel. One of the few native-born New Yorkers, I guess, extant, and I've been working at Marvel since I was about 17.

**NC:** What were they publishing back in those days?

**SL:** Comic magazines, too, but obviously I think they had *Captain America*, which was one of the biggest at the time, and they had *Marvel Mystery Comics*, and *Sub-Mariner*, *Daring Comics* and *Mystic Comics*. Not too many others. It

was a pretty small operation at the time. And I was there for a while, and, as a matter of fact, Jack Kirby, who is now just about our top artist, he was my boss at the time, he and Joe Simon, who had hired me. And after I was there a short time, Joe and Jack left, I was the only fellow remaining, and Martin Goodman, our publisher, asked if I would hold the job down until he could find somebody else on a permanent basis, because I could see he didn't relish a 17-year-old handling this entire, vast operation. And he's never told me that he found anybody else, but he never told me that he stopped looking, so, as far as I know, I'm still there on a temporary basis. [laughs]

**NC:** What time do you really consider that the new age, or the *Marvel Age*, of comics really began?

**SL:** It's probably one of the few questions you'll ask that I'll know the answer to, I would say, with the first issue of *Fantastic Four*, which was about six or seven years ago. Until then, we had been turning out comic magazines just like everybody else, thinking of them as being for young children. And one of the reasons I even called myself "Stan Lee," which is just taking my first name, Stanley, and cutting it in two, was because I figured, "This is just a temporary job, and one day I'll quit, and write some Great American Novels, and I'll use my real name then." Well, after being there for about 25 years or whatever it was, I began to realize that I'm going to be doing this for a while, and it's about time to try to make something of these books.

So it took a little courage, I guess, on the part of Mr. Goodman, but he agreed to go along, and we decided to change the whole format and to do these magazines as though we're doing them for ourselves. If we were comic magazine readers, we said, what would we want to read? We certainly wouldn't want to read this stuff, you know? So we tried to inject all kinds of realism, as we call it, into the stories, and I say "as we call it" because, obviously, the stories are fairy tales, anyway. We think of them as fairy tales for grownups. And we take someone like Spider-Man and you have to accept the basic premise, which is that a fellow can be bitten by a radioactive spider and then be able to climb walls and so forth, which is, of course, nutty. But once (we hope) you've accepted that, then we try to make everything else very realistic. We say to ourselves, just because you have a superpower, that doesn't mean you might not have dandruff, or trouble with girls, or have trouble paying your bills. Well, this is what we started doing which was different than anybody, as far as I know, had ever done in comics before.

**NC:** I've seen the first edition of *The Silver Surfer*, and it was really beautiful.

**SL:** We have very high hopes for that mag. I think it's probably



Here's the splash page to the "Headline Hunter" story that appeared in *Captain America* #8 (November 1941), "The Strange Riddle of the Plague of Death!" It was written by Stan, who signed it, but the art credits are unknown. [©2011 Marvel Characters, Inc.]

# Face-to-Face with Wertham's Partner!

FROM THE  
**STAN LEE**  
ARCHIVES

## Stan debates Dr. Hilde Mosse on the Barry Farber Show

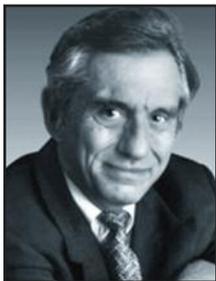
WOR-AM Radio, November 12, 1968

Transcribed by Steven Tice

Copyedited by Danny Fingeroth

**Barry Farber** was a prominent local New York late night radio host in 1968, when this program aired. Later, he would become, and remains, a national media figure. In this program, he brought Stan together with **Frederic Wertham's** colleague, **Dr. Hilde Mosse**, a figure as controversial and prominent in American psychotherapy as was Wertham. Although the show, discovered on audiotape in Stan's Wyoming archives, takes place 14 years after the publication of Wertham's anti-comics tome, **Seduction of the Innocent**, for Mosse, the issues are still the same as in the 1950s. Also on the broadcast are animation luminaries **Dennis Marks** and **Barry Yellen**. The transcript has been edited to emphasize the dialogue of the primary "adversaries," Lee and Mosse. Some of Farber's, Marks's, and Yellen's comments have been deleted or shortened due to space limitations, as were commercials and station identifications. Also, while Mosse's syntax may seem a little odd, bear in mind that, as a refugee from Nazi Germany, she spoke in the manner of someone who, while highly intelligent and educated, was not a native English speaker. Hilde Mosse died in 1982, at age 70.

1968 Barry Farber Show on WOR-AM radio, with Stan Lee, Hilde Mosse, et al. Stan Lee Collection, box #71, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.



Barry Farber has been a major radio personality for decades, and is still active today.

**BARRY FARBER:** I'm Barry Farber... Onward now into an argument. Not as big an argument as we would have had a couple years ago, but, who knows, in some aspects maybe a bigger one, about comic books, television cartoons, and movies for children. Hilde Mosse is a child psychiatrist. She's a medical doctor, of course. She's Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at New York Medical College, the School Bureau of Child Guidance. Let me get all the titles straight now so we don't crash on takeoff. You are School Psychiatrist at the Bureau of Child Guidance. Right?



An undated photo of Hilde L. Mosse.

**HILDE MOSSE:** That's right.  
**BF:** In other words, you are as official a child psychiatrist as one can possibly be. You are just as official as Dr. Frederic Wertham. If he were to walk into this room, neither one of you would salute the other one. You are both equally competent in this argument, right?

**HM:** Yes, we worked together for years.

**BF:** Is your attitude the same as his?

**HM:** Yes, that's right.

**BF:** I've got to congratulate my assistants because we've got a great broadcast before we even begin. Dr. Wertham is famous for his comments about and, frankly, against most of the literature for children, including cartoons, comic books, and the like. I haven't heard a conciliatory remark from Dr. Wertham in ten years of Wertham-watching. Regardless of what's happened inside the industry, Dr. Wertham seems to

maintain his anxiety and his powers of observation, and, in fact, his opposition to most of what's going on inside comic strips, and comic books, and television cartoons for children.

Barry Yellen is president of Childhood Productions. He has, before the age of 21, directed, produced, or written 582 different plays. Mr. Yellen, right now you are president of Childhood Productions, involved in all sorts of children's—



Here's Stan in the mid-1960s.

**BY:** Children's films, motion pictures, theaters, and television. Primarily theaters.

**BF:** Stan Lee is with us, and he came in with such a beautiful woman I almost said to myself, "Holy mackerel. I'm not going to tell anybody, because who in the world has a right to walk into the studio with a woman that beautiful?" Well, Stan Lee does, because that's Mrs. Lee. And you know something? I made up my mind not to say a word if you come in with anybody. Before I even saw her, I was looking in the mirror. Look, it's not even a mirror, the glass right here, I could see her coming in and I just made up my mind I wasn't going to say a word, but I have a note in front of me that she's Mrs. Lee. So we're all going to live happily ever after for the duration of the broadcast.



Stan's wife Joan, here in a modeling pose, was with him at the talk show.

**STAN LEE:** Hopefully, Barry.

**BF:** Dennis Marks is a TV writer. The last time Dennis Marks was on these microphones I said, "Let's see, now, you're a TV cartoonist." And I knew good and well that he wasn't a cartoonist. He wrote, he wrote the dialogue.

**DM:** And the stories.

**BF:** Has anybody got a flippant, light comment on comics and what's happened lately.

**DM:** TV cartoons are fun. That's my stand for the evening.

**SL:** Well, I'll say that comic magazines are great literature, which ought to get us into an argument about as fast as anything possibly could.

**BF:** Are you talking about all, or just you?

**SL:** Oh, no, I'm always referring just to mine, the Marvel Comics Group. You know, I might add that I actually don't know which side to be on, because, years ago, I was a very staunch fan of Dr. Wertham's, which is almost heresy for somebody in my field to say. When I was very much younger, I read a book, I think it was called *Dark Legend*.

**HM:** That's right.

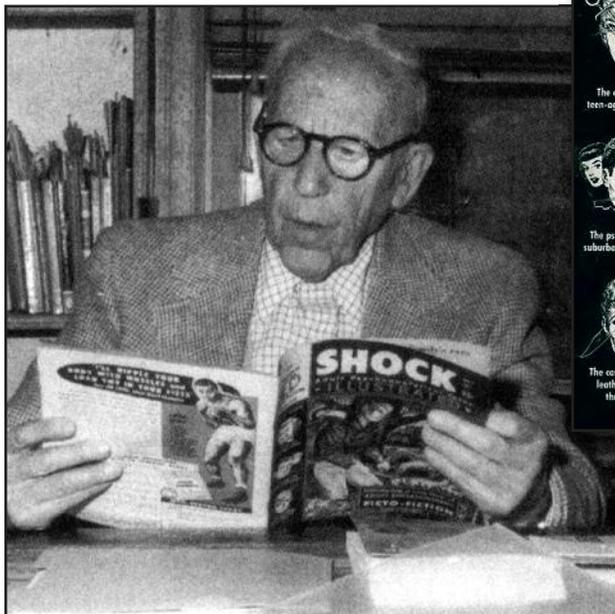
**SL:** A case history of a boy who killed his mother or some such thing?

**HM:** That's right, yes.

**SL:** It made a lasting impression on me, as a youth. It scared the life out of me, and I said to myself, "Gee whiz, anybody who would write this for young people, a book like this which would fall into young people's hands..." I was very surprised to find, years later, that he was crusading against violence, because I still find him a little bit frightening when I think of the title of that book, even. So I guess it just proves nothing at all, really.

**BF:** But I want to know what *this* proves, if anything. Reading now from page three of the CMAA.

Fredric Wertham in approximately 1955, responding in, well, shock to an issue of EC's *Shock Illustrated*. [©2011 the copyright holders]



What does that mean, again?

**SL:** I think Comic Magazine Association, and the last "A" you've got me.

**BF:** Uh-huh. Here, Comics Magazine Association of America. Naturally. Listen to this. "During the recent election campaign in South Vietnam, candidates used more than two million comic books to win votes, *Time Magazine* reported."

**SL:** Even the losing candidates, which must say something for comics. No, the thing is, about comics, I think nobody will deny that there are good ones, and there are bad ones. But I think we had this discussion once before, Barry. Comics are a medium. They're a means of communication using pictures and words, and I don't think you can condemn them because of their format.

**BF:** No, you can't condemn them, but you can scrutinize them more than you can books. I'll tell you why nobody has ever done a show just on books. We may do a show on a specific book, but I don't know anybody who just said, "Tonight we're going to discuss books. In general." Because it's too big. Why discuss books? [But] we have the right to discuss comics in general for the simple reason that comic books have such power to propel, to pervert, to do anything they want to, that you deserve discussing.

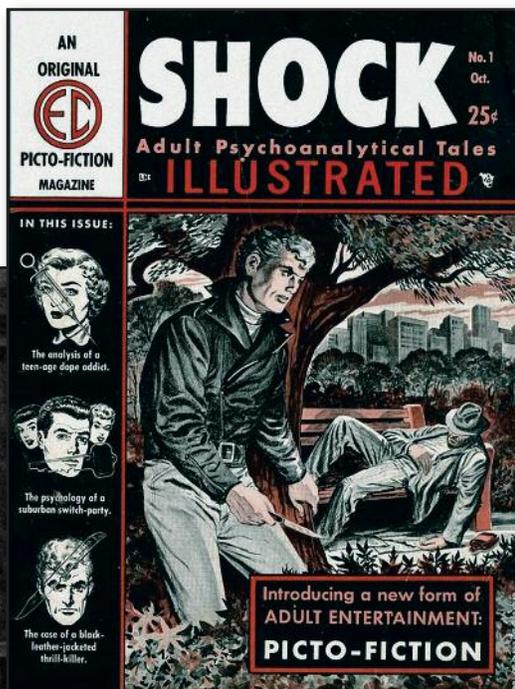
**SL:** Well, do you think comic books have more power than a book or than a motion picture?

**BF:** [whispers] Definitely.

**SL:** Really? Why so, Barry?

**BF:** Because You're in a lower class mentality, either because of lower age, which is excusable, or because of normal middle age and lower mentality, which is less excusable, but you're in the much more impressionable group. But if I put [a message] in the medium of a compelling cartoon or comic book series, my audience is my marionette. My readership is my constituency. They're my toy, almost.

**SL:** Well, you're just really talking, then, about the audience, about the fact that any type of communication that's directed toward



A clearer view of the comic Dr. Wertham is reading: *Shock Illustrated* #1 (September-October 1955). It was actually part of EC's post-horror-era "New Directions" line of comics with color covers and black-and-white interiors that had text and art, but no word balloons. Cover painting is by Jack Kamen. [©2011 EC Comics, Inc.]

younger people you feel will affect them more than some type that's directed toward older people, and I don't think you can argue that point. But, as far as comics being more influential, or having more impact, I don't think anything has more impact than a good, dramatic motion picture.

**HM:** Well, I would very much like to say something here, which I think is pertinent, about children swallowing fire-crackers. I know of cases which we are concerned about children playing on a vacant lot and getting into old iceboxes and then suffocating in them. And a friend of mine took that up in a class once, where there were about 35 to 40 children. And some children laughed at him, and snickered, and said, well— He said, "Why don't you take this seriously? Why don't you believe me?" Well, they say the Three Stooges and some other cartoon type film on television, they do it all the time, and they get out again, nothing happens to them. This makes an enormously deep impression on children, and of course it can be imitated.

I can give you a case I had the other day with my medical students, was a four-year-old child, was brought in by the mother because of fire-setting, and when we examined exactly what happened, the following had taken place. Mother was ironing, and the kids were watching television, and all of a sudden the four-year-old put out a scream, runs into the kitchen, and then the mother smells something funny, and she goes there, and the curtains are on fire. Apparently he had climbed up and had set fire in a manner which wasn't quite clear, but it had to do with the pilot light. Now, what they were watching, when we followed this story through, was, on a Saturday afternoon, they watched *Road Runner*. And *Road Runner* very often has explosion and fire-setting in it. And you have to know, of course.

So this, and *Speed Racer*, and many other programs. And you have to know how children react in order to know how it affects. And I'd like to say something that Mr. Lee says. You know, there's a tendency to confuse the issues completely. You cannot ever compare a book, which is scientific and artistic, like *Dark Legend*, and compares the matricide committed by a New York boy with both Hamlet and Orestes with comic books, which consist only of pictures, which are directed specifically toward children, in which the story line is of the most primitive and simple outline. It's very easy to write them, because the majority of them now, and when we first started to be interested in them, of course, deal with these strong men type, whether it's Atomic Man or whether it is Spider-Man. It is a very primitive pictorial. Of course they make more of an impression, because by the time Wertham wrote his first book, a

hundred million copies comic books were published a month, not a year, but a month, and they were the greatest publishing success in the history of known publishing. So this is something totally different from a book, which, if it's a bestseller, at that time had maybe 10,000 copies of less. So you cannot compare them.

**DM:** That little kid who set fire after watching *Road Runner*. I just wanted to ask the good doctor, if there—well, strike that. She certainly doesn't have a provable case in court that, because *Road Runner* was on the air at that time, that that is what caused the kid to set fire to the drapes. Number one, I'm sure she will find in her records cases of twenty, thirty, I'll even give her a hundred kids who jumped off roofs with red capes saying, "I'm Superman." How many kids pushed their grandmother into the oven after reading *Hansel and Gretel*?

**HM:** Wait a minute, you've said several different things I'd like to be able to answer. In the first place, there are proven cases, not only in this country, but all over the world, of direct imitative action, violent and otherwise, it doesn't have to be violent, following either film, or television show, or comic books.

You don't have to take my word for it. It's quite clear that imitation exists. Even imitation murders have been proven. Now, whatever that means, I would say, one way or other, it doesn't mean not necessarily you don't have to show murder on television. I mean, I don't jump to these conclusions.

**DM:** Well, where do you stop? That's what I want to ask?

**HM:** Wait a minute. We have to know exactly how children act. I am talking about children now, and that's the experience I have, because I examine children very carefully, and clinical examination, not any kind of speculation or anything like that, shows that this exists.

**SL:** Dr. Mosse, aren't children affected by everything that they hear and say?

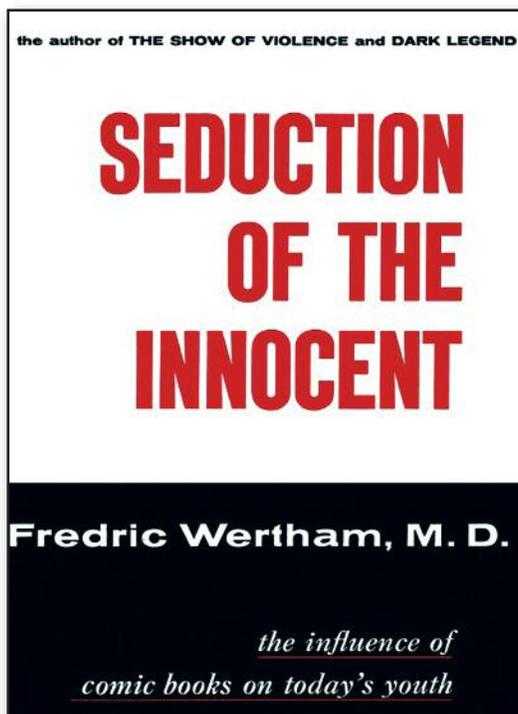
**HM:** Of course they are.

**SL:** And you'd almost have to segregate them from the world itself if you don't want them to be adversely affected by things. I mean, what do you do about a war? Now, they're exposed to the headlines about a war. They're exposed to newspaper crime news.

**HM:** Well, unfortunately, there's nothing I can do about it. But I'd like



Dennis Marks in the 1980s.

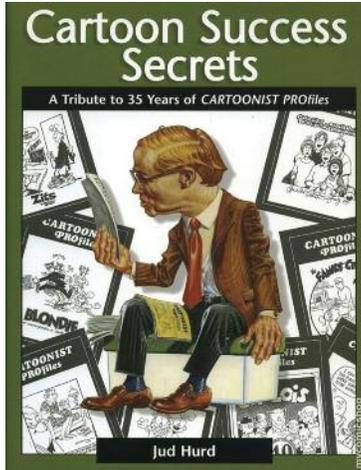


*Seduction of the Innocent* was Wertham's 1954 book that attacked comic books and contributed to the severe restriction of the industry and the loss of income by many talented writers and artists. [©1954 Rinehart and Co.]

# Legend meets Legend

Stan Lee interviewed by Jud Hurd  
of Cartoonist PROfiles magazine

From *Cartoonist PROfiles* #4, November 1969



[Copyright ©2004 Jud Hurd and  
Copyright ©2007 Philip J. Hurd]

According to *Jud Hurd's* 2004 book, *Cartoon Success Secrets: A Tribute To 35 Years Of Cartoonist Profiles*: "Author Jud Hurd may tell friends that he's been 'in the cartooning business since year one,' but it only seems like it. The venerable cartooning editor actually began in 1925. In 1969, he founded *Cartoonist PROfiles*, which has been providing an insider's perspective on the cartooning industry ever since."

Hurd passed away in 2005, and with his death, the magazine ceased publication.

**Stan Lee**, the very articulate editor of *Marvel Comics*, is always an articulate man to talk to. *Cartoonist PROfiles* readers can listen in here on a conversation we had with him on a recent afternoon.

**Q:** Are you anxious to receive scripts or drawings from people who want to get into the comic book field.

**A:** Not really. If somebody who's absolutely fantastic should be available, we would try to make a spot for him, but we have about all the people we need at the moment. We've been very lucky since you and I talked several years ago. By trying hard for years, and combing the nation, and calling everybody we knew, or ever had known, and trying to develop new talent, we now have reached the point where we have what I think is about the best comic magazine art staff ever assembled. We can always use a good writer, but I'm even reluctant to say that, because our demands are so difficult that even a good writer might not be able to write for us. There's so much else, besides being a good writer, that enters into doing the type of material we need.

**Q:** In the past, many young artists who first worked for the comic books have later switched over to doing syndicated newspaper comic strips. Does the answer you have just given mean that young people can no longer look forward to this?

**A:** Well, any answer that I give you is only true for this particular moment in time—now next week we may decide to put out a few new magazines, in which case I'll be looking for people again. I look at the samples of anyone who comes up to



[Cartoonist PROfiles Interview and cover copyright ©2004 Jud Hurd and copyright ©2007 Philip J. Hurd.]

the office, and if the fellow's good and we can't use him, I'll of course take his name anyway because we never know what will develop. Here's one problem that an editor or an art director always has. Suppose somebody came up right now with samples and he's better than the men I have now. Let's say that I don't have a book to accommodate him—the only thing I could do is to fire somebody who's working for me now. Now I would owe that to our company, if this new man is better, to get rid of one of those men now working for me. But, as a human being, how do you react to a situation like this? It's a difficult problem. In the comic magazine field, it seems that we always have too



As a kid, Stan liked to copy the art from comic strips such as Chester Gould's *Dick Tracy*.  
[©2011 Tribune Media Services.]



Young Stan also imitated the art style of *Milton Caniff*, who's seen here in a self-portrait. [©2011 the copyright holders]

many artists or we don't have enough—we never reach a plateau. If you're at a point where you have just the right number, within a week someone else who's good will come along, and then what do you do? So this is something we live with all the time.

**Q:** *Do you pay a lot of attention to the many fanzines which are produced by comic book buffs and collectors?*

**A:** Yes—I pay attention to the fanzines in the sense that I believe in brain-picking and I'll pay attention to anybody or anything that wants to voice a comment about comic magazines. Most of the fanzines are highly repetitive—a lot of them are just interested in peddling their own wares—they'll have their own drawings and their own little stories. But very often the things I enjoy are their criticisms—and I don't mind it even if they're very derogatory; I like to know what they hate about the books that I edit—I don't always agree, however. They may criticize things without a full knowledge of why the things are done that way, but I still want to know why anybody who's interested in comics likes or doesn't like something that we're doing or something that a competitor is doing. I learn by reading their opinions.

**Q:** *Letters from readers of your magazines reach your desk in piles, don't they?*

**A:** Yes, and they are a much better source of opinions than the fanzines. These opinions are more typical because the fanzines generally express the opinions of the fanatical fans while the mail expresses the opinion of the average fan. Actually, I read all the mail given to me and I read all the fanzines that cross my desk. I used to have wonderful eyesight before I started this job and now I'm going blind. My biggest beef with many fanzines is that they are produced with letters one-millionth of an inch high and they're usually mimeographed without enough ink, etc. When reading them, I wear my strongest glasses plus a magnifying glass; But I read every page—it's like a compulsion with me. And I read every letter.

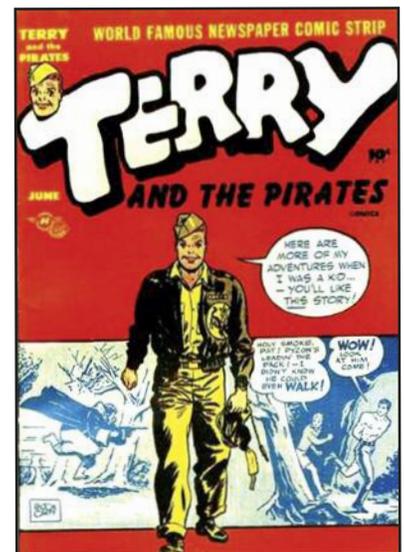
**Q:** *You write a great many of the Marvel Comic Magazines. Can you tell me how you go about that?*

**A:** Well, we work differently than any other company. In most other companies, a writer will write a script—more than likely he'll discuss the plot with the editor or submit a plot to the

editor, and if it's O.K., he goes home and writes a script. Then he gives it to the artist who draws the strip. We find that it's faster and more palatable and seems to give us a better result to have the writer discuss the plot with the artist. The artist then draws the strip with no script at all—just a knowledge of what the plot is. So the artist is part writer—he's breaking the story down as he sees it—his only limitation is that he must know how many pages the story is. I, or Roy Thomas, or whatever writer discusses the plot with the artist, will say, for instance, that this is a 20-page story so the artist knows he's got that many pages to fill.

**Q:** *Are these sessions between writer and artist verbal or written?*

**A:** They can be either way. I verbalize them myself—I don't have the time or the interest—I'm too bored to write the plot out and I have the kind of relationship with the artist where we sit and talk for five minutes about it. Later on, while the artist is making his drawings, he puts little notes on the side of the pages indicating what the hell he's drawing, just to help me know what he's doing in the various panels. Here's an idea as to how I work with several of our artists: In the case of Gene Colan, I'll write maybe a page of notes for myself, including all the things I want to discuss. Then I will phone Gene and he puts his tape recorder against the phone and I discuss the story with him sort of reading the page I've written. In the case of Jack Kirby, I will merely phone him, or he will phone me, as



And here's one of Caniff's most famous creations, *Terry and the Pirates*, which debuted in 1934. This Harvey Publications comic—of which Caniff's cover to the June 1947 issue #4 is shown—was comprised for the most part of collected daily and Sunday *Terry* strips, but also contained new material by creators such as Joe Simon, Jack Kirby, and Jack Keeler. [©2011 Tribune Media Services.]



As a kid, Stan was also a fan of George Herriman's *Krazy Kat* strip. [© King Features Syndicate, Inc.]

# Stan the Rock 'n' Roll Man

Stan's fans include rockers from the 1960s to today

**FROM THE  
STAN LEE  
ARCHIVES**

While Stan's tastes in pop music run more toward the Sinatra end of the spectrum—or why else would he have nicknamed artist John Romita “Ring-a-Ding,” taken from the title of a Sinatra album?—Lee's Marvel comics have always been of interest to rock 'n' rollers. More than a few of them made a point of meeting The Man over the years, and Stan talked about many of those encounters in the Bullpen Bulletins. In the Stan's Soapbox section of the Bullpen Bulletins for September 1968, Stan closed out by saying:

“And now we've gotta cut out—Country Joe and the Fish just arrived to visit us—and we don't wanna keep 'em out of the water too long!”

Now that may not have been their first visit to the Bullpen, or it may have been a message that was

Stan Lee  
Marvel Comics Group  
625 Madison Ave.  
New York, N.Y.

Country Joe & the Fish  
P. O. Box 2233  
Berkeley, Calif.  
May 19, 1967

Dear Stan,

No doubt you'll be pleased to know that your creations have so entered the consciousness of the generation that they emerge, yes actually emerge, in the folk music of the times. If you listen carefully to this record on your office stereo ( every office has an office stereo, in New York, right? ) you'll hear and see two actual figments.

Quite naturally we read your comics all the time here instead of working because our beloved leader J.E. Hoover said that our kind always did read comic books.

So we thought after you listened to the record we could make a deal. Here's the deal: you let us join the MMMS for freebies, and we'll let you join the Intergalactic Fish Fan Club for freebies. And then we can trade posters, and then... why the world is the limit. That's our deal, and I sure hope you dig it 'cause we dig you!

peace and joy,

Country Joe & the Fish

CJF/nf

5/26/67

Hi, Piscatorial Pals!

Never mind your record! What I wanna know is-- why types your letters? He, she, or it is great!

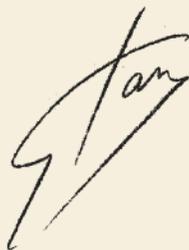
Anyway, we're deliciously delighted that our somewhat forensic fame has reached as far as the hallowed harmonious halls of Berkeley-- and penetrated, how'er insidiously, the liltin' lyrics of thine own rollickin' record!

What I'm trying to say, guys, is-- enjoyed your tintinnabulation' tunes-- got a kick out of our mention-- and am glad to dub thee-- one and all-- Merry Marchers in Perpetuity!

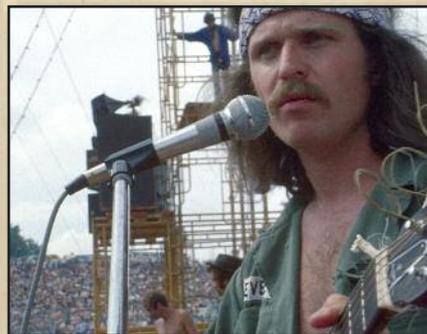
Your membership goodies are herewith dispatched. Any group that can come with a name like Country Joe and the Fish can't be all bad!

Hang loose, gang-- you're our type of heroes.

'Nuff said!



delayed in being published, but in any case, we found, in Stan's Wyoming archives, the 1967 correspondence on this page between Stan and his “Piscatorial Pals.”



Country Joe at Woodstock, 1969. [© 2009 Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc.]

For those of you who weren't around back then, “Country Joe” McDonald is probably best known for leading the crowd at 1969's Woodstock Music Festival

in an off-color cheer, which is featured in the 1970 *Woodstock* movie. But if that's all you know of his and the Fish's music, it's worth checking out what else they've done, as a band and individually. Certainly you might find their song “Superbird” of interest, because it namechecks some Marvel superheroes.

1967 correspondence between Stan Lee and Country Joe and the Fish, Stan Lee Collection, box #14, folder #8, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.

# To Hollywood and Beyond

## Stan and the movie *auteurs* by Danny Fingeroth

FROM THE  
**STAN LEE**  
ARCHIVES

From the dawn of the Marvel Age of Comics, Stan has known and worked with the best and brightest directors of several generations.

### ALAIN RESNAIS

In the March 1970 Stan's Soapbox, Stan announced that he and **Alain Resnais**, the noted "French film genius" spent "many pleasant hours rappin' about movies, comic mags, and the arts in general. According to Alain, Marvel Comics are definitely the 'in' thing in the arty circles of Europe today."

Stan and Resnais developed a close friendship and even worked on two proposed films together (See part of Stan's screenplay for one, *The Monster Maker*, elsewhere in this very book.)

April 9, '80

Mes Cher Amis,

I've got only a minute to dash off this short note--

Just wanted to tell you that THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER, dated April 8th, wrote: "Favorites among French films selected for Cannes this year are: 'Mon Oncle d'Amerique' by Alain Resnais," etc. Yours was the FIRST mentioned, and they mentioned 3 others, by Tavernier, Allio, and Jean-Luc Goddard. Very impressive. I'm not sending you the clipping itself because I'm saving it to show to people here in Los Angeles-- and I don't have a Xerox machine easily available.

NEWS: We didn't buy a house here yet, because I haven't yet sold our apartment. Mortgage interest rates are so high it looks like we'll never sell the apartment! I didn't sign my new contract yet because we're still negotiating and I'm listening to other offers. (I'm very nervous about it!) I've been speaking to Henry Winkler about playing SPIDER-MAN as a big budget movie-- he's excited about it. It all depends upon whether he and Marvel can come to terms. (He's the guy who plays Fonzie in the hit tv series HAPPY DAYS). I even told him I'd love it if we could convince you to direct the movie-- he ~~thought~~ thought it might be a great idea. Well, we'll see. I'm learning (as you've always said) nothing is ever definite out here, and it takes forever to come to any agreement on anything between any two parties.

Have to rush now-- the usual meetings and conferences. Write me when MON ONCLE is finished-- and let me know when you're coming to the US again. Hope all is wonderful with you both.

Excelsior!

-- and love from  
both Joanie's  
and the two of you.

5/23/79

Dear Flo and Alain,

Here's a brief Lee news update...

I LOVE Los Angeles. Joanie loves Los Angeles. (Not as much as I do-- but almost). In case I forgot to send it to you, our address is:

10701 Wilshire Blvd.  
Los Angeles, Ca. 90024  
(213) 474-1180

We're returning to New York May 31st. (We've been here in L.A. since April 15th) Joanie will stay in New York long enough to try to sell the house in Rosenburg and our daughter's apartment. Then, she'll rejoin me in L.A. I'll be returning to California in a week or two, and spend most of the remainder of the year here.

A few days ago we learned our New York apartment had been robbed!! Every bit of jewelry Joanie owned was stolen. And-- we're not insured! It's a very big loss, both financially and sentimentally. We try not to think about it, but it's the most depressing and distressing thing imaginable. It's one of the reasons we'd like to pull up stakes and come out to Los Angeles permanently, if we can.

I've met a lot of people here and hope to meet lots more. With luck, I may be able to infiltrate into the tv and movie business yet. Will write again, in a few weeks, after I return to L.A., to give you an more complete report about what's happening business-wise. The one big item right now, and I can't remember if I told you or not, is that Lee Kramer, Olivia Newton-John's manager and boy friend, wants to do a big-budget Silver Surfer movie with me-- and it looks like he will. I'll serve as consultant and some sort of associate producer. Hanna-Barbera may do Kid Colt- same arrangement.

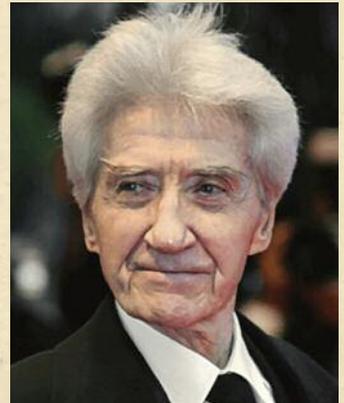
Hope all is well with you and your film. When are you returning to the U.S.? Can you come to L.A.? Anything new and exciting? Lock up your jewelry!

And now, through the tears, Joanie and I say--

Excelsior!

Resnais (*Night and Fog*, *Hiroshima Mon Amour*, *Last Year at Marienbad*)

sought out and worked with Stan. In a 2007 article about Resnais by Frederic Tulen, the author writes that Resnais "lights up when I ask him if he has been in recent contact with Stan Lee, the great comic book artist who also had a role [narrating] in *The Year '01*. 'Not for some while,' he says, but they are and shall always remain friends. He recalls working on a film script with Lee in New York... 'It was wonderful being in New York in those days and to see Stan Lee every morning, to talk with him and to see him smile.'"



A recent photo of Resnais.  
[Cineuropa]

In Stan's Wyoming archives, we found these letters from Stan to Resnais and his then-wife, Flo, including one describing a burglary at the Lees' Manhattan apartment. (In the first letter, "both Joanie's" refers to Stan's wife and his daughter, who have the same first name.)

1979 and 1980 letters from Stan Lee to Alain Resnais, box #14, Stan Lee Collection, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.





In this interview, Stan speaks of being influenced by “old silent movies where everything was exaggerated so the audience would know what the mood was.” Here, Charles Chaplin in his 1925 silent classic, *The Gold Rush*. [©2011 the copyright holders]

would know what the mood was because they couldn't hear the voices. So, actually, as I say, I used to read Shakespeare. I love the rhythm of words. I've always been in love with the way words sound. Sometimes I'll use words just because of the sound of one playing upon the other. And I know comic book writers aren't supposed to talk this way. But I like to think I'm really writing when I write a comic, and not just putting a few balloons on a page.

**MB:** Do you consciously strive to catch the tenor of the times? You've covered campus protest in *Spider-Man*. But what about other issues? Do you feel that it's your responsibility as an artist—and I won't say “comics” artist here, but obviously we can accept you as an artist with other kinds of artists—is it your duty to take a stand on issues?

**LEE:** I think it's your duty to yourself, really, more than to the public. See, this is a very difficult field. For years my hands were tied. We thought we were just writing for kids, and we weren't supposed to do anything to disturb them or upset their parents, or violate the Comics Code, and so forth. But over the years as I realized more and more adults were reading our books and people of college age (which is tremendously gratifying to me), I felt that now I can finally start saying some of the things I would like to say. And I don't consciously try to keep up with the tempo or the temper of the times. What I try to do is say the things I'm interested in. I would love to be writing about drugs and about crime and about Vietnam and about colleges and about things that mean something. At least I can put a little of that in the stories. As I say, though, I'm really doing it for myself, not the reader. But everybody wants to say what he thinks. And if you're in the arts, you want to show what you believe. I think that's pretty natural.

**MB:** What do you consider your responsibility as a comics artist, then?

**LEE:** To entertain. I think comic books are basically an entertainment medium, and primarily people read them for escapist enjoyment. And I think the minute they stop being enjoyable they lose all their value. Now hopefully I can make them enjoyable and also beneficial in some way. This is a difficult trick, but I try within the limits of my own talent.

**MB:** Several years ago, *Esquire* published a collage of the “28 Who Count” on the Berkeley campus, and included were the Hulk and Spider-Man. What's this great appeal of Marvel Comics to college students?

**LEE:** I don't know. I would think the fact that there's a sort of serendipity, there is surprise. You don't expect to find a comic book being written as well as we try to write Marvel. You don't expect to find a comic book that's aimed at anyone above twelve years old. And I think a college kid might pick up a Marvel comic just to idly leaf through it and then a big word catches his eye. Or a flowery phrase or an interesting concept. And before he knows it, not every

college kid, but a good many of them are hooked. And I think it's the fact that here is something which has always been thought of as a children's type of diversion. And they realize: “My God! I can enjoy this now!” This is kind of unusual.

**MB:** It's like the end of the one *Avengers* story when you used [Percy Shelley's poem] “Ozymandias” to reinforce the villain's downfall.

**LEE:** Wasn't that great? That was Roy Thomas' idea, one of the best he's ever had. Beautiful ending that way.

**MB:** I've always wondered that perhaps the appeal is the catalog of neuroses in the superheroes. That they're all into the numbers people are going through now. Human fallibility, altruism, identity crises, these sorts of things. Even your arch-fiends like Dr. Doom and The Mandarin and Galactus are not really all bad. They've all been forced to be bad, to be misanthropes, by force of circumstances. But when's sex going to come into Marvel Comics?

**LEE:** Unfortunately not until we get rid of the Comics Code, or put out a line strictly for adults (which I've been wanting to do). But I just haven't been able to convince the powers-that-be that the world is ready for them yet.

**MB:** Well, obviously you've broken some barriers by having heroes married and having children.

**LEE:** Hopefully, someday we'll be able to put out a line—not that we want to do dirty books—but something that's really significant and really on the level of the older reader.

**MB:** I recall one thing that wiggled me in that regard: the beginning of a *Nick Fury* story where it was morning with a subtle hint of the previous night's activities.

**LEE:** Oh yes, that was Jim Steranko's. Wasn't that great? I was very pleased that it got past the Code. Well, actually you had to

# Stan the (Family) Man

## Photos from the Lees' personal collection

The Sept. 9, 2007, Sunday edition of *The New York Times Real Estate Magazine*, of all things, spotlighted a major feature on Marvel's creative head honcho, with rare photos supplied by Stan and Joan Lee. Thanks to Stan & Joan for permission to print them here, and to Bob Bailey for sending us the scans. For more photos from the Lees' personal life, pick up a copy of Stan's autobiography *Excelsior! The Amazing Life of Stan Lee*, co-authored by George Mair and published by Fireside Books in 2002. [All photos on these two pages ©2011 Stan & Joan Lee.]

[This article also appeared in *Alter Ego* #74.]



Young Stan on a pony. Any chance that its name was Marvel?

When Stan was 16, the Lieber family lived in this apartment house at 1729 University Avenue in the Bronx. Years later, future comics writer and editor Len Wein would spend part of his childhood in the same building.



Stan and Joan Lee as newlyweds in their one-bedroom apartment in Manhattan's East 90s, circa 1947-48. Stan married Joan Clayton Boocock on Dec. 5, 1947, just two weeks before his 25th birthday. In his autobiography, Stan's co-writer scribes: "Stan always thought she was the best birthday or Christmas present he ever got."



Stan prepares to carry Joan across the threshold of their new 3-bedroom home at 1084 W. Broadway, Woodmere, NY. The date on this picture is a rather vague "1949-52," but we really doubt if it took Stan three years to carry her inside.

# Projects that Weren't

## Ideas from comics greats Will Eisner and Richard Corben that never saw print

by Danny Fingeroth

FROM THE  
**STAN LEE**  
ARCHIVES

Even top creators have projects that never see the light of day for all sorts of reasons. In Stan's Wyoming archives is some early 1970s correspondence between Stan—by then Marvel's publisher—and two acknowledged comics titans, **Will Eisner** and **Richard Corben**, relating to projects that never got off the ground.

## Will Eisner



**Will Eisner (1917-2005)** was raised in the tenement Bronx of the Great Depression. He was a pioneer in the creation of comics of the "Golden Age" of the 1930s and '40s, achieving immortality with his noir crime-sighting hero, *The Spirit*, the first character to star in a comics insert distributed in newspapers. At one time or another, just

Will Eisner in the 1960s.

[©2011 Will Eisner Studios]

about every comics great of his own and succeeding generations worked with and for Eisner, including Jules Feiffer, Wallace Wood, Jack Kirby, Al Jaffee and Mike Ploog. When *The Spirit* ceased publication in 1952, Eisner devoted himself to producing educational and instructional comics. Then, in 1978, Eisner reinvented himself—and the medium—with his graphic novel, **A Contract with God**. Other notable Eisner graphic novels included **To The Heart of the Storm**, **A Life Force**, and **The Name of the Game**.

In 1973, Eisner, probably at Marvel's request, submitted ideas for a humor magazine. Eisner was no stranger to humor, using it often in *The Spirit* and in his instructional comics work, as well as in publications.

A classic Will Eisner *Spirit* splash—this one from October 2, 1949.

[©2011 Will Eisner Studios]



TO: Stan Lee  
Roy Thomas

MEMO

FROM: Will Eisner

100 POP MUSIC  
HI-PI-PO-PO  
C.K. ✓

RE: Editorial Conference 2/12/73

The following is a general (tentative) plan for issue #1 of the new satire magazine, subject, of course, to second thoughts and quality of submissions.

FEATURES: (4 pages)

Review of the best of the underground-- write to: Print Mint, Rip-off Press, Krupp Comic.

WORST MOVIE<sup>S</sup> OF THE SEASON: (4 pages)

Use actual stills if possible. Maybe Gene Shallit to review it. If not him we'll fake a review.

SECRET PAPERS FOR SALE: (2 pages)

Introductory page-- visual showing a display of papers (imagined) and facing it a page showing a Marboro-type advertisement. List a whole set of way-out documents.

PLANNING THE NEXT WAR: (8 pages)

Make this the lead feature. Open with a meeting at the pentagon with general staff.

Things are very slow. We've got to plan a New War. The question of who comes up. The suggestion is two small countries in Africa. They run that through the computers. Plan it all out like Viet Nam. They send "advisors", etc. The "advisors" start calling for money. Russia gets involved. President ecstatic. He would get a third term. In the end, the deal is blown because the two countries have a Pepsi-Cola contract which, if a war starts, will be blown. The Pepsi-Cola people stop it.

Wind up with the general staff trying to think up another country...

THE OCCULT: (4 pages)

A visit to a Sabbat. Photo article, maybe people being changed into another thing. Maybe a Jewish-type mother serving food...als Goodbye Columbus.

Will's Memo about "Editorial Conference 2/12/73" gives his overview of the points discussed on that day. [©2011 the copyright holders.]

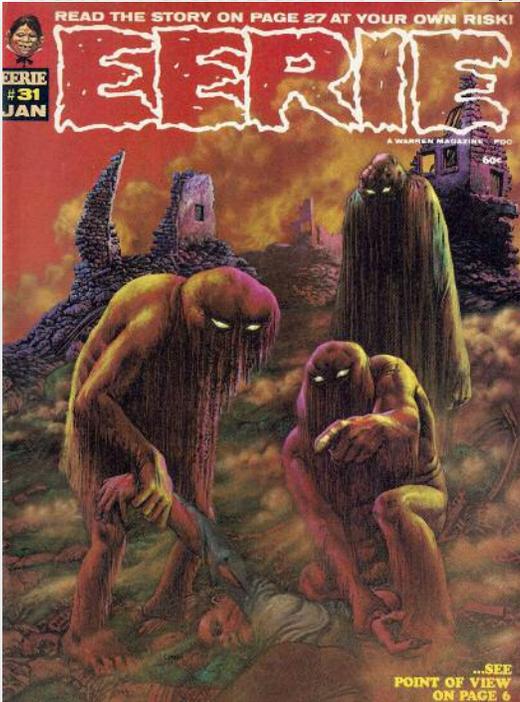
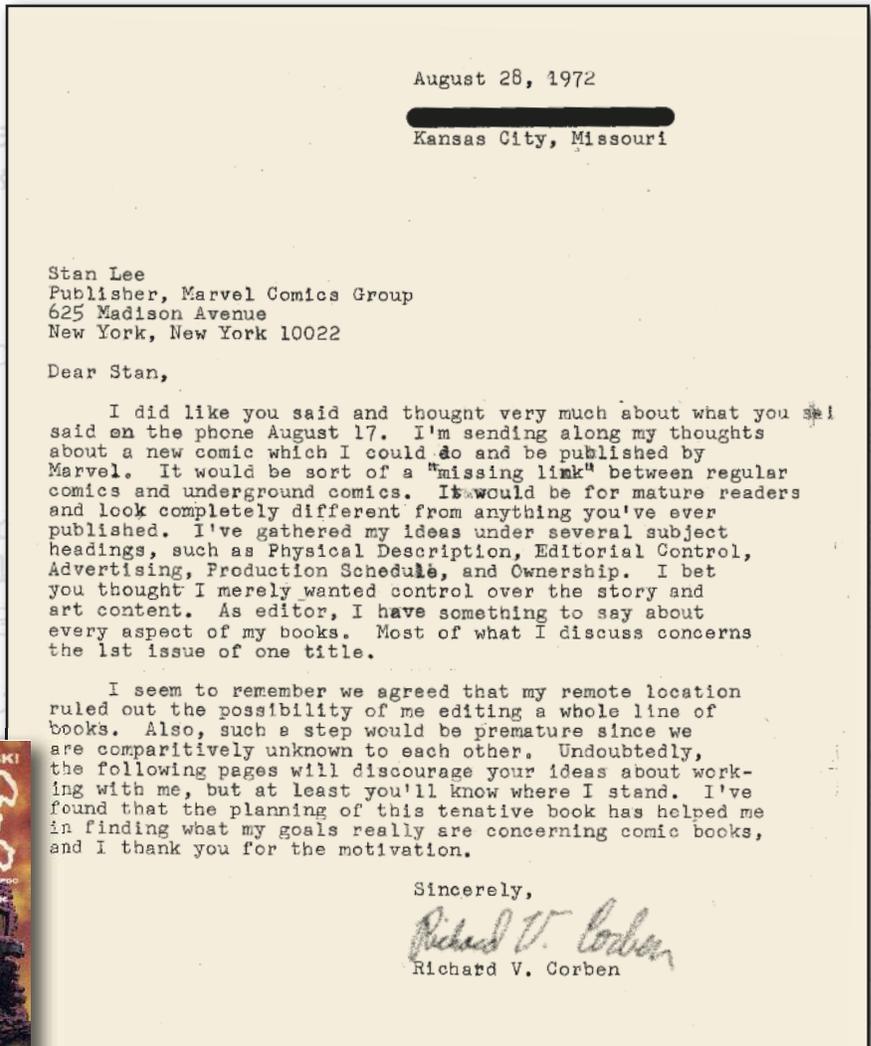
# Richard Corben

August 28, 1972



**Richard Corben** grew up in Kansas City, where he studied at the Kansas City Art Institute. In 1970 he published his own underground comic book, *Fantagor*. Afterwards he worked on the underground magazines **Slow Death** and **Skull**. Also in the '70s, Corben was a regular artist for **Eerie**, **Creepy** and **Vampirella** magazines. He also did groundbreaking work for France's *Métal Hurlant*, known as **Heavy Metal** in the US. Currently Corben draws for Marvel, DC and Dark Horse Comics. In 2005 he worked with Rob Zombie and Steve Niles on the independent comic, *Bigfoot*, for IDW Publishing.

In August 1972, Corben sent a letter and proposal to Stan...



Richard Corben's eerie cover to January 1971's *Eerie* #31. [©2011 Warren Publishing Co.]

August 28, 1972 cover letter and proposal from Richard Corben, Stan Lee Collection, box #12, folder #1, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.

After the cover letter came the proposal itself...

# Stan Lee: 1974

## Re-presenting a classic conversation with Marvel's master

From *Comics Feature* magazine

Interview conducted by Jay Maeder

*Comics Feature* was a professional magazine published for several years by the fabled Schuster brothers, Hal and Jack. This is a neglected Stan Lee interview from *CF*, located by Barry Pearl, who contacted interviewer Jay Maeder. It is reprinted by permission, for which we thank Jay profusely. And thanks to Barry for finding it in the first place. [This interview also appeared, in different form, in *Alter Ego* #74.]

—DF & RT

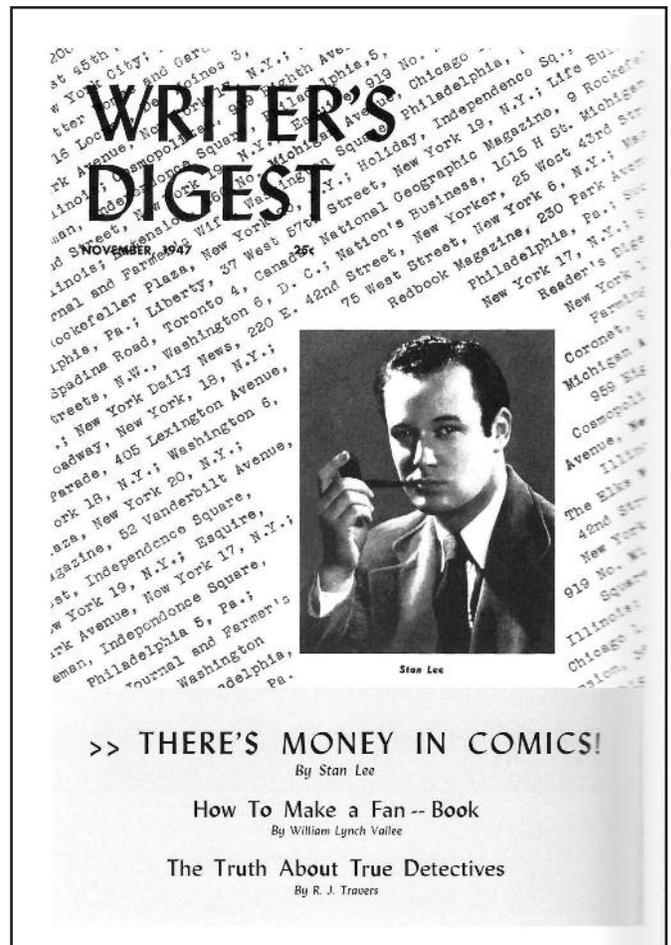
**JAY MAEDER:** There are probably worse things to be than the wildly celebrated king of the comics. I imagine you rather enjoy being Stan Lee.

**STAN LEE:** It wasn't always this way, I must admit. In the first fifteen years or so that I was the head writer and editor at Timely and Atlas, I remember, my wife and I would go to cocktail parties and somebody would say, "What do you do?" and I'd say, "Oh, I'm a writer." "Really? What do you write?" And I'd start getting a little nervous and I'd say, "Uh, magazine stories." "Really? What magazine?" And I knew there was no way of avoiding it, and I'd end up saying, "Comic books," and suddenly the person's expression would change... "Oh, isn't that nice," and they'd walk away, you know, looking for some television or radio or novelist celebrity. That's all changed now. I go to places and I'm held up as one of the more interesting celebrities... and people go over to the playwrights, you know, and say "Hey, I want you to meet Stan Lee, he's the head of Marvel Comics, he made up Spider-Man."

And I must say I'm very happy that this has happened. It's like achieving one of my goals, because I remember I wrote an editorial, it must have been a good fifteen years ago, and I said one of our main objectives would be bringing some additional measure of respect to comics, that I would consider myself and our company successful if we found a way before we were through this vale of tears to elevate comics in the minds of the public. So that if somebody said, I write comics, or I draw for comics, people would say, "Hey, really? Tell us about it." And not say, "A grown man like you?" You know what I mean? So from that point of view I'm very happy now.

**JM:** How did you get where you are?

**SL:** Sheer accident. I never wanted to be a writer particularly. As a kid I joined the WPA Federal Theatre. I wanted to be an actor. But there wasn't enough money... and I always loved advertising, and the closest I could get to it was, I found a job writing copy for a news service, and then I started writing obituaries for people who were still alive, and I was writing publicity releases



Despite having his picture on the cover of the November 1947 issue of *Writer's Digest*, it wasn't until years later that, as he tells Jay Maeder, people at cocktail parties would start to be interested in what Stan did for a living. [Writer's Digest © 2011 F+W Media, Inc. Article © 2011 the copyright holders.]

for the National Jewish Tuberculosis Hospital in Denver. All of which was pretty depressing. A million things, you know. I was an office boy for a trousers company, I was an usher at the Rivoli Theatre. Anyway, they had a contest at the *Herald-Tribune* [newspaper], an essay contest, which I won three weeks running, and whoever the editor was at the time called me and asked me to stop entering the contest. And he asked me what I intended to be. I was just out of high school, you know, and I said, well, I don't know, an advertising man or an actor or a lawyer or something, and he said why don't you be a writer?

Coincidentally, I learned of a job that was opening up at Timely

Comics. They needed a gofer. Timely Comics then had Joe Simon and Jack Kirby, and they had just sort-of created Captain America, and they were doing “The Human Torch” and “Sub-Mariner,” and I came in, and before I knew it, they had me writing “Captain America” and they had me doing some editing. Shortly thereafter, Joe and Jack left, and I was like the only guy there and the publisher asked me if I could fill in as editor until he found someone else. And he never found anyone and I’ve been there ever since.

I never thought of it as a permanent job. I never particularly wanted to be in the comic book business and I always figured, hey, this is great, I’ll stay here a year or two or three until I make some money and then I’ll write the Great American Novel. And for years and years I stayed in the job, never thinking of it as my permanent career. For years this went on. And I was too dumb to realize, hey, this is what you’re doing, Stan, this is it. I always had this feeling of temporariness.

And business got bad and we had to fire a lot of people... I was left with a skeleton crew, which consisted mostly of me. And we were living at Timely under the conditions where every few years there was a new trend. We’d be very big in Westerns and suddenly the Western field dried up and we had to find a new trend, and we’d be doing a lot of superheroes and then there was a lack of interest in superheroes so we had to find a new trend... and we’d do romances or mysteries or funny animals. Whatever. And there was no... I mean, I’d write one as well, or as badly, as another. It never made a difference to me what type of thing we were doing. The [Comics] Code was no problem to me. We never put out books that I felt were too violent or objectionable. They certainly weren’t sexy. I never had trouble putting out books that would be acceptable to whoever had to accept them. So when this period came around, *it* was just like another new trend. Okay, we’ve got to drop the so-called horror stories and now we’ve got to find something else to do. And we did. We came out with... I don’t even remember what we came out with, but I assume we found something.

**JM:** *The whole Atlas thing... this was not the greatest period the comics have ever known...*

**SL:** Yeah.

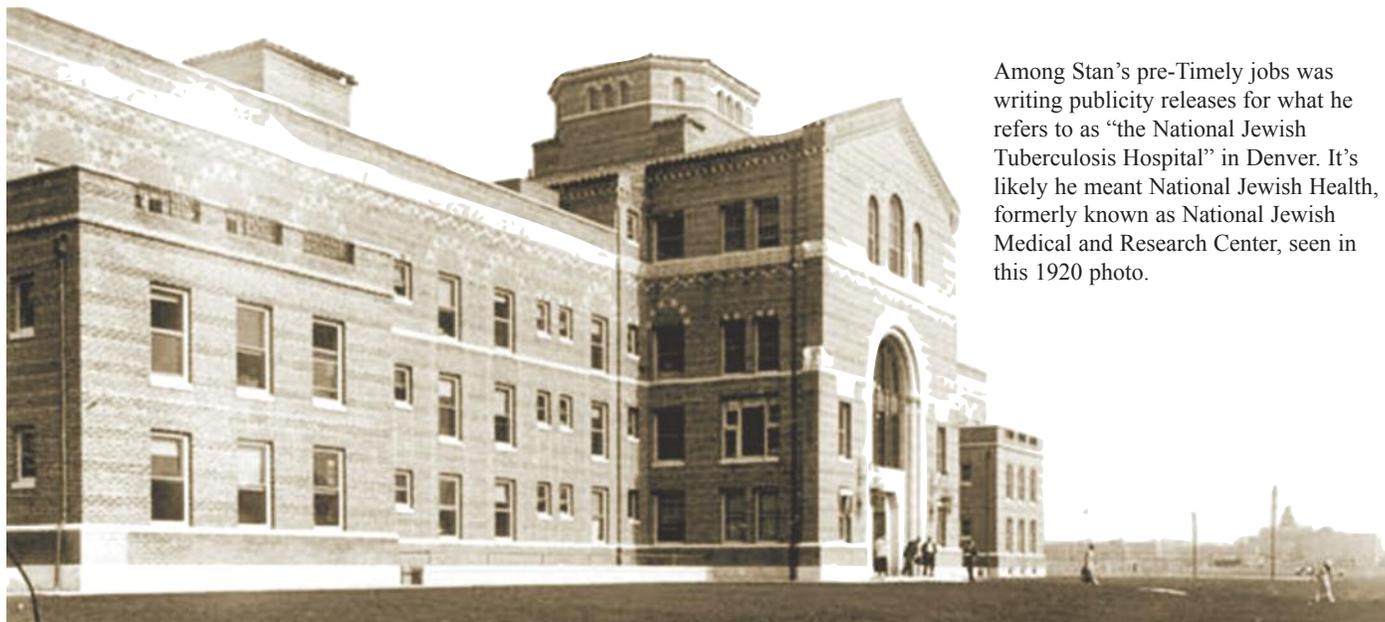
**JM:** *Atlas is into the journey into unknown world thing, you know, you and Kirby and Ditko are doing variations on the Japanese monster film, Fin Fang Foom and all this... and somewhere in here you start dreaming about a whole different approach, and what I’m asking is this: was this an accidental thing or did you guys sit down and very deliberately create a revolution.* [NOTE: Actually, Maeder is referring to the post-Atlas period of the late 1950s and very early ’60s. —DF & RT]

**SL:** Both. It was accidental *and* I did it deliberately. What happened was, like I say, I’d been thinking it was a temporary job, you know, I’m waiting till I’ve saved up enough money so I can quit and go do something else. And my wife said to me one day, “Stan, when are you gonna realize this is permanent? And instead of looking to do something sensational in some other field, why don’t you make something sensational about what you’re doing? I mean, you’re writing, you are creating... do something really good.”

Well, of course, up until then I had always done mostly what the publisher wanted. As you mentioned, it was not a glorious period for the comics. Certainly not for our company. And our publisher, who also published other types of books—movie books and crossword puzzle books and so on, the slicks—by this time he had left the comics pretty much in my hands. He didn’t have any tremendous interest. They weren’t doing all that well and he wasn’t that much concerned, I suspect. And coincidentally my publisher walks in one day and he says, “You know, Stan, I just realized, I was looking at some sales figures, and I see that National Comics’ *Justice League* seems to be selling pretty good. That’s a bunch of superheroes, Stan, maybe we ought to form a team of superheroes. Maybe there’s a market for that now.”

So all three things came together: my wife telling me why don’t you do something good, the fact that I was able to do almost anything because the publisher wasn’t that much on top of what we were doing, and the fact that he wanted a superhero team.

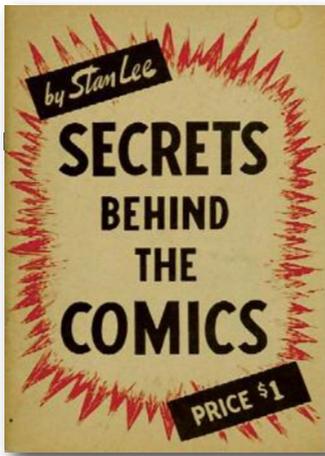
So I figured okay, I’ll do it as I’ve always done it, I will do as



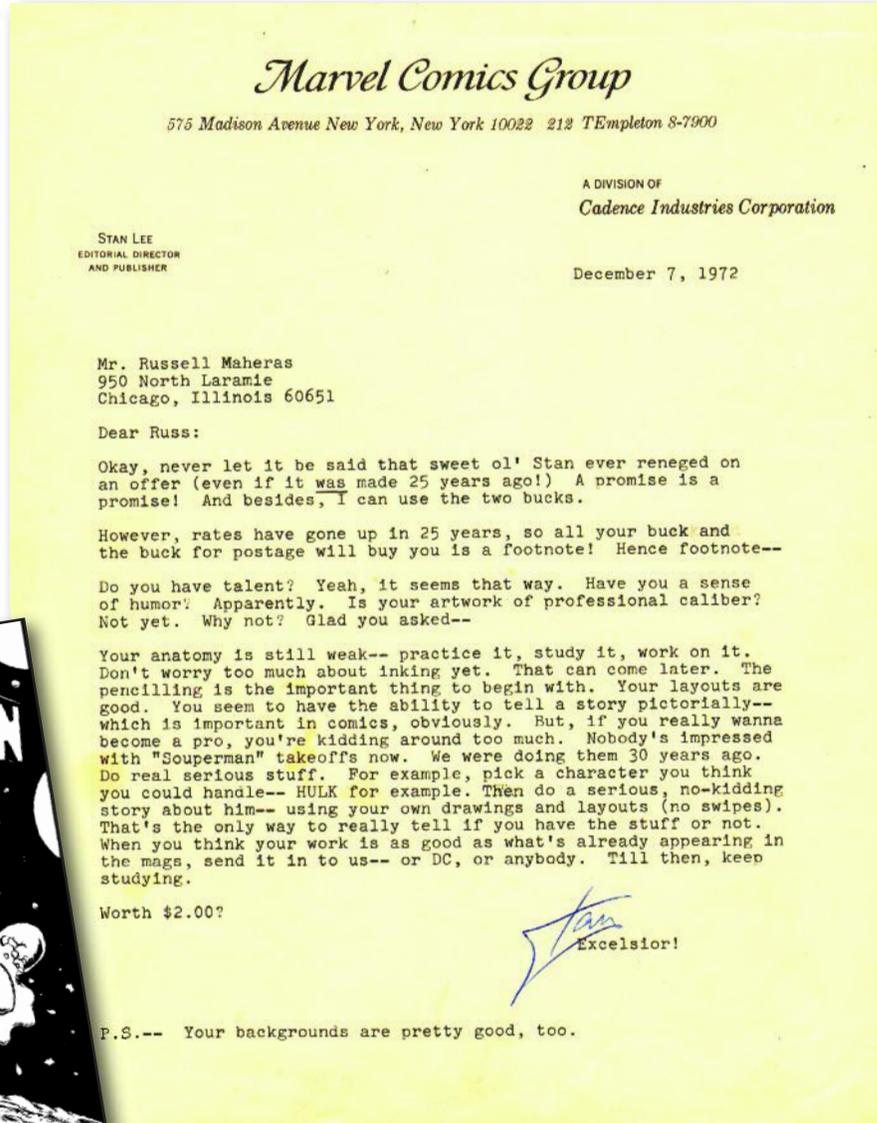
Among Stan’s pre-Timely jobs was writing publicity releases for what he refers to as “the National Jewish Tuberculosis Hospital” in Denver. It’s likely he meant National Jewish Health, formerly known as National Jewish Medical and Research Center, seen in this 1920 photo.

[©1947 and 1975, Stan Lee/Famous Enterprises.]

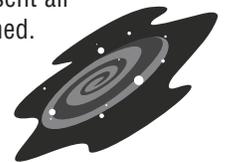
# Stan Keeps a Promise— 25 Years Later!



In his self-published (as “Famous Enterprises”) 1947 book, *Secrets Behind the Comics*, the 24-year-old Stan Lee promised readers that if they sent him a dollar, he would critique their artwork. 25 years later, in 1972, Russell Maheras took Stan up on that offer, to which, amazingly, Stan responded with the promised critique—of Maheras’s “Souperman”—as seen in the letter on this page.



Asked if he had a copy of the original letter he wrote to Stan, Maheras told Danny Fingeroth in March 2011: “No, I don’t have the letter I sent Stan. At that stage of my life it was no doubt hand-written (with no carbon copy) and impulsively dashed off. What’s crazy about back in 1972 is that when one sent a portfolio, one basically sent all one’s original art via snail mail, and prayed it didn’t get lost or damaged, and that it was eventually returned. Artists like me had no money for printers’ stats, and, as I recall, copiers (if you could find one) were still very crude, relatively expensive, didn’t reduce, and thus couldn’t handle large-sized work. The fact that I got my originals back even though I only gave Stan an extra buck for postage shows just how nice about the whole deal he was.”

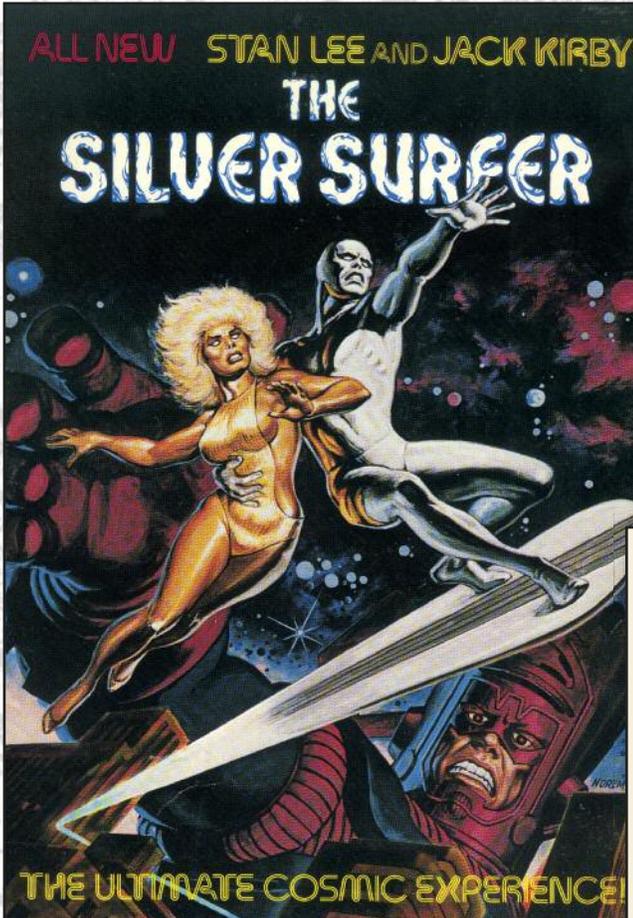


# The Saga Of... The Silver Surfer Graphic Novel

Lee & Kirby's last team-up has the groundbreaking duo going out with a bang!

by Danny Fingeroth

FROM THE  
**STAN LEE**  
**ARCHIVES**



[Story ©1978 Stan Lee and Jack Kirby. Silver Surfer © 2011 Marvel Characters, Inc.]

Kirby's return would indeed mean that he and Stan would combine for another Surfer project, this time in the then-new graphic novel format. The book was worked on in 1977 and published in 1978. The cover is painted by Earl Norem, based on a Kirby drawing. The line "The Ultimate Cosmic Experience" seems to be promotional copy, not a subtitle, since it's not seen anywhere in the interior of the book.

Jack Kirby, who with Stan co-created the Fantastic Four, the Hulk, the X-Men and so many other groundbreaking cultural icons—including the Silver Surfer—had left Marvel in 1970 to spearhead his own line of comics at DC.

Stan's response to Frederic Frees about what it would take for the Surfer to return was written a year before Kirby did indeed return to Marvel in 1975, where he would work until 1978.

April 22, 1974

Mr. Frederic Frees  
Imagination Inc.  
443 Jackson Street  
San Francisco, Ca. 94111

Dear Frederic:

Yes, there's a slim chance that the Silver Surfer will return.

If----

If Kirby comes back to draw him.

If I have the time to write the new stories.

If the world seems ready for Norrin Radd to once again zoom and soar above our weebegone world!

Excelsior!

SL/fl

Stan Lee

# THE SILVER SURFER

by  
**STAN LEE & JACK KIRBY**

## The Making of an Epic

Page One (Either inside cover typeof  
arrangement or page facing title page )

Illustration : Arm of Galactus or symbol of  
Life and Death principle which is part of the universe  
and governs all its inhabitants, both large and small.

Here's the opening page to *The Silver Surfer* graphic novel. As with the rest of the pages from the book in this article, Jack's notes that accompanied the art are reproduced at the top of the page, Stan's typed script is at the bottom. Stan's handwritten notes are in the margins of the photocopies of the pencil art. We also see the lettered and colored pages from the book itself.



**SILVER SURFER**

**PAGE 1**

**TITLE: THE SILVER SURFER**  
by  
**STAN LEE & JACK KIRBY**

**CAPTION: (At bottom of page)**

**BEHOLD! The hand of Galactus! BEHOLD! The hand of him who is like unto a God! BEHOLD! The clutch of harnessed power-- about to be released!**

Panel descriptions for *Silver Surfer* graphic novel, Stan Lee Collection, box #55, folders 2 & 4, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming. Photocopies of pencil art with balloon placements; script for *Silver Surfer* graphic novel, Stan Lee Collection, box #55, folder #1, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.



# Silver Age Stan and Jack (or: “Will Success Spoil Spider-Man?”)

FROM THE  
**STAN LEE**  
ARCHIVES

Lee & Kirby, March 3, 1967  
Interviewed on WBAI radio,  
New York, by Mike Hodel

Transcribed by Steven Tice, copyedited by Danny Fingerroth

**Mike Hodel** briefly hosted a science fiction program on New York’s WBAI radio in the late 1960s, where he interviewed Stan Lee and Jack Kirby (in an episode of the program entitled “Will Success Spoil Spider-Man?”) in 1967. Shortly after this interview, Hodel moved back to his native Los Angeles, where he hosted “Hour 25,” a science fiction program on that city’s KPFK radio from 1972 until his untimely death in 1986. The show continued, often with guest hosts such as Harlan Ellison and J. Michael Straczynski, and, since 2000, “Mike Hodel’s Hour 25,” named in his memory, has continued to be broadcast via the internet at [www.hour25online.com](http://www.hour25online.com).

**MIKE HODEL:** Who goes around saving maidens, preventing banks from being robbed, and committing deeds of that type, under an alter ego for the name “Peter Parker”? How about “Tony Stark”? Would you believe “Reed Richards”? “Stan Lee?” “Jack Kirby?” Well, except for the last two, they’re all superheroes and they belong in Marvel comics, and they are written and drawn by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby. And Mr. Lee and Mr. Kirby are going to be answering questions about their superheroes. And I guess the first one would be addressed to Stan Lee, and it’s the title of this program. Stan, will success spoil Spider-Man?



Mike Hodel circa 1984.  
[©2011 the copyright holders]

**STAN LEE:** [chuckles] Well, I don’t think anything could spoil old Spidey, as we lovingly call him. Just have to correct one thing you said, though. You said that, except for Stan Lee and Jack Kirby, the others are superheroes. We like to think of ourselves as superheroes, too. I might add also that there are other artists and other writers who do some of the other books, too. Jack and I don’t do them all, although we do the *Fantastic Four* and *Thor*. *Spider-Man* has been a success since he started, and, luckily, I don’t think he’s been spoiled yet, so we just have our fingers crossed.

**MH:** I ran across Marvel comic books about six or eight months ago, and one of the things that drew me to Marvel comic books, and *Spider-Man* in particular, is a panel that showed Spider-Man swooping down on some bank robbers, and they said, “Whoops, here comes Spider-Man!” And he replies, “Who were you expecting? Vice President Humphrey?” Now, this is not a line you expect to find in a comic book, and it sort of symbolizes your whole approach to the field, which is offbeat and interesting. Was it your idea, Stan? Where did it come from?

**SL:** Well, I guess, in that sense, in was my idea, since I write

the dialogue. In a nutshell, our theory is—although maybe I shouldn’t give the theory in a nutshell, because then I don’t know what we’ll talk about for the rest of the half hour. But, at any rate, in a nutshell, our theory is that there’s no reason why a comic magazine couldn’t be as realistic and as well-written and drawn as any other type of literature. We try to write these things so that the characters speak the way a character would speak in a well-written movie, well-produced television show, and I think that’s what makes our book seem unique to a person who first picks them up. Nobody expects, as you say, that sort of thing in a comic book. But that’s a shame, because why shouldn’t someone expect reasonable and realistic dialogue in a comic book? Why do people feel that comic books have to be badly written? And we’re trying to engage in a one-company crusade to see to it that they’re not badly written.

**MH:** Jack, you drew and invented, if I’m not mistaken, Captain America, one of the earliest superheroes, who’s now plying his trade in Marvel comics. How did Captain America come to be, and does he have any particular relationship to your other superheroes?

**JACK KIRBY:** I guess Captain America, like all of the characters come to be, because of the fact that there is a need for them. Somebody needed Captain America, just as the public needed Superman. When Superman came on the scene, the public was ready for him, and they took him. And so, from Superman, who didn’t exactly satiate the public’s need for the superhero, so spawned the rest of them.



Stan and Jack at a National Cartoonist Society event in 1966. [©2011 the copyright holders]



A surreal look at Lee & Kirby's creative process, seen in "This is a Plot?" from *Fantastic Four Annual* #5, 1967 (the same year as this interview). Written and penciled by Jack. Inks by Frank Giacoia. [©2011 Marvel Characters, Inc.]

magazines that were coming into creation then, for the new magazines.

**MH:** Well, Captain America fought valiantly against the Axis from 1940 until after the war. Then what happened? When did he die off or go into hiding until he was revived by Marvel Comics?

**JK:** Well, I believe that Captain America went into hiding like all ex-soldiers. I know I went into hiding. I didn't show my face for quite a few years. In fact, I went out to Long Island with my wife and I got happily lost there and never found my way back to Manhattan. And so, feeling like I, myself, am Captain America, because of the fact that his feelings are mine when the drawings are created, and because his reactions are my reactions to the specific situations in the story, why, I have no compunction to say that we both were hiding for all those years, and were quite happy about it.

**MH:** Now that Captain America is back in the fight, has there been any talk about sending him to Vietnam? They could certainly use him.

**JK:** Well, that's Stan Lee's department, and he can answer that. The editor always has the last word on that.

**SL:** Well, the Secretary of Defense and myself just haven't yet made up our minds. [laughs] I don't know. I don't think we'll be sending him to Vietnam, really, because... It's a funny thing. We treat these characters sort of tongue-in-cheek, and we get a lot of laughs out of them, we have a lot of fun with them. I somehow don't know if it's really in good taste to take something as serious as the situation in Vietnam and put a character like Captain America—. We would have to start treating him differently and take the whole thing very seriously, which we're not

The rest of them all came from Superman, and they all had various names, and various backgrounds, and they embraced various creeds. And Captain America came from the need for a patriotic character, because the times at that time were in a patriotic stir. The war was coming on, and the corny cliché, the war clouds were gathering, and the drums were beginning to beat, and the American flag was beginning to show on the movie screens. And so Captain America had to come into existence, and it was just my good fortune to be there at the time when we were asked to create superheroes for the

prepared to do. The time that Jack talks about, when Captain America was first created, the books were written a little bit differently then. There wasn't this type of subtle humor. The stories were very serious, and at that time I think it was okay to have Captain America fighting the Nazis and so forth, because they were done very seriously. But right now, I don't think I'd feel right writing the stories about Vietnam.

**MH:** All of these superheroes—not all of them, but many of them—have hang-ups. You have one character, one superhero, who is blind, named Daredevil, otherwise known as Matt Murdock. You have Spider-Man, Peter Parker, who is perhaps the most guilt-ridden teenager I've ever run across. And there are many others. How did you decide that these were going to be something more than superheroes, that they were going to have problems of their own?

**SL:** Well, it was just the idea of trying to make them realistic, as we mentioned before, trying to write them a little bit better. It seems to me that the best type of story is the type of story a reader can relate to. The average superhero published by some of the other companies, you can't really relate to them because



Although Stan tells Mike Hodel, regarding Captain America, "I don't think we'll be sending him to Vietnam," and indeed Marvel would not send him there in the near future. Cap had already been there in the January 1965 *Tales of Suspense* #61. At that point, the Vietnam War had not become as controversial as it would be by 1967, and even in this story, Cap goes there on a mission to rescue one man in a tale that took all of ten pages. As for why there was a Sumo in Vietnam—don't ask, just buy it! [©2011 Marvel Characters, Inc.]

they're living in a vacuum. They just have a superpower, they can fly through the air or whatever, and that's it. Other than that, they're two-dimensional. Now, in order to make a person three-dimensional, he has to have a family life, he has to have personal problems, and so forth. I've said this so often that it's almost becoming a cliché with me, but what we try to do is, we know that these superhero stories are really fairy tales. They're fairy tales for older people. We think of them that way. We don't really write them for young kids.

And what we ask the reader to do, and hope he will do, is accept the basic premise, the basic fairy tale quality, such as the fact that Spider-Man does have the proportionate strength of a spider if a spider

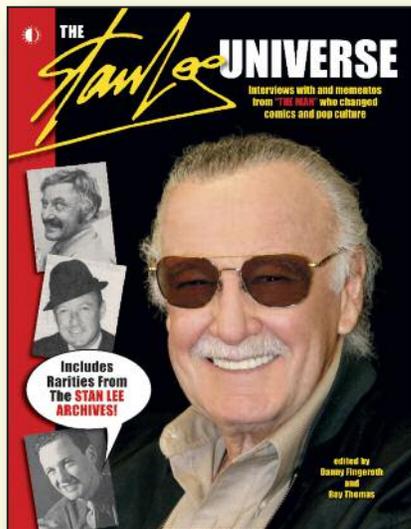


Stan tells Hodel that he knew the Hulk would be popular because "it had the idea of a monster who was sympathetic." Here, the Hulk's alter ego, Bruce Banner, at the beginning of his nightmarish double life in the May 1962 *Incredible Hulk* #1, script by Stan, pencils by Jack, inks by Paul Reinman. [©2011 Marvel Characters, Inc.]

give them understandable qualities and reasons why they are the way they are. We've even had villains who reformed and heroes. One standing joke among our readers, and the artists and writers who work with us, our so-called is, after a while, we don't know who the heroes and villains are. There's such a fine line, you see, dividing hell, when we started with the Hulk, we just knew he had popular because he had everything in his favor. It had the and Hyde format. It had the idea of a monster who was genetic, the way Frankenstein really had been in the first Frankenstein's Monster, that is. He wasn't bad, he was understood. All he wanted to do was be left alone. I would bet my bottom dollar the Hulk would have to be well-liked, and he was. And he still is one of our most popular heroes, probably the most popular one with our college and college-age readers.

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**THE STAN LEE UNIVERSE**



Face front, true believers! THE STAN LEE UNIVERSE is the ultimate repository of interviews with and mementos about Marvel Comics' fearless leader! From his Soapbox to the box office, the Smilin' One literally changed the face of comic books and pop culture, and this tome presents numerous rare and unpublished interviews with Stan, plus interviews with top luminaries of the comics industry, including JOHN ROMITA SR. & JR., TODD McFARLANE, ROY THOMAS, DENNIS O'NEIL, GENE COLAN, AL JAFFEE, LARRY LIEBER, JERRY ROBINSON, and MICHAEL USLAN discussing his vital importance to the field he helped shape. And as a bonus, direct from Stan's personal archives, you'll see rare photos, sample scripts and plots, and many other unseen items, such as: PERSONAL CORRESPONDENCE between Stan and such prominent figures as: JAMES CAMERON, OLIVER STONE, RAY BRADBURY, DENIS KITCHEN, ALAIN RESNAIS and (Sinatra lyricist and pal) SAMMY CAHN! Transcripts of 1960s RADIO INTERVIEWS with Stan during the early Marvel era (one co-featuring JACK KIRBY, and one with Stan debating Dr. Fredric Wertham's partner in psychological innovation and hating comics)! Rarely seen art by legends including KIRBY, JOHN ROMITA SR. and JOE MANEELY! Plot, script, and balloon placements from the 1978 SILVER SURFER GRAPHIC NOVEL, including comprehensive notes from Lee and Kirby about the story. Notes by RICHARD CORBEN and WILL EISNER for Marvel projects that never came to be! Pages from a SILVER SURFER screenplay done by Stan for ROGER CORMAN, and more! So get a jump-start on the celebration of Marvel's 50th anniversary, and let this incredible book take you on a guided tour of the STAN LEE UNIVERSE. Excelsior! (Co-edited by ROY THOMAS and DANNY FINGEROTH.) Available in both softcover, and hardcover that includes a deluxe dust jacket, plus 16 EXTRA FULL-COLOR PAGES of rare Archive Material, not found in the Softcover Edition.

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that's what I was going to ask. You say your books are not at children, but at young people and adults. Is there any way that you can check for magazine sales and so forth as to your readership is?

Our only check, really, is through the mail. Which is a good check, because we get thousands of letters a week. I guess we must get almost as much mail as the Beatles, don't even sing. And by reading all this mail, a monumental task in itself, we've learned a lot about who are readers that they like and dislike, and almost half of our mail is illegible students and college-age people.

What do they like, and what do they not like?

That's what you'd think they like. They like whatever we do seems to be original, unexpected. They like the degree of effort we put into the books. They're mad for the quality of art, which I think is far superior than has ever been presented in other comics over the years. They like the realism, which is a difficult thing to say, because somebody who isn't familiar with our books would think, "This guy must have been talking about comic books, and he's talking about it." But the readers know what we mean. They like what they find, good writing, good drawing, good editing, and sincerity. I think they can detect a note of sincerity. Even in the stories have some humor, quite a bit of humor, to show there is an underlying sincerity. We take them seriously,