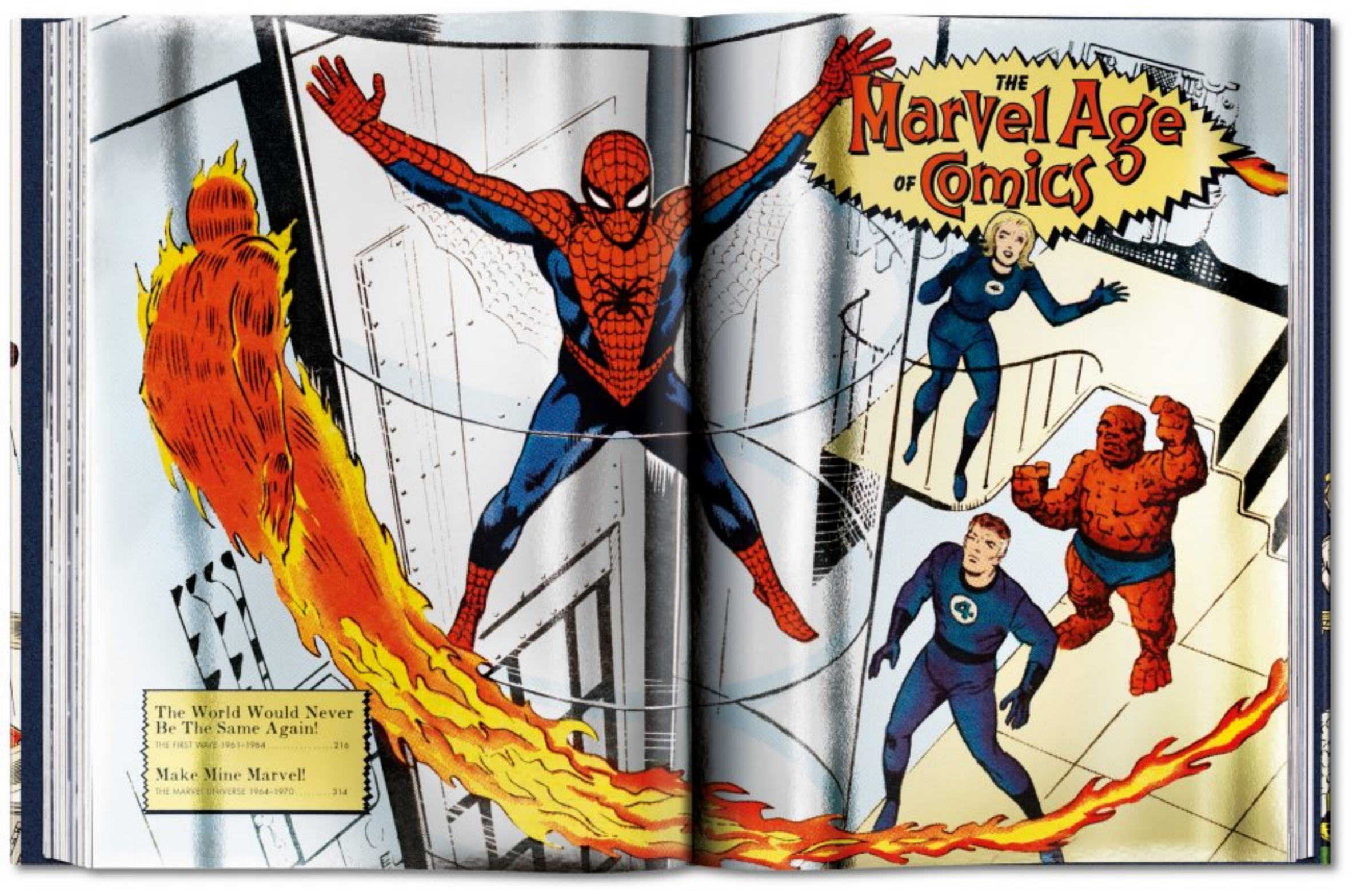


The World Would Never Be The Same Again!
THE FIRST WAVE 1961–1964 216

Make Mine Marvel!
THE MARVEL UNIVERSE 1964–1970 314

Marvel Phase Two
DAWN OF THE BRONZE AGE 1970–1975 480

No More Mister Nice Guy
THE NEW SUBVERSIVES 1975–1985 560

Goodman's Golden Age
TIMELY COMICS 1939–1950 8

It's Always Darkest Before the Dawn
ATLAS COMICS 1950–1961 118

MENACE

MAR.

ATLAS

10¢

A TALE OF MADDENING MENACE...

"ONE HEAD TOO MANY!"

ON SALE MONTHLY

MORE TALES OF MADDENING MENACE!

"THEY WAIT IN THEIR DUNGEON!"

"THE MAN WHO COULDN'T MOVE!"

"POOR MR. WATKINS!"

MENACE No. 1

(Opposite) Cover, pencils and inks, Bill Everett, March 1952. *Menace* was Stan Lee's baby. His attempt to capture what Bill Gaines and Al Feldstein were doing so successfully over at EC putting out a horror comic book with a small cadre of supremely talented artists, all under the auspices of one writer/editor. The cover to the first issue of *Menace* is quite simply one of the most gruesomely wonderful Atlas pre-Code horror covers—a large image in a cemetery setting of a green, moss-covered, two-headed corpse! Everett was the flat-out star of this series, drawing the first six covers and having a story in each of the first six issues.

MENACE No. 7

(Top left and above) Interiors, "The Witch in the Woods", script, Stan Lee; pencils and inks, Joe Sinnott, September 1953. For the second time in less than a year, Stan Lee mocks the ridiculous custom of Dr. Frederic Wertham's crusade against horror and crime comics. In this story a father reprimands his son for reading an issue of *Uncanny Tales*, exhorting him to read real literature like Grimm's Fairy Tales instead. Taking the initiative, he reads the story of Hansel and Gretel and proceeds to scare himself silly from the story's violence.

IN TERROR'S ICY GRIP

(Left) Photograph, 1954. *Time* magazine's May 3, 1954, issue noted that "of the 80 million comic books sold in the U.S. and Canada every month, about a quarter are what the trade calls 'horror comics'. ... They deserve the title." Here, a young boy is scared witless reading a copy of the same month's issue of *Menace*, No.3, with its horrific cover by Harry Anderson.

CLASS OF '66

(Above) *Magazine* interior, "…Now You're Smart Enough for Comic Books," *Esquire* pencils *Jack Kirby* with *John Romita*; inks *Joe Sinnott*, *September 1966*. In the wake of camp-inspired comics mockery brought on by the *Batman* TV series, *Esquire* discovers that, actually, Marvel comics are cool again — and are increasingly popular on college campuses. "As one Ivy Leaguer told Stan Lee, 'We think of Marvel as the twentieth-century mythology and you are this generation's Homer.'"

PIN PALS

(Above) *Accessories*, *ca. 1966*. Buttons featuring Marvel heroes were becoming commonplace symbols by 1966.

HEROES UNITED!

(Right) *Photograph*, *ca. 1966*. A young boy is thrilled to be in the presence of Spidey and Cap at the Michigan State Fair.

THE AVENGERS No. 23

(Opposite) *Cover pencils*, *Jack Kirby*; *inks*, *John Romita*, *December 1965*. "Marvel often stretches the paradoxicentric imagination far into the phenomenagoria of other dimensions, problems of time and space, and even the semi-theological concept of creation," a Cornell student enlightened *Esquire*. "They are brilliantly illustrated, in a nearly hallucinogenic colors. Even the simple mortal-hero stories are illustrated with every panel as dramatically composed as anything Orson Welles ever put on film."

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN No. 55

Ultimo! Cover, pencils and inks: John Romita. December 1967. Romita closes in on Doc Ock's face as he witnesses Spider-Man's defeat. While not exactly Romita's invention (the great Jack Cole showed a similar Plastic Man scene on the May 1951 cover of Police Comics, for example) the tightly cropped composition — with a scene unfolding in the reflection of Doc's sunglasses, would become a recurrent visual, repeated in such famous covers as Irv Novick's Batman No. 285 (September 1976).

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN No. 48

Ultimo! Cover, pencils and inks: John Romita. May 1967. The new Vulture swoops down on Spidey over the more covered streets of New York City.

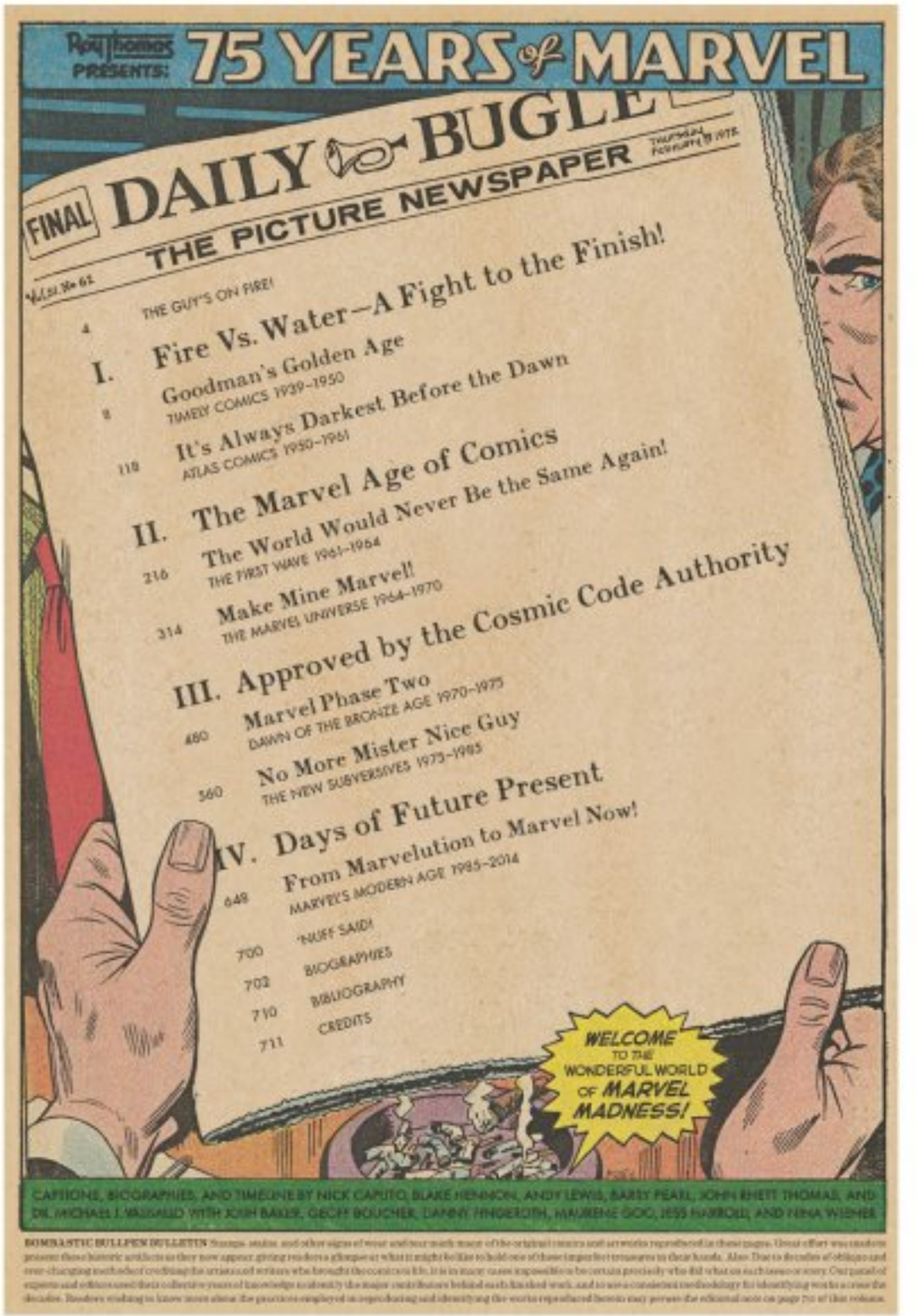
AMAZING SPIDER-MAN No. 60

Ultimo! Cover, pencils and inks: John Romita. May 1968. John Romita's initial run of Spider-Man covers are some of the most compelling, attractive, and inventive ever crafted. Stan Lee let the pictures tell the story and Romita was a master at drawing the viewer in with his visual storytelling — often using dark backgrounds to focus the viewer's attention on the central figures.

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN No. 39

Left! Cover, pencils and inks: John Romita. August 1966. The first issue of *Spider-Man* after Ditko's departure was a stunner, as Lee decided to go all-out, not only revealing the identity of the Goblin, but having him unmask Spidey. Romita, who had recently finished an eight-year stint drawing romance comics for the Underground Competition, was nervous to step into Ditko's shoes. "People laugh when I say this, but I did not want to do *Spider-Man*. I wanted to stay on *Daredevil*," he told Roy Thomas in a 2001 interview. "The years ... I felt obliged to paint Ditko because — this may sound naïve, but I was convinced, in my own mind, that he was going to come back in two or three issues ... I couldn't believe that a guy would walk away from a successful book that was the second-highest seller at Marvel."

They Know What They WANT!
EVERY MONTH!
NEWSSTAND
MARVEL
CAPTAIN AMERICA
HUMAN TORCH
SUB-MARINER
DARING
MYSTIC
MARVEL
CAPTAIN AMERICA
WHERE'S MY DARING?
I WANT MY CAPTAIN AMERICA!
DID YA SAVE MY SUB-MARINER?
SAVE ME MARVEL, PLEASE!
I'M FIRST-- HUMAN TORCH FOR ME!
MY MYSTIC, PLEASE!
GIVE ME MARVEL!
They Want the BEST!
for EXCITING...DARING ACTION-PACKED COMIC THRILLERS...
READ--
MARVEL Comics
Captain AMERICA Comics
MYSTIC Comics
HUMAN TORCH Quarterly
SUB-MARINER Quarterly
DARING Comics
THE ANGEL Quarterly
ON SALE Now AT YOUR FAVORITE NEWSSTAND...10¢


Roy Thomas PRESENTS: 75 YEARS of MARVEL
FINAL DAILY BUGLE
THE PICTURE NEWSPAPER
Vol. 51 No. 62
THE GUY'S ON FIRE!
I. Fire Vs. Water—A Fight to the Finish!
Goodman's Golden Age
TIMELY COMICS 1939–1950
It's Always Darkest Before the Dawn
ATLAS COMICS 1950–1961
II. The Marvel Age of Comics
The World Would Never Be the Same Again!
THE FIRST WAVE 1961–1964
Make Mine Marvel!
THE MARVEL UNIVERSE 1964–1970
III. Approved by the Cosmic Code Authority
Marvel Phase Two
DAWN OF THE BRONZE AGE 1970–1975
No More Mister Nice Guy
THE NEW SUBVERSIVES 1975–1985
IV. Days of Future Present
From Marvelution to Marvel Now!
MARVEL'S MODERN AGE 1985–2014
'NUFF SAID!
BIOGRAPHIES
BIBLIOGRAPHY
CREDITS
WELCOME TO THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF MARVEL MADNESS!
CAPTIONS, BIOGRAPHIES, AND TIMELINE BY NICK CAPUTO, BLAKE HENNON, ANDY LEWIS, BARRY PEARL, JOHN RHETT THOMAS, AND DR. MICHAEL J. VASSALLO WITH JOSH BAKER, GEOFF BOUCHER, DANNY FINGEROTH, MAUREEN GOC, JESS HARROLD, AND NINA WIENER
BOMBASTIC BULLPEN BULLETIN

MARVEL COMICS No. 2 PROTOTYPE

(Opposite) *Cover prototype: pencils and inks, Bill Everett (1939).* This watercolor and gouache mock-up was likely created for the second issue of *Marvel Comics* before the decision was made to change the title to *Marvel Mystery Comics* and feature the Angel by Charles J. Mazzioja on the cover instead. It is unknown why this cover was never used. The painting was sold at auction by Sotheby's on December 18, 1992, to an executive at Marvel.

GOLDEN AGE ARCHAEOLOGY

(Above left and right) *Original sketches, pencils, unknown, Summer 1941.* These artifacts were discovered in the estate of Paradise, Inc. owner Lloyd Jacquet. On the left, a page-one splash rough for *Sub-Mariner* No. 8, possibly by Bill Everett or Carl Pfeufer. On the right, a page-one splash rough for *Human Torch* No. 8, possibly by Carl Burgos or Harry Sahle.

DON'T BOTHER ME, MOM! I'M BUSY!

(Right) *Photograph, ca. 1941.* Paradise! What's better than being a kid and catching up on the latest issue of *Marvel Mystery Comics* (No. 17)?

GAYETY Vol. 1, No. 1

(Above) Cover art, *Alex Schomburg*; November 1941. While creating masterpieces of dynamic composition for Timely super hero comic covers, Alex Schomburg was also moonlighting for other Martin Goodman publications. Here, a classic sidebreaded pinup launches *Gayety*, a men's humor and girlie comedy bandolier magazine, one of several similar Goodman publications in a newsstand sea of comparable periodicals. These oversized magazines were the prototypes for the Humorama line of men's humor digests, owned by Goodman's brother, Abe.

ALL WINNERS COMICS No. 4

(Opposite) Cover; pencils and inks, *Al Avison*; Spring 1946. A classic war cover displays all of this title's Timely heroes marching above a blazing image of war-torn Earth.

ALL-SELECT COMICS No. 3

(Above) Cover; pencils and inks, *Alex Schomburg*; Spring 1944. An elaborately detailed cover by Timely's master cover artist, Schomburg's blazing action covers usually showcased all of Timely's Big Three cover stars: the Human Torch (and Toro), the Sub-Mariner, and Captain America (with Bucky).

ALL-SELECT COMICS No. 1

(Right) Cover; pencils and inks, *Alex Schomburg*; Fall 1943. Timely's Big Three are joined by Stan Drake on the Black Widow and Allen Bellman's One Page Mystery crime puzzle filler.

AMAZING FANTASY No. 15

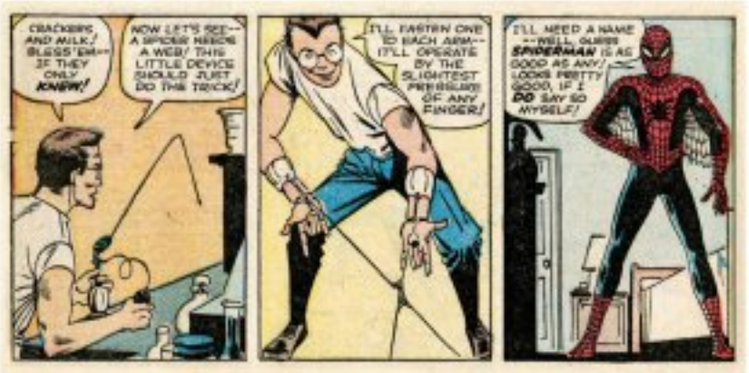
(Right) Interior. "Spider-Man"; script, Stan Lee; pencils and inks, Steve Ditko. August 1962. Science buff Peter Parker invents a device to shoot webbing and designs a unique costume — a productive afternoon to say the least! Unlike most artists, Ditko drew the teenage Parker (and his alter ego) with a less-than-heroic build.

AMAZING ADULT FANTASY No. 7

(Below) Cover, pencils and inks, Steve Ditko. August 1961. Billed as "The Magazine That Respects Your Intelligence," *AAF* became a showcase for the Lee-Ditko team's popular O. Henry-style stories with a twist ending.

NATIONAL TREASURE

(Opposite) Original art, Amazing Fantasy No. 15, Steve Ditko, 1962. The isolated figure of Peter Parker became a defining image that many young readers connected with. In 2008 the original interior art for this issue — all 23 perfectly preserved pages, with pencil remnants and opaquing fluid still intact — was donated for posterity to the Library of Congress.



OUT OF THE INKWELL

(Below) Interior, Amazing Adult Fantasy No. 12; pencils and inks, Steve Ditko. May 1962. Steve Ditko's early "self portrait" reveals a surprisingly humorous side to the most private — and serious-minded — member of Marvel's burgeoning artistic roster. Ditko rarely agreed to interviews, once saying "It's not what I'm like that counts. It's what I did and how well it was done." Ditko did attend the first NY Comic Convention in 1964, though not as a guest, but a member of the audience.

of such offbeat tales — commencing with *Amazing Adult Fantasy* No. 7 (December 1961). It debuted only a week after *Fantastic Four* and was billed on covers as "The Magazine That Respects Your Intelligence."

AAF's eight issues are fondly remembered, but sales were disappointing. So with No. 15 the title was changed again, this time to just *Amazing Fantasy* — and it introduced a teenage super hero called Spider-Man. (As a teen himself in the 1930s, Stan Lee had been a fan of a pulp-magazine hero called the Spider, who, except for his name, had absolutely nothing spiderlike about him.)

From the get-go, Martin Goodman hated everything about the notion, telling Lee: "People don't like spiders!" and "Teenagers can only be sidekicks, not heroes!" Still, because *Fantastic Four* was off to a strong start, the publisher went along with the idea.... for the moment.

Lee's first choice for penciler of the new series was Jack Kirby, just as he had been for *Fantastic Four*, *The Incredible Hulk*, Thor, and Ant-Man. He and Lee kicked around ideas, and the artist went home and began drawing. However, before Kirby had penciled more than a few pages, Lee decided that the two of them simply weren't on the same wavelength regarding the way to portray a high schooler who gains arachnid powers. Lee wanted an awkward, unheroic youngster, treated more realistically than teenagers were usually portrayed in comics, but Kirby's work was full of his trademark dynamism and heroism. His Spider-Man's costume, as visually recollected years later by Steve Ditko, was very simple and un-spiderly. Ditko inherited the Spider-Man series, and he and Lee pretty much started from the ground up.

Ditko turned out to have the perfect temperament and technique for handling a thin, socially awkward young man who acquires the proportionate powers of a spider. His design for the costume was brilliant, with the hero's features hidden behind a full-face cobweb-design mask.

Lee and Ditko's origin tale centers on Peter Parker. "Midtown High's only professional wallflower." He's Clark Kent, complete with glasses but no Superman abilities.... raised by a loving aunt and uncle... a miserably insecure high schooler. At a science exhibit, he's bitten by a (momentarily) radioactive spider, in what amounts to a parody of super hero origins, and he gains "spider powers," including great strength and the ability to climb up a wall or cling to ceilings — as well as a "spider sense" that seems to have no parallel in nature.

Wearing a mask to protect his identity in case he messes up, he tries to use his new qualities for monetary gain, but shows no great aptitude for doing so. He sews himself a Spider-Man costume and develops wrist devices that shoot out sticky webbing to augment his arachnid qualities. When a thief flees past him at a TV studio where he's making an appearance, the disguised Peter sees no profit in stopping him. Only later, when that same criminal coincidentally kills his uncle, does the wall-crawling teenager

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN No. 102

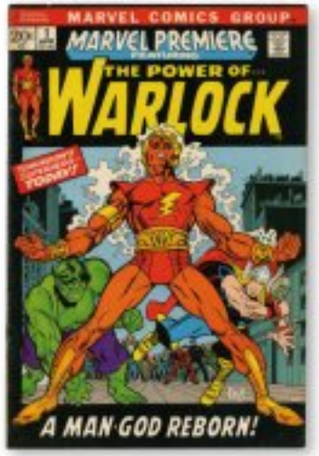
(Right) Interior: *"Vampire at Large!"*; script, Roy Thomas; pencils, Gil Kane; inks, Frank Giacoia. *November 1971.* Marvel's first post-Code vampire, Morbius, took *Amazing Spider-Man* by storm in 1971. Within three years, the anti-hero would have his own series in the pages of *Fear*.

MARVEL FEATURE No. 1

(Below) Cover: pencils and inks, Neal Adams. *December 1971.* Spinning out of story threads sewn in Roy Thomas-scribed issues of *Sub-Mariner*, *Dr. Strange*, and *Incredible Hulk* came Marvel's first post-*Avengers* assembling of solo heroes, proudly described as the world's greatest "can-team," the Defenders!

MARVEL PREMIERE No. 1

(Below) Cover: pencils, Gil Kane; inks, Don Heck. *April 1972.* The religious and spiritual subtexts of Warlock were unmistakable, and indicative of Marvel's progressive vision for its comics a decade after the start of the Marvel Age. Three years later, writer/artist Jim Starlin would pick up the reins and push the series into cosmic overdrive.



No. 1 IN SALES

(Above) Promotional button, 1971. The unthinkable occurred in 1971 when little ol' Marvel took the unit sales crown from industry goliath DC—and here's the tchotchke to prove it!

A MARVEL-OUS EVENING...

(Opposite) Poster: pencils and inks, George Delacorte. 1972. Carnegie Hall got a makeover as the House of Ideas on January 5, 1972 ("One Night Only!"), with Stan Lee, Spider-Man and friends, the Marvel bullpen, and appearances by director Alain Resnais, author Tom Wolfe, Beach Boy Dennis Wilson, and the Chicago Hamilton Players. Delacorte's Modernist poster was a hit.

super-villainous bloodsucker rather than a classic Dracula type, but no matter: Neither would have been allowed before the Code updating.

Roy Thomas, who wrote the Morbius story, was busy on other fronts during this period, as well. He launched *Kull the Conqueror*, starring another Robert E. Howard sword-and-sorcery hero…developed the Defenders, a group consisting of Dr. Strange, Sub-Mariner, and Hulk…teamed with artist Gil Kane to turn a golden humanoid from *Fantastic Four* into Warlock, the sole resident super hero of a "twin Earth" on the far side of the Sun…and, in *The Avengers*, scripted a nine-issue epic story line that pitted two alien races from the *FF* series against each other, with "this island Earth" caught in the middle. In large part because of the superlative contribution to four of its segments by artist/co-plotter Neal Adams, the "Kree/Skrull War" set the standard for multipart, intercosmic clashes in comics: first-rate artwork by John Buscema and his younger brother Sal, who had begun drawing for Marvel two years earlier, also added considerably to the story arc.

Near the end of 1971, Goodman pulled off a considerable coup with regard to DC Comics—though how much of it was planned in advance and how much was rolling innovation is open to question. By now, the 32-page (minus covers) color comic book sold for 15 cents, up from the 12 cents companies had begun charging in 1964. Overnight, both Marvel and DC increased all their comics to 48 pages (minus covers) for 25 cents: a two-thirds increase in price, for a 50 percent increase in page count. The majority of the pages would be new art and story, with the rest filled with reprints.

However, after only one (at most two) issues of 48-pagers, Goodman suddenly cut back to 32-page comics…now with a cover price of 20 cents. He had brokered a deal whereby retailers would receive a bigger cut of these two dimes, making it likely that Marvel would receive additional space in stores selling comics. "DC's going to take a bath!" he proudly proclaimed to Roy Thomas and production manager John Verpoorten in his office, when announcing his plan to them. DC clung to the larger (and pricier) titles for a year; by the time they dropped to 20-cent comics in late 1972, Marvel had surpassed DC in sales for the first time ever, becoming the world's No. 1 comic book company.

Not all of that could be attributed to the price differential, of course: Marvel had been slowly gaining on DC for the past decade, thanks to the innovative work done since 1961 by Lee, Kirby, Ditko, and others. Now, at last, the Marvel approach had paid off in full.

MARVEL ON THE MOVE

The year 1972 was a big year in the life of Marvel Comics in many other ways, as well.

It began with an "Evening with Stan Lee and Marvel Comics" on January 5—at New York's legendary Carnegie Hall, no less. A concert promoter named Steve Lemberg had succeeded Don Wallace in controlling merchandising rights to Marvel's heroes, and

CONAN THE CIMMERIAN

(*Marvel Magazine* interior, "*The Phoenix on the Sword*," Weird Tales story, *Robert E. Howard*; art, *Jaques Wilson*; December 1932) Even decades later, the pulps continued to provide a wellspring of characters that would influence comic book writers and artists who weren't even alive when they were first published. Robert E. Howard's Conan stories, starting with "The Phoenix on the Sword," were published off and on through the 1950s, but it was Roy Thomas's adaptation for Marvel that introduced the character to comic book readers.

CONAN THE BARBARIAN No. 4

(Opposite) Cover, pencils and inks, *Barry Smith*; April 1971. The layout still showed Kirby's influence, but by Conan's fourth issue, Barry Smith had cracked open a treasure chest full of refined artistic touches. His tenure on the character stands as one of comics' most impressive maturation processes. Smith told Archie Goodwin in a 1981 interview, "Conan... was just pure unadulterated luck for me. Anybody could have got the job... I read the Conan books because I was asked to by Roy [Thomas]. I didn't know who Conan was before that. The first three issues are simply super heroes masquerading in loincloths."

CONAN THE BARBARIAN No. 7

(*Marvel* Interior, "The Lurker Within"; script, *Roy Thomas*; pencils, *Barry Smith*; inks, *Sal Buscema* and *Dan Adkins*; July 1971) In a letter to Marvel in issue No. 2, legendary SF writer Harlan Ellison summed up the impact of Conan on fandom, both SF and comics: "Surely he is a dream. It is simply too beautiful to believe we at last have the Cimmerian in a pictorial form on a continuing basis. The world isn't like that; you just don't get your wish-fulfillment translated into material terms... the love and care that went into his first comic appearance can only be taken as positive omens for Conan's long and hasty future."

CONAN THE BARBARIAN No. 17

(*Epic* Interior, "The Gods of Bal-Sagoth"; script, *Roy Thomas*; pencils, *Gil Kane*; inks, *Ralph Reese*; August 1972) Veteran artist Gil Kane proved an able fill-in artist for Conan, as his Athenian, muscular figure work matched Smith's approach.

AT THE CONTROLS

(Opposite top) Photograph, ca. 1982. Stan Lee plays the 1982 *Spider-Man* video game on the Atari 2600. Spidey celebrates, the Green Goblin despairs, and the boys wait for another turn.

DAREDEVIL No. 181

(Opposite below) Interior, "Last Hand": script and pencils, Frank Miller; inks, Klaus Janson. April 1982. Miller draws on 1970s films such as *Dirty Harry*, *Game of Death*, *Death Wish*, *Mean Streets*, *Taxi Driver*, *The French Connection*, and *Magnum Force*. Inheriting equal parts Neal Adams, Akira Kurosawa, and Martin Scorsese, Miller's *Daredevil* is the *Point Blank* of four-color monthly comics. Looking back, Miller remembered, "Her presence led the whole series down a very dark path. ... Because I was a kid in my twenties, and making up a sexy killer woman. It was bound to get pretty grim." Miller killed off Elektra in stunning fashion: Stabbed in battle by Daredevil's hated enemy Bullseye, she crawls to Matt Murdock and dies in his arms.

Meanwhile, with one Captain Marvel dead and buried, it was clearly time for another, lest some ambitious competitor try to poach that time-honored name. The African American Monica Rambeau, a captain (what else?) in the New Orleans police department, was conceived by writer Roger Stern and artist John Romita Jr. Possessing the ability to convert her body into energy, she would soon join the Avengers and even become their leader.

Frank Miller, meanwhile, convinced editor-in-chief Shooter to let him have *Daredevil*'s most cold-hearted villain, Bullseye, kill Elektra in combat—even though her demise would cost Marvel a commercially viable character. After *DD* No. 181 was published, Miller began receiving death threats à la Gerry Conway following Gwen Stacy's passing, to the point where he took a stack of such mail to an FBI office!

With *Epic Illustrated* doing well, the time was right for an entire Epic Comics line, to be sold only in comics shops, with the creators retaining ownership of their characters. This imprint's first entry was Jim Starlin's science-fiction saga *Dreadstar*. Its longest-running title, launched in 1985, would be Mad magazine artist Sergio Aragonés's *Groo the Wanderer*, a hapless sword-and-sorcery hero scripted by TV writer Mark Evanier.

As an anomaly in the midst of all this activity, Marvel even published a comic book *The Life of Pope John Paul II*, written by Steven Grant and drawn by John Tartaglione and Joe Sinnott. It would be followed by *Mother Teresa of Calcutta*.

Even a Marvel Books division was set up, initially to publish coloring books, et al, but with the possibility of doing original prose novels. Meanwhile, recognizing the growing iconic status of a certain friendly neighborhood web-weaver, Parker Brothers (no relation to Peter) released a Spider-Man action video game for the Atari 2600. It was the first video game based on a Marvel Comics character, but it would be far from the last.

MARVEL ON THE *MOVE*

Since the mid-1950s, Marvel had several times relocated its offices up and down a relatively few blocks of Madison Avenue. The running office joke in the early '70s had been that the office space Marvel and Magazine Management rented depended on how much *walking* publisher Martin Goodman's doctor had advised him to do. In 1982, Marvel finally left the advertising agencies behind and moved downtown, to the slightly less pricey 387 Park Avenue South, where the company had room to spread out and grow.

New staffers were hired, including Ann Nocenti, Eliot R. Brown, Mike Carlin... Jim Owsley, the first African American editor at Marvel (and perhaps in mainstream comic books)... and Carol Kalish, who at age 27 followed one-time comics writer Mike Friedrich as head of the sales department, just as the number of comic book stores in the country closed in on 3,000. She hired as her assistant a guy named Peter David, from whom more will be heard later. Tom DeFalco became executive editor, Danny Fingeroth, editor of the Spider-Man line. Older production hands rounding out the staff included Danny Crespi (brought to Marvel by longtime staffer Morrie Kuramoto), colorist George Roussos (who in the late 1930s had been one of the first artists to work on *Batman*), and veteran artists John Tartaglione and Jack Abel.

There was movement in Marvel's magazines, too. For the past decade, editors, writers, and artists had followed Stan Lee's late-'60s edict to keep the heroes fairly static, creating mostly the "illusion of change" in the stories, so that, even if things were shaken up for a while, they would usually return to the status quo ante. E.g., Crystal and Medusa of the Inhumans and even Power Man (Luke Cage) had each joined the Fantastic Four for a spell, replacing an indisposed member; but there'd never been much doubt among readers that, ere long, the roll call would revert to Reed, Sue, Johnny, and Ben. Now, though, that kind of surety began to go out the window, in the era of a sea of an eternally shifting X-Men roster and a Daredevil who was shown on one cover wielding a revolver.

Tony Stark, always a social drinker, became too incapacitated by alcohol to continue his secret life, so his African American friend Jim Rhodes became the new Iron Man, courtesy of writer Denny O'Neil and penciler Luke McDonnell. And no one could be 100 percent certain that Stark was ever coming back. (Nor did he, for nearly two years!)

If Spider-Man's long-dead foe the Green Goblin wasn't to be somehow resuscitated, another criminal could update his gimmicks and become the Hobgoblin, courtesy of writer Roger Stern and artists John Romita Jr. and Sr. Nova, a hero who had fallen from favor, suddenly lost his super powers in the pages of the licensed title *ROM: Space Knight*.

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN ANNUAL No. 16

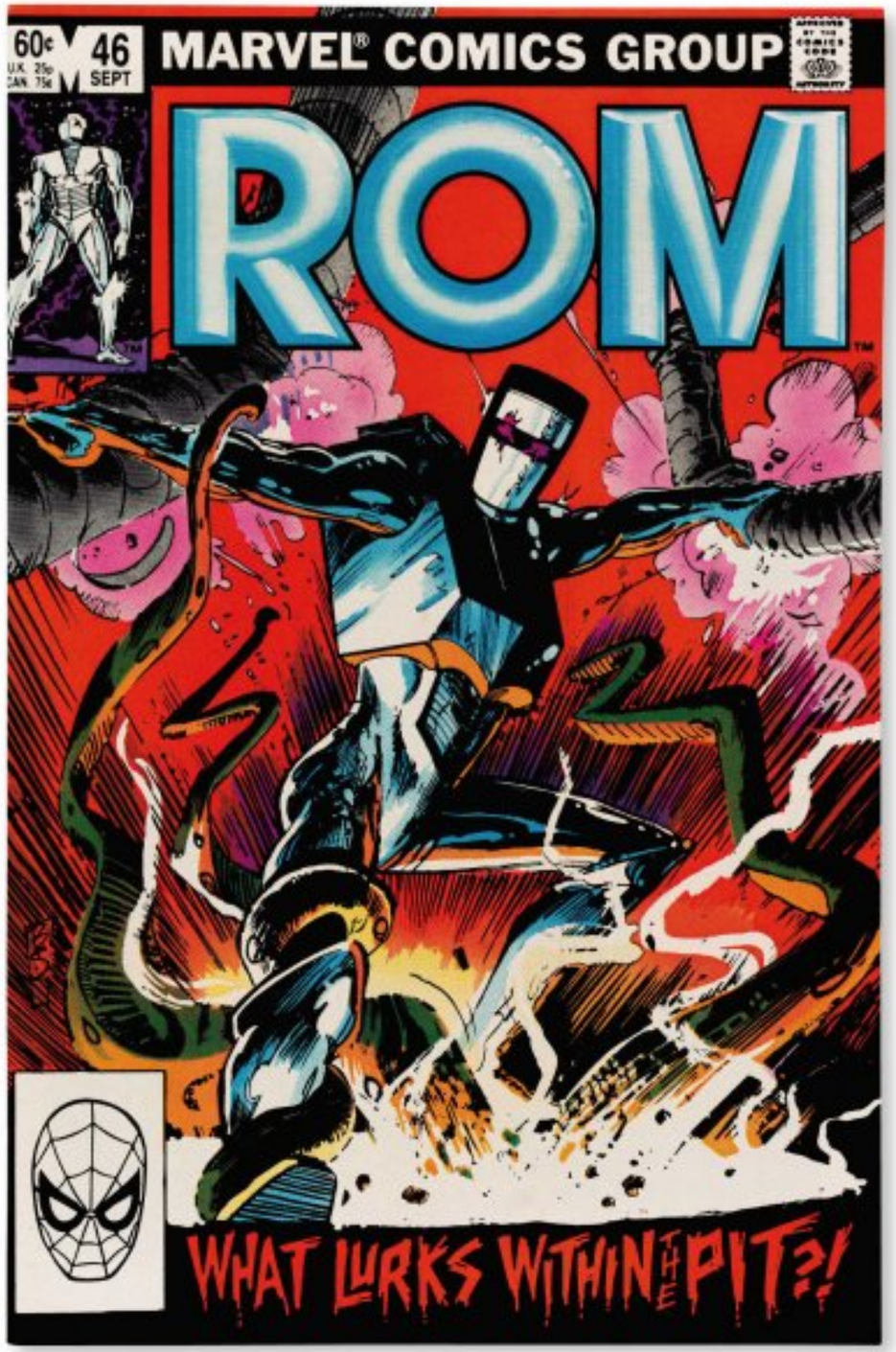
(Top) Cover: pencils, John Romita Jr.; inks, John Romita Sr.; November 1982. Jim Starlin's haunting graphic novel featuring "The Death of Captain Marvel" meant that Marvel would seek not a new character to take on that iconic name. Monica Rambeau, an African American police woman, gains superpowers, joins the Avengers and calls herself Captain Marvel. There would be more Marvels to come.

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN No. 238

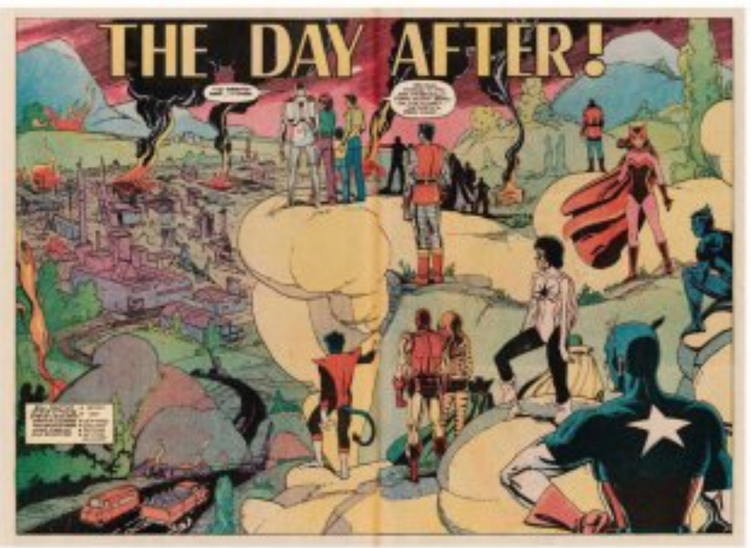
(Above) Interior, "Shadow of Evils Past": script, Roger Stern; pencils, John Romita Jr.; inks, John Romita Sr.; March 1983. The Green Goblin was not of the picture, but the strokes of gold (unique equipment were!). Enter the Hobgoblin, whose identity would not be revealed (and, behind the scenes, would change as *Amazing* writers and editors came and went) until four years later.

OFF THE WAGON

(Left) Power Ad; pencils, Luke McDonnell; inks, Steve Mitchell; May 1983. Tony Stark's relapse into alcoholism paved the way for James Rhodes's first stint as Iron Man.



"I liked the character. And I liked what they did with it. I thought the concept was quite good. It was unique. It made it attractive to do. I almost hate to say this, but it was pretty easy to draw, too."
— JOHN BUSCEMA



ROM No. 46

(Opposite) Cover, pencils and inks, Bill Sienkiewicz; September 1985. ROM adapted the sleek silver Space Knight from Parker Brothers toys. While the toy did a belly flop in the retail sector, the comic book series persevered for 75 issues, with dazzling backstory, and personalities that were superimposed over the simple plastic foundation.

TAKE MY DRAGON... PLEASE

(Above) Interior, Crusty No. 73, script, Jim Owsley (with apologies to Stan Lee), pencils, Jack Kirby; inks, Dick Ayers; April 1986. Fire purple pants, then heart tomato? Fin Fang Foom, from 1961's Strange Tales No. 98, somehow captured the affection of many a Marvelite. This re-tooled story from Crusty (Marvel's answer to Mad) tells the radically different story of Fin Fang Foom, stand-up comedian! Lord Foom would continue to rear his head every few years, in comics, cartoons—even as a video game "boss"—but by far his most dramatic turn was as a short order cook at the Green Wok in midtown Manhattan, in 2000's one-shot *Fin Fang Four Restaurant*.

ROM No. 66

(Left) Interior, "The Day After!", script, Bill Mantlo; pencils, Steve Ditko; inks, Steve Leialoha; May 1985. Marvel didn't take its toy adaptations frivolously, putting serious talent on them—including Steve Ditko, returned to Marvel in a limited capacity since 1974, and a regular artist on ROM since issue 39—and integrating them into the company's greater universe.

STRANGE TALES No. 164

(Right) Interior, "Nightmare!", scripts, Jim Lawrence; pencils and inks, Don Heck; January 1968. After Ditko's exit, many talented artists continued to experiment with Dr. Strange's visual mindscape, like Bill Everett, Marie Severin, and Don Heck.

MARVEL SUPER-HEROES No. 12

(Below) Cover; pencils, Gene Colan; inks, Frank Giacoia; December 1967. Martin Goodman hated when people thought that Marvel Comics published the original (1940s) Captain Marvel. When the name fell out of copyright, he quickly commissioned Stan Lee to use it. Alias Captain Mar-Vell would be Stan Lee's last hero of this era.

NICK FURY, AGENT OF S.H.I.E.L.D. No. 1

(Below) Cover; pencils and inks, Jim Steranko; June 1968. Freed from a decade of descendant distribution restrictions, Marvel quickly expands its line, with Nick Fury, Dr. Strange, the Sub-Mariner, the Hulk, Iron Man, and Captain America each receiving his own title.

SILVER SURFER No. 4

(Opposite) Cover; pencils, John Buscema; inks, Sal Buscema; February 1969. "Like Jack Kirby before him, John thought big as an artist, but where Jack's imagination was without bounds, John always anchored his in a very physical sense of reality. His figurework was superb, his layouts and storytelling were efficient and expansive, and his world-building was as solid as the ground under our feet." —Gerry Conway

TV deal, but Lee worked with artist Gene Colan to create a super hero who was one of the Kree, an alien race recently introduced in *Fantastic Four*. The spaceman's given name was Mar-Vell, and his Kree military rank was, of course, Captain.

FREE AT LAST!

Around this time, DC Comics and its distribution arm, Independent News, were purchased by the conglomerate Kinney National. Now part of a larger corporation, Independent had new incentive to seek to increase its profits, so it allowed Marvel to add even further to its number of titles. Marvel responded in 1968 by splitting the three remaining "anthology" comics — *Tales of Suspense*, *Tales to Astonish*, and *Strange Tales* — into six solo-hero mags: *Iron Man*; *Captain America*; *Sub-Mariner*; *The Incredible Hulk*; *Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D.*; and *Doctor Strange*. Simultaneously, the company also launched *Captain Marvel* and a second war title, *Captain Savage and His Leatherneck Raiders*.

Following soon afterward was *The Silver Surfer*, done as an extra-length comic. Surprisingly, however, instead of assigning Kirby as its artist, Lee realized that he and Kirby had divergent views on how to handle the Surfer, whom Galactus had exiled to Earth after he turned against his master, so he tapped John Buscema as penciler. The latter's flawless draftsmanship spurred Lee to new heights of grandiloquent language and philosophizing. Older readers, in particular, heaped praise on the magazine. *Silver Surfer* No. 3 introduced Mephisto, an other-dimensional stand-in for Satan, whose attempts to persuade the Surfer to join him echoed the Temptation of Christ in the Gospels. Issue No. 4, wherein the gleaming alien journeys to Asgard to battle Thor, represents yet another apex of Marvel art — for a second issue in a row.

Marvel was achieving other highs in quality around that time, too. Steranko had turned the full-length *Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D.* title into a one-man tour de force (except for the mag's inkers), though he soon left the title due to the difficulty of producing 20 pages of art and story a month on top of his day job as a commercial artist. Thomas, Colan, and inker/colorist Tom Palmer transformed *Dr. Strange* into an artistic showcase, moving it for the first time beyond slavish imitation of Ditko. And the phenomenally talented young Neal Adams, the first new artist hired by DC in a decade, began drawing the ailing *X-Men* title for Marvel. His bravura style married violent action to a heightened realism that emphasized detailed faces and volcanic emotions. With Thomas scripts and Palmer inks, the trio quickly made the mutant comic one of Marvel's most noteworthy, although the sales improved only slowly.

A less splashy new arrival was the Guardians of the Galaxy, a team originally composed of a time-displaced human explorer and three colorful aliens fighting the worlds-conquering Badoon from *Silver Surfer* No. 2. The series had a one-shot tryout story in the partly-reprint *Marvel Super-Heroes* No. 18 (December 1967), courtesy

"Confusing enough for you, faithful one?
Well, hold on tight — we've only begun!!"
— *FANTASTIC FOUR* NO. 58

FANTASTIC FOUR No. 59

(Opposite) Cover pencils, *Jack Kirby* inks, *Joe Sinnott*, February 1968: 'Jack's point of view ... became the governing philosophy of the entire publishing company and, beyond the publishing company, of the entire field,' veteran artist Gil Kane told *The Comics Journal* in 1988. '[Marvel] would get artists, regardless of whether they had done romance or anything else and they taught them the ABCs, which amounted to learning Jack Kirby ... Jack was like the Holy Scripture.'

FANTASTIC FOUR No. 59

(Above) Cover pencils, *Jack Kirby* inks, *Chic Stone* and *Wally Wood*, June 1968: 'And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not: I will lead them in paths that they have not known.' — Isaiah 42:16. Marvel's books were headed places no comic had ever been, and Stan Lee was pulling out all the stops to invite fans along.

FANTASTIC FOUR No. 59

(Left/Interior) 'Doomsday': *script, Stan Lee*; pencils, *Jack Kirby*; inks, *Joe Sinnott*, February 1968: Black Bolt, ruler of the Inhumans, is one of the most tragic characters to come the Marvel pantheon. Possessed of sonic powers so great that his newborn cries destroyed the Inhumans' city, he lives his first eighteen years in isolation — and must vow to spend his entire life in absolute silence. Thus the Inhumans always leave he had the means to escape their captivity, but the price to pay was great. In the end, noble Black Bolt protects his evil brother, Maximus — the Inhuman Cain to his Abel — who was the cause of all of this.

EVERYTHING HE TOUCHES TURNS… TO EXCITEMENT!

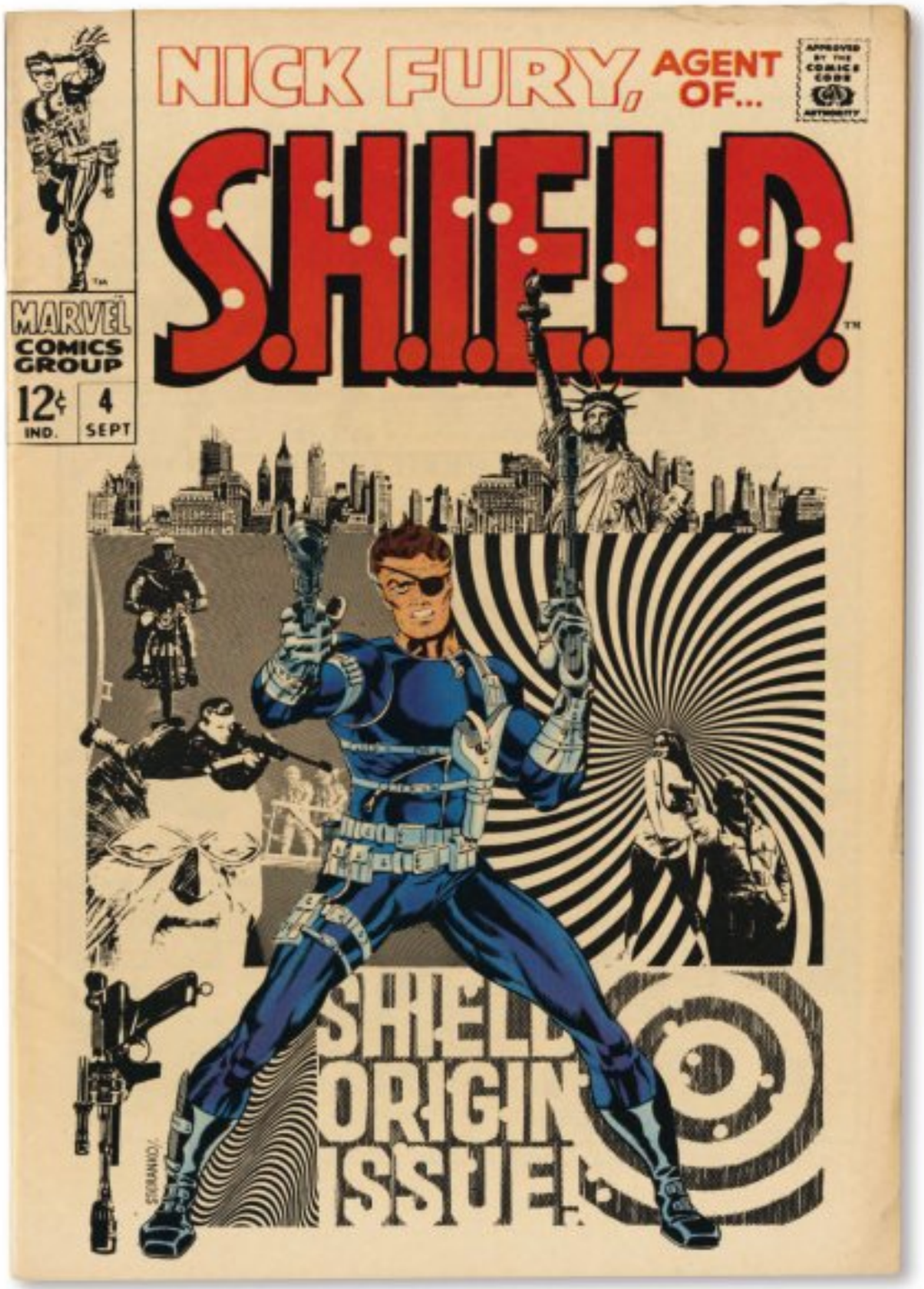
(Above) Movie poster, Goldfinger, Eon Productions/ United Artists, 1964. Winning the Academy award for special effects, with a best-selling DB5 toy and even the cover of Life, this third, quintessential installment of the Bond series provided the template for all the movies to follow: ever more sleek cars and gadgets, more chic *femmes fatales*, and more sinister villains. Shot with a 'Bon shows that crazy fans argue wn't ever be topped. Bond fever hit its pitch in 1964.

STRANGE TALES No. 159

(Above and right) Interiors, "Spy School!": script, pencils, and inks, Jim Steranko; August 1968. Jim Steranko hit the new fully formed Marvel Universe like a bomb. "I look at Kirby as being the architect, Steranko building the framework, and the rest of us doing the finish work," artist Paul Gulacy described Steranko's impact in 2009. Steranko was the first artist at Marvel allowed to both write and draw a super hero series. As a result, his stories began to flow differently, becoming more like an — as yet unnamed — "graphic novel." Before Steranko, Nick Fury existed only at work. Here we see his apartment, and Fury will soon meet Val, his first love interest since Pamela Hawley was killed during WWII.

NICK FURY, AGENT OF S.H.I.E.L.D. No. 4

(Opposite) Cover, pencils and inks, Jim Steranko; September 1968. Psychedelic was a word used — and abused — in the '60s to describe weird, colorful, sometimes hallucinogenic visual displays. It could also be applied to Steranko's fantastic artwork — although he colored a new phrase for himself: Zap Art. The term fit, as he employed techniques culled from various sources, including photography, collage, movie posters, and advertising to create a contemporary look.



CONTINUED AFTER NEXT ISSUE

THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!®

STAN LEE EDITOR • ROY THOMAS WRITER • JOHN BUSCEMA ARTIST • TOM PALMER INKER • MIKE STEVENS LETTERER

THE SWORD AND THE SORCERESS!

FASTER, ARAGORN! FASTER, MY VALIANT STEED!

WITH EACH MOMENT, THE FIRES WITHIN MY BREAST RAGE MORE FIERCELY... BECOME HARDER TO CONTROL!

A NIGHTMARE LANDSCAPE...A STRANGE AND TERRIBLE WORLD...AND, WINGING HIS WAY HIGH ABOVE ITS SHADOWS ON A SPECTRAL MOUNT, THE BLACK KNIGHT...AVENGER, ADVENTURER, AND A SOUL IN GRIEVOUS TORMENT...!

AVENGERS No. 84

(Opposite) Interior, "The Sword and the Sorceress", script, Roy Thomas; pencils, John Buscema; inks, Tom Palmer; March 1971. Avengers stories know no genre boundaries — medieval fantasy to space? It's just a quick teleportation trip away.

BIG JOHN

(Above) Photograph, John Buscema, originally published in Marvel Comics Super Special No. 2 (1977). John Buscema's younger brother (and fellow Marvel penciller) Sal told Tom DeFalco, "Things go hard in our sleep and breaks dancing." John would draw famously detailed sketches on the back of his assigned pages, often "better than some of the stuff that he did on the them . . . He'd get a spark of inspiration and turn the page over and draw whatever was in his skull."

CONTINUES AFTER NEXT PAGE

AVENGERS No. 97

(Above) Interior, "Godhead's End", script, Roy Thomas; pencils, John Buscema; inks, Tom Palmer; March 1971. Longtime comic book readers found as everyman they could relate to in Rick Jones, whose status as the "Forever Young" of the Marvel Universe placed him in close contact with the heroes he (and they) adored. Thus, his encyclopedic knowledge of past comic characters came in handy in ending the Kree/Skrull War!

AVENGERS No. 100

(Left) Interior, "Whatever Gods There Be!", script, Roy Thomas; pencils and inks, Barry Smith; June 1971. Loyal Avengers readers might not have been aware of the Cosmic phenomenon, but in the series' 100th issue they get to behold a previous six pages of art penciled and inked by Smith, including this double-page spread. (The rest of the pages were inked by veterans Syd Shores and Joe Sinnott.)

AVENGERS No. 93

(Above and opposite) Interior and interior original art, "This Doubleed Earth" script, Roy Thomas; pencils, Neal Adams; inks, Tom Palmer. November 1971. During his first five years in the comics scene, Neal Adams had transformed every side he took on, from DC's *Batman* and *Green Lantern* to Marvel's *X-Men*. His association with X-scribe Thomas on the unchkinny mutant issue "Eyes/Skroll Fire" resulted in some of the most consential storytelling in comics history, expanding the Marvel Universe to the deepest reaches of space—and shrinking to vanishingly small levels during Ant-Man's fantastic voyage through the Vision's android innards.

AVENGERS No. 94

(Left) Interior, "More Than Johnson" script, Roy Thomas; pencils, Neal Adams; inks, Tom Palmer. December 1971. As with the Ant-Man/Vision interlude from the previous issue, Adams pioneered in innovating new ways to establish perspective.

DECLINE AND FALL OF THE NEWSSTAND

(Above) Photograph, anonymous-commissioned, 1973. The mid- to late 1970s saw the rise of comic book stores and distribution networks to service them. In addition to being able to better target their customers than newsstands had been, they also worked on a non-returnable basis—which is music to the ears of any publisher.

DOCTOR STRANGE No. 4

(Opposite) Cover pencils and inks, Frank Brunner. October 1975. By the heavy hosts of Haggoth! After almost two years of "Premiere" status, the success of Englehart and Brunner restores Doctor Strange to his own title for the first time in five years.

MARVEL PREMIERE No. 10

(Above) Interior, "Finally, Shuma-Gorath!", script, Steve Englehart, pencils and inks, Frank Brunner. September 1973. "On a mountain range, I'm Doctor Strange. For you..." —T. Rex, "Marabu Dust"

MARVEL PREMIERE No. 14

(Right) Interior, "Sise-Neg Genesis", script, Steve Englehart, pencils, Frank Brunner, inks, Dick Giordano. March 1974. The storied team of Englehart and Brunner bring the magic back to Doctor Strange. Englehart has described his work with Brunner as a coproduction "unique in its level of collaboration." The pair would close together and work late into the night fusing action and philosophy into each and every one of the good doctor's spellbinding adventures.

CAP'S LAST SUPPER

(Right) Photograph: Joyce Dopkeen; Joe Simon in his home studio, Manhattan, 2007. The great Joe Simon shows off a Marvelous take on Michelangelo's iconic *Last Supper*, with Cap fittingly in the prime seat. "Look back, I say, 'Who did this stuff? Who was this guy?'" Simon recalled in 2008. His eight-decade career in comics was "just a lovely way for a tailor's son to make a living." The beloved *Captain America* artist remained a presence at conventions until his death in 2011 at age 98.

DAREDEVIL No. 35

(Opposite) Cover: pencils and inks, Chris Samnee; July 2013. "I look to friends, I look to relationships I've had — but mostly I just go back to Stan and Jack," said writer Mark Waid. After years of grim and gritty *Daredevil* comics, with Matt Murdock cowed in the very long shadow cast by Frank Miller, Waid's fresh new take finally brought DD back into the light. With a succession of fantastic artists, Waid restored some of the fun, swashbuckling spirit of Moreland's early adventures.

ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN No. 160

(Below) Interior: "Death of Spider-Man Part 5," script, Brian Michael Bendis; pencils, Mark Bagley; inks, Andy Lanning and Andrew Hennessy; August 2011.

MILES MORALES: THE ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN No. 1

(Below) Cover: art, David Marquez; July 2014. Through the introduction of Afro-Latino Miles Morales as the new Ultimate Spider-Man, Brian Michael Bendis never ignored his signature title, once again exploring the responsibility of power through the lens-covered eyes of a young hero discovering his place in the world.

combine them all in *The Avengers*. Audiences puzzled by the "First Avenger" designation in the *Captain America* film would soon learn precisely what he was the "first" of.

Marvel followed its triple cinematic success by announcing a series of direct-to-video short films called Marvel One-Shots. The first two would feature Phil Coulson, played by Clark Gregg, in self-contained stories about a day in the life of a S.H.I.E.L.D. agent. Two more One-Shot films would follow over the next two years.

Sadly, at the end of 2011, the longest, strongest living link to Captain America would finally be snapped, when Joe Simon, cocreator of the Sentinel of Liberty, died at age 98.

The comics, meantime, had their own milestones. In *Ultimate Spider-Man* No. 160, Peter Parker died in the arms of Mary Jane Watson. (She was still in his life in this series, though they'd never gotten married.) The next issue — renumbered No. 1 — introduced a brand-new Spider-Man, Miles Morales, who is black and Hispanic, underscoring Stan Lee's oft-made point that the web-spinner could be *anyone* under that wonderful full face mask designed by Steve Ditko. Miles would soon discover, as Peter had, that "With great power, there must also come great responsibility." New editor-in-chief Alonso pointed out to the media that the move was in Marvel's tradition of "reflecting the real world in all its diversity." Even *Time* magazine did a piece on this new multicultural Spidey.

Writer Mark Waid and several talented artists brought *Daredevil* back from the dark side of town, in stories harking back to the hero's early days under Stan Lee, Bill Everett, Wally Wood, and Gene Colan. The new approach was greeted enthusiastically by fans.

A *Wolverine and the X-Men* series echoed the title of the recent animated TV series, with writer Jason Aaron and artist Chris Bachalo putting Logan through the wringer as headmaster of the new Jean Grey School for Higher Learning. Its location? Westchester County, New York — where else?

One of the year's major crossover events was *Fear Itself*, a limited series by writer Matt Fraction and artist Stuart Immonen that emphasized Thor and Captain America, building off the popularity of their recent films.

THE YEAR OF THE AVENGERS

Marvel continued to take charge of its own digital destiny in 2012, in an era when iPads and Kindles were fast replacing the newsstand, perhaps to some extent even the comic book store. In March, an enthusiastic crowd attending a Marvel panel at SXSW Interactive's ScreenBurn Arcade was introduced to Marvel Infinite Comics, a new format of "digital-first" titles that would control the pace at which a reader read a story, something impossible to do with a printed comic — and Marvel AR ("Augmented Reality"), an app that enabled readers, by scanning a symbol on certain comics pages into their mobile devices, to see the characters "come alive." The latter was introduced in Marvel's mega-event comics series for the year, *Avengers vs. X-Men*.

TO A NEW WORLD OF GODS AND MONSTERS

(Above) Book cover, author, Mary Shelley: Frankenstein: *Grosset & Dunlap, 1931.* Lee and Kirby's Hulk was clearly influenced visually by the classic Frankenstein movies, in particular Mary Shelley's monster as portrayed by Boris Karloff. Complemented by the brilliant makeup of Jack Pierce, the monster was a sympathetic character, much like the Hulk.

THE INCREDIBLE HULK No. 3

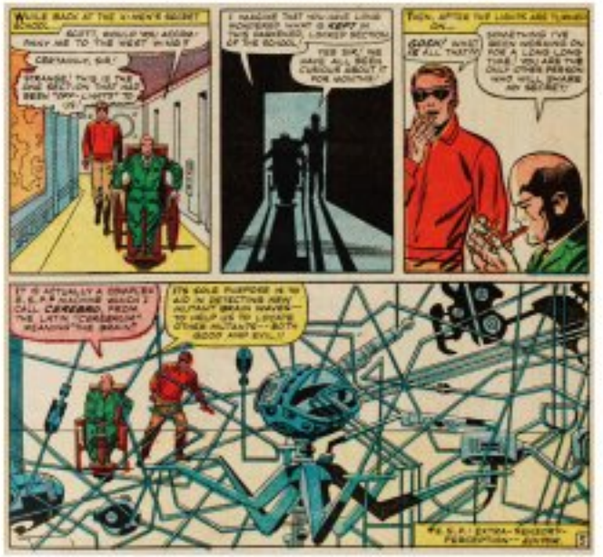
(Left) Interior, *"The Origin of The Hulk"*, *script, Stan Lee; pencils, Jack Kirby; inks, Dick Ayers; September 1962.* A Marvel tradition begins: updating new readers on the abilities and history of a character in a short story a few months after their debut.

THE INCREDIBLE HULK No. 1

Alpanis/Green pencils, Jack Kirby; inks, uncredited; Jack Kirby, September 1962. Marvel continues the monster motif popularized by the Thing. Stan Lee's cover copy playfully teases his audience with questions on exactly what kind of character the Hulk would be. Robert Bruce Banner—whose full name resulted from Stan Lee occasionally calling him "Bob"—is struck by the gamma rays of an atomic bomb while rescuing teenager Rick Jones.

FANTASTIC FOUR No. 5

(Right) Interior, *"Prisoners of Dr. Doom"*, *script, Stan Lee; pencils, Jack Kirby; inks, Joe Sinnott; July 1962.* "Sup! You know something—I'll be doggoned if this encounter doesn't remind me of the Thing!" Once again, Johnny Storm learns about a super hero by hanging up with Marvel comics. In *Strange Tales* No. 114, not too far in the future, the Torch will rediscover Captain America through a comic book as well!



X-MEN No. 7

(Above) Interior, "The Return of the Blob"; script, Stan Lee; pencils, Jack Kirby; inks, Chic Stone; September 1964. No, not Steve McQueen's Blob. Here, the professor develops Cerebro, a machine that can track down mutants. Apparently it isn't set to detect Infomacus.

X-MEN No. 4

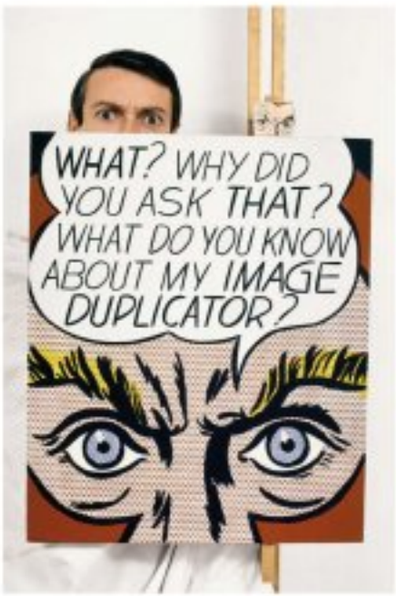
(Opposite) Cover; pencils, Jack Kirby; inks, Paul Reinman; March 1964. Pairing two new villains (the Scarlet Witch and Quicksilver), the X-Men follow in the Marvel tradition of having an evil team with a roster similar to their own. The Brotherhood of Evil Mutants has five members, one of whom is female—just like the X-Men.

X-MEN No. 1

(Left) Interior, "X-Men"; script, Stan Lee; pencils, Jack Kirby; inks, Paul Reinman; September 1963. "Roy Lichtenstein [was] not a fan of comics and cartoons," his widow Dorothy told the media following a 2013 retrospective of his work. "When people think of Roy, they think of those cartoon images from the early '60s. But he had another close to 40 years after that working on other imagery." It is perhaps a fitting end to the story for comic fans, who love to hate Pop Art and its blatant, celebrated co-opting of their heroes' artwork, in this case Kirby's Magneto from X-Men No. 1.

IMAGE DUPLICATOR

(Right) Photograph, John Lovegrove; artist Roy Lichtenstein with his painting, Image Duplicator; c. 1963. "Lichtenstein did no more or less for comics than Andy Warhol did for soup." —Art Spiegelman

"The comic strip is no longer a comic strip but in reality an illustrated novel. It is new and raw just now, but material for a limitless, intelligent development. And eventually, and inevitably, it will be a legitimate medium for the best of writers and artists."

— WILL EISNER