Okay, here we are with the second issue of WOEEKKAZOWEDORK! and in keeping with our policy of a rotating editorship, yours truly is responsible for this offering.

But before I tell you a little bit about this issue, we at WOEEK want to thank everyone who decided to try our first issue, and make it the unqualified success it was. Thank you, friends, and we hope you agree that WOEEK deserves a place in Fandom.

I think our regular staff members (co-publishers all) have gotten together some pretty exciting things this time around, and because of that, we’ve upped our page count to 36. And, may I add, without raising our price. While it may appear that we have, indeed we have not, as our cover story this issue includes a Toric in color and therefore works out the same for you as last issue’s 75¢ plus 25¢ postage.

Willie Blyberg brings us the second part of his MUTANTS strip, the second of the two-cabochon legacy which will be your way next issue. Our third issue, by the way, will be edited by Pete Iro, who aside from doing our cover this time around, offers an interesting dissertation on Jack Kirby. Kim Thompson turns his hand to something different this issue with a review of Mark Greenwald’s "A Treatise on Reality in Comic Literature." Mark has produced what I feel is the finest piece of comic orientated literature I’ve ever encountered: TORIC is a masterful scientific study... Yet as you will find out in Kim’s review, it’s not for everyone so check out page 24 and see for yourself.

Plus...more goodies. In particular, "A Conversation with Don McGregor." Whether not one is a great fan of Don’s writing, this interview is important to all as it sheds some light on a side of the Bullpen we rarely, if ever, get to see. Told from his unique vantage point, Don’s story is something I think every fan should be aware of.

Personally I feel Don has done more for the cause of progressive and literary comic books—the offering of viable and interesting alternatives for the older readers—than any other person in the medium. Don is, in brief, the writer I admire, and a man I love. Check this out because there’s a distinction between the two. As a writer I admire him for his talent and determination to bring a new dimension to comics; as a man I find him to be one of the warmest, most generous and fascinating persons I’ve known. And I’d like to take the time here, Jim, to thank him... for his talent, his friendship, and just simply... for himself. And it’s for this reason that this second issue of WOEEKZOWEDORK! is dedicated with gratitude and much appreciation to Mr. Donald Francis McGregor.

Turning to other matters, if you’re as interested in quality ones as I am, then urge you to check out TORIC, a newspaper-sized and available from its editor, Frank Lovecza, at 947 Maple Drive, #15, Morgantown, West Virginia 26505. The second issue of JUMBO, featuring other than things interviews with Don McGregor and... believe it or not... (God this one of the only person I know who’d attempt such a thing: Peter Gillis) is still available for only 75¢ (postage included). The third issue will feature articles by Frank, Archie Goodwin, Tony Isabella, Alphonso Muchin, Mark Gassper and others. It’s a first class zine so check it out and don’t forget, tell Frank I sent you.

Before I conclude and give way to the contents of our issue, no editorial would be complete without a word thanking thanks to Bill Seville and Sam de la Rosa for the simply indescribable frontispiece seen on the opposite page; to Mark Fascella and Tim Corrigan for their fine, fine artwork; to Steve Crane for coming thru with some much needed, and excellent logos; to Mark Greenwald for being ready, willing and especially able when it was needed.

And also, special thanks to Gasper the Great, a nondescript character who thinks his real name is Mark Gaspes: to Don McGregor again; and last yet most important, to my wife, Sue, who goddamn it, put up with me not only through getting this issue together, but who does no 365 days a year. Thanks Sue, and thanks everyone.

Finally, I would appreciate that all LOCs on this issue be sent directly to myself: Dean Mullaney, 703 Katan Avenue, Staten Island, N.Y. 10312 (tel. 212-948-8390). Thanks, and enjoy.

Dean Mullaney

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A mystery about her; a mystery which heightens the air of eroticism surrounding her.

As for being the most powerful woman in comics, again that is very true. When Crystal began appearing regularly in the FANTASTIC FOUR, it seemed natural that her elemental powers made her particularly powerful. Storm, on the other hand, is surprisingly ineffectual. Zephyr, who appeared in the early years of Marvel's STRANGE STORIES series, was more powerful and adept at control of the wind, but she didn't nearly the force that an elemental should be.

But in Storm, the overwhelming power of such a force is overbalanced by her ability to control cosmic winds. She is possibly more powerful than Thor. She can shape up a storm and lets it do its thing. Ororo controls it, too. And storm. She is highly skilled in her use of this.

She is constantly finding new intricacies to her power, such as her ability to confine such tremendous power to her ability to control cosmic winds. One wonders what limits (if indeed there are limits) there are to her powers. She is certainly more godlike than mortal.

At this writing, her origin has yet to be published (and may have grown swiftly by the time you read this). However, it seems evident at this point. Storm has gained a tremendous popular following. The growth of her mystique, her secretiveness, and the view of this, is no real need to rush the facts.

She has one of the most intriguing and enjoyable personalities in comics. Mainly because she is so complex, and it's fun picking out the bits and pieces that make her. She is a story in logical contradiction. For instance, she values money and status, but is constrained. She is clearly a free spirit, a libertarian, and needs to feel fully free, emotionally and physically. Indeed, she suffers from agoraphobia. And yet she confines her emotions at all times, keeping a calm, unemotional demeanor. She is an introvert.

Also, she is both a natural and a super-natural; her African heritage ties her to a culture that is traditionally associated with the land and the elements. Also, we have noted her earthly sensuality. However, that sensuality often becomes so overwhelming that it becomes unearthy, even unearthly, reminding of the sirens of classical myth, whose beauty was irresistible. And her control of those natural elements she is associated with makes her seem more of a goddess than an earth-mother. And yet, she is, in reality, both, in that this combination makes her the definitive super-heroine. The goddess part of her puts her above the rest of humanity, the earth-mother aspect anchors her to the masses. Too, she encompasses both the power of a goddess and the demigod, the charisma of the earth-mother. It is a rare, delicate combination, to be savored.

To continue, she is alternatively naive and worldly: naive in that she is unaware of the world she lives in, having lived for most of her life in a fantasy world; worldly in that she is very worshipped by her followers and called by them in moments of crisis. She is still very much a child, who doesn't know very little of herself and her powers, which is why she has enrolled in Professor Xavier's school. And yet, she has a jaded worldliness about her. She knows well her capabilities and is sure of her abilities. But she enters new situations with apprehension, but never seems to be, she knows herself, but only in a certain context, nowhere else. She's quite capable of that. Look at her relationship with Colossus, who, having been brought up on a communist farm in Russia, has never experienced a woman like her. But she has also seen the world. And has to see another world, but also see the same relationship without sacrificing anything.

She has also been discovered by the rest of the team. She is also alternatively submissive and assertive. This is due to her apparent empathy. Or perhaps Storm, being so close to nature, can feel or detect natural signals in other people. Whatever, she is always quite cerning of the feelings of those around her, knowing how her authority is needed, and she is best an equal member of the team. When Cyclops was troubled over the recent battle he had fought with his brother, Havoc, Storm realized the severity of his feelings and assumed the authority to prevent Wolverine from attacking Scott. Storm simply said, "You will do nothing, Wolverine—not now, not ever, or you will answer to me." Here again is the complexity of Storm. She is neither dealing with Wolverine was hard, simple, straight and effective. Also, very, very cold. But yet, she reasons from her depth of understanding of the human condition and its various needs.

It is also interesting to note how quickly Wolverine bowed to her command. Wolverine does not like taking orders from anyone, and such was the nature of his antagonistic relationship with Cyclops. Cyclops is the leader and Wolverine won't accept it. Yet he accepted Storm's authority (perhaps because of the tightening reality of her threat). It isn't difficult to see that Storm is much more of a natural leader than Scott. And this is only natural—as a goddess in Korea, she had led her people for years. However, she makes no pretensions toward leadership in the X-MEN. She lets Scott give the orders and she co-operates. Again, Storm's depth of understanding explains this. She knows the man has much to learn, but also realizes that Scott is leader, and as such, she has no pretensions toward leadership. To challenge his authority with her would be an insult to the group. She has learned that it is better to keep her emotions in check and to be patient. The time will come when her voice will be heard and when she is needed. At present, Storm knows her power and her authority, but is content to keep them under control until she better knows herself.

She also has a strangely innocent concern with her appearance. "Tell me, Kurt...am I... pretty?". Storm has become Westernized. In Kenya, she was one with nature, and nature was beautiful; so it followed that she would be beautiful. The western world has been ugly. As Professor X foretold her, it would be ugly, "but it is real—for more real than the fantasy you're living in now" (meaning her life as a goddess in Kenya). Storm has seen her fantasy dispelled. She has seen nature ravaged, and has sought consolation, as most westerners do, with her own beauty. It is all she has left of her fantasy, and she holds on to it.

It hasn't taken long for Storm to emerge as the most famous woman in comics. But, of course, she was designed to be such, and is being handled brilliantly by Chris Claremont and Dave Cockrum. For female readers, she is...awesome...and ideal. She displays the true feminist spirit in that she does not seek to equate herself with men, but has realized that she can go just as far (perhaps farther) by totally realizing her womanhood. It has already found her a place as Marvel's most powerful woman, possibly its most powerful character in general. For men, she is the ultimate woman—secure and consistent in her beauty and confidence, and yet so irresistibly mysterious that a lifetime with her is as exciting a prospect as meeting a woman before. And yet, both groups are interested.

With time, she may become the ultimate character, the one who is all things to all people. But, hell, even if she doesn't, Storm is Storm, and that, to be sure, is quite enough.

At Rivercom '75, Dave Cockrum was quoted as saying of Storm: "...well what I had in mind was to make her the most powerful woman in comics, and the most beautiful woman in comics, and I think I've succeeded...if I can find someone who looks like her, the two tickets to Tierra del Fuego are right here in my pocket...".

Indeed, Ororo (her real name) is the most beautiful woman in comics, as she is the first heroine to combine American standards of beauty with those of another (Africa). Her culture, thereby making her exotic and stunningly sensual. She speaks a very earthy, very natural sexuality. She is an African...tall, statuesque, with long white hair that sets off her complexion. Her eyes change with her mood; deep blue when emotive, empty when in action, exploding with light when using her powers. There is, as a result,
CONVERSATION WITH...

DON McGREGOR

WOONE: To begin with, Don, as it now stands, you've handed in your last series assignments to Marvel. Correct?

DON: By the time your magazine sees print, that fact will be pretty evident. Conclusively gone would be the dramatic way to phrase it. The KILLRAVEN book died with "The Morning After Mourning Prey." (ed note—AMAZING ADVENTURES #39) although when it was plotted neither Craig nor I were aware that it was going to the wall. The BLACK PANTHER has escaped the clutches of the Klu Klux Klan, moving into his new title, which will be done by Jack Kirby. The POWERMAN! strip, in the mysterious ways of comic book intrigue, was taken out of my hands before that.

WOONE: We were told officially that the RR book was cancelled because of poor sales, yet as it turns out, it was simply killed to make way for a new book by another writer. What were you told concerning the death of the strip?

DON: When the RR series began, I think there was some doubt as to whether or not it would survive for any length of time. Science-fiction has not had a very remarkable track record as succeeding sales wise, not in comic format, and during its four year history there were times when there were vague threats coming from on high that the book might die. They stayed vague for the most part until about the fall of 1975. At that particular time a number of titles were dropped significantly and many titles were cancelled. RR was selling somewhat in the same group of titles, which had also been dropping in the percentage of sales. One of the horror titles was threatened under the same edict that claimed that RR would be taken off the line. I'm not going to mention it, but I don't have a specific reason for that attitude, but it seems as if all important people have a specific reason for anything that is important to them. The important factor is that members who have more political power, to phrase it more correctly, can decide which books will get more exposure, for one example, on the bulletin boards. This particular horror series managed to have a pretty good space on the pages every month, or near to it, even to the point that the lead character wasn't going to appear in the magazine that month. Right about that time I asked the powers that be, who claim benevolent rule, if we might have a few pages of the RR series mentioned in those pages, especially some of the more historical and divergent aspects that both Craig and I were beginning to introduce into the strip. "Hey Gang," I said, not really in that bantering manner, with a lot more emphasis, "let's see a little more of this. Craig and I both know that we have this little odd-ball strip, that might cater to some of the audience that does not now know it exists, and that we feel that the decision had already been made to cancel this thing, and there would be no real value of space on those pages for a book that was going to die. It seemed to help that other book. Stranger still, it wasn't RR. It was AMAZING ADVENTURES from on high again that RR was granted a reprieve, and I was ecstatic. Miracles still work. And after the reprieve, official word replete and then did give us thekeys to the store. We were the best-selling s-f comic, or some such thing. That was curious, since we were on the verge of cancellation, but then we had something to do with being one of the few titles with the kind of audience.

When the real, bona fide death of KK actually occurred, it was a sad day. We were warned repeatedly that I was going to give him the news. Both of us were pretty stunned. Craig and I had worked together on that strip for over two years. You tend to become a bit close. It hit me, however, that I had nothing to lose and the potential of the strip. Each issue you manage to achieve success by that...let's let them know all about it. The book and it continues to open up to you, wider and wider, the vision extending. Now it was severed. Vision gone. One of my major headaches was gearing up to us, shrieking, "Oh, boy, now that KILLRAVEN's dead, you can work with me!"

WOONE: That's pretty cold.

DON: Yeah, that's pretty cold. And this was a person I had known for a long, long time. It's kind of an intimacy, a kind of intimacy where they just have more respect for other peoples' feelings at all. You can be standing barefoot holding onto a piece of artwork and one of these people will come up to you and rip it right out of your hands. The least they can do would have been to tell me that they had lost last have some common humanity that is not extended to you. Not even that little bit of dignity and respect.

I'm not going to name particular people and things like that because that's what I try to do to the people. They wouldn't be able to reply, or whatever. I'll just tell you what I think. I'll just tell you what I think. I don't feel I was treated there, but I just wouldn't name some of the people, because I feel I have been treated unfairly. I feel I know they've said things about me that have come out of different people who were talked to these people at conventions. These same people will be very nice to you to your face. That seems to be the case.

WOONE: It seems as though in comics, the norm is...when a book is cancelled, you simply pick up a new series and you may be thinking about the other book. Yet with people like Craig and yourself, it's different...

DON: Well I still miss the characters a lot. You have to understand that this was a plotted way ahead. I had the next two years of RR, a lot of time to plan on how the lead character wasn't going to appear in the magazine that month. Right about that time I asked the powers that be, who claim benevolent rule, if we might have a few pages of the RR series mentioned in those pages, especially some of the more historical and divergent aspects that both Craig and I were beginning to introduce into the strip. "Hey Gang," I said, not just beginning to realize his potential as a character. It's a character that I would not be adding any more words for Old Skool or Young Skool. Craig and I are working on "The Morning After Mourning Prey."

On the last RR book, "The Morning After Mourning Prey" there are no defense in their reading list and I changed the title from "AMAZING ADVENTURES" to "Mourning Prey" logo. I know I went in there and broke some of the neath of the title; Craig assures me that he went in there and "mourned" the name of the people in the past. I use them in the past. I wouldn't have put money on "AMAZING ADVENTURES" being published.

After the reprieve, official word replete and then did give us the keys to the store. We were the best-selling s-f comic, or some such thing. That was curious, since we were on the verge of cancellation, but then we had something to do with being one of the few titles with the kind of audience.

WOONE: Really? I think that story, and the book itself are complex, appealing, one might say, the "awsome" kind of book. You would have liked that.

DON: I wish they had other ways of marketing so they could reach different audiences with their books. The "AMAZING ADVENTURES" series is a market that's fostered for over three years and s-f isn't really noted for having any kind of depth. This was the series, it seemed as if it had some lasting potential. I think the point is, if the RR book could appeal to an audience...Because they're analogous, if they could get it out there and market it lager...I think one of the things about a series like KK has a much lower print run (the numbers aren't available, I'm just guessing) than a title like SPIDER-MAN. In many cases, KK's a better book than SPIDER-MAN. Or at least it's a lot cheaper, and probably because of its smaller number of available copies, never made the college bookstores. If KK had only one series, the marketing people might have run a large ad in the weekly comic ads, or something like that instead of a small ad like SPIDER-MAN. I think one of the things about a series like KK has a much lower print run (the numbers aren't available, I'm just guessing) than a title like SPIDER-MAN. In many cases, KK's a better book than SPIDER-MAN. Or at least it's a lot cheaper, and probably because of its smaller number of available copies, never made the college bookstores. If KK had only one series, the marketing people might have run a large ad in the weekly comic ads, or something like that instead of a small ad like SPIDER-MAN.

WOONE: The Old Skool origin. "Arena Kill", AMAZING ADVENTURES #17 was in that vein. There appears to be a belief that if a story or book deals with social or political issues or comments on relationships between people, then it's not escapist.

DON: I suppose what they mean by that is it forces them to review themselves and their lives and in that sense it isn't escapist. But there is nothing wrong with a little of that. There is a whole other story, the stories are escapist. There are very, very many stories. The Panther fighting the crocodile (ed note—JUNGLE ACTION #10) is quite escapist stuff; it's done very graphically, very flamboyantly...a very visual thing. But on the other hand, there are other elements happening there also. But I think many other elements happen to have to do with themselves, questions of society, politics, and all the rest.

WOONE: There is also an often used argument that comics should not contain a liberal amount of copy, and that is what is not comics...

WOONE: To maintain that readership, to keep them reading PACE that three or four months. And, I feel you need certain books that have something of depth in them. Not a little or substantial than what's there in general now.

DON: Well of course what happens is that the readers become bored with the material they're reading, and the Marvel Comics boys are right at one point close to 70 or 80 titles a month. When you have that many titles that...and that the same, somebody's going to get bored somehow along the line. You have to have some kind of differentiation. In trying to get a stocking level on the books, you kill a lot of growth and potential audience. You might want to get involved with comics, or at least stick with them.

WOONE: There were KILLRAVEN, DOCTOR STRANGE, the BLACK PANTHER, MASTER OF KUNG FU, THUNDERBOLTS...with the exception of NOFX, they're all gone, or at least the same (progressive if you will) books they once were.

DON: I don't think they should try to kill everything that doesn't conform to their standards. There's room for all kinds of comics, and I think they're bad ideas is constantly saying "you can't do that"...or "don't do that...don't you understand, this is not comics"...Well it's comics if it's words and pictures and is comics is supposed on your point of reference, but there should be some kind of alternative so other comic books are the same. I think there are all different types of escapism. I think there's a great deal of escapism in the BLACK PANTHER and the NOFX, and some very serious subjects, and at times we did...Some of the RR stuff gets down to showing how absurd things are at this point in time and place..."The Day The Monuments Shattered" and "Something Worth Dying For" (ed note—AMAZING ADVENTURES #31 and 26 respectively) handled it that is Don. I've trod on some of the subjects with a kind of ironic whimsy, a touch of caustic wit, but...
DON: I don't understand people saying it's not comics. My copy (ed. note—it must be mentioned that when Stan Lee was writing, the size of the original pages were larger). My copy may have been different than Stan's... I just ask myself, what can I do that makes the story valid. A reason for me to do it other than to pick up a pay check. I have nothing against wanting to be paid for my writing, but that can't be the major reason I do it. My copy was not just describing what was going on in the pictures; I don't believe so; that's not what I was attempting to do. I tried to give the story as many facets as possible, both in character and in theme, so that in 17 pages you could have as many shades of meaning and interpretation, rather than just a straight one level thing. You could read it on one, two basis levels but hopefully people would get other things out of it as well. I don't know any other way to state it than that; to hope that it can enlighten and that it still makes thought.

WONEE: I think your comics were among the most visually oriented... It seems to me that the best comics are produced when the writer and artist realize the other.

DON: Yeah, a lot of times I did let the art tell the story. Many times Craig would just know what to put out and I would ask myself how am I going to write anything, this stuff is so beautiful. I don't do so that it won't come out in a pretty picture book, so that it would work on all levels. Craig was always a great challenge also because he was one of the few artists I've worked with who was really involved with the characters. We could spend an hour and talk about all the different aspects of KR's personality.

DON: I was interested in the way the story would be told. And I guess it has a basis in film also. I had this fantasy that this was the way it was going to be, that time I wrote a story. Anything I asked for, and more, because Tom added his own story, as well as what I asked for. There you have not only your own sense of graphics and imagination, but the artist's as well. And I thought oh, this is the way it's going to be all the time. Unfortunately I found out later that it's quite the case (laughed). On the other hand, I've had an incredibly fortunate to work with some very talented people whom I respected and who respected me so that we could work in a very close relationship. I didn't have as much to do with the layouts in the K5 book so with the others but I would give suggestions to Craig which a lot of times he would just ignore and say he had something better. I would never argue with Craig because he was putting so much time and effort into it. Obviously it would be insane of me, working with one of the best people in the business, to say 'hey, you didn't do this'.

Now working with Billy Graham I had a lot to do with many of the layouts. With Rich Buckler, it was actually working side by side. In the PANTHER, a lot of it was disregarded right on the plots because I do a page by page breakdown. I feel a writer should structure his own story. That's to me a part of what storytelling is all about.

WONEE: As opposed to, say, letting the artist take the initiative and structure it his way...

DON: Well that might work if you didn't have a limited number of pages, as an artist may just get hung up in drawing the pictures and not bother with the padding. Some artists handle it better than others. But in a way, it feels like it's the writer's responsibility to pace the story, to layout exactly how it's going to unravel.

WONEE: In reference to the PANTHER, one of the editors at Marvel told me that JUNKLE ACTS was their worst selling book. Yet now they turn around and give the Panther his own title and as we know, a character isn't given his/her own book unless the sales justify it.

DON: Oh but they do if it's Jack Kirby (laugh). Not having really been privy to the sales figures, I imagine the book dropped off when we started doing to Klaw material. I'll take some of the blame for that, but I think they should equally. They were afraid of the subject matter. We were talking about marketing, if they had known how to market it, if they got it out to the newspapers that we were handling some really serious stuff. I don't think that the Klaw would firebomb us, or they'd sue us and I thought that was pretty strange; I just couldn't imagine it. And besides, anything I did within the books that concerned the Klaw was all a kind of documented evidence. I confess used it in a fictionalized sense, but all the routines and such are accurate. It was such a complex piece of work, not only in terms of plot, but in theme and even what I had hoped to achieve with it, handling something so real as the KKK in a comic book. I think it was valid. They're Marvelous, energetic, belligerent "they" who shape what can and can't be in a comic book, they suggested 'why don't you do The Sons Of The Serpent?'. They didn't understand that I wanted to get it past the phony censors and deal with very real elements of our time and place. I wanted to depict not only the KKK but analyse where we are these days in America, the kind of polarization that is tearing this country apart. I wish we could have done the next PANTHER book, the sixth chapter of the Klaw saga, as it would have more firmly established the boundaries that would be encompassed in the novel as a whole. The next issue was to be called "Dragon Soldiers Marching At The Pace" and it had Mind Eagle's origin in it as well. Plus, the third telling of how Angela Lynne died. I'm not going to give it away, but I have to tell you one thing—that much of what you've seen in the beginning books is not what really happened. The motivations are entirely different. Once you understand the key to it, it's easy to start determining what's going on. There are a lot of clues tossed in, some of them are camouflaged a little, but they're there and in re-readings of the story, you'll probably pick them out.

There was a third Panther novel planned, by the way, which would have been called "The Panther and the Land of the Apothec".

WONEE: What would that have been about?

DON: Obviously his adventures in South Africa. And also, the search for his mother.

WONEE: With that, there would have been a return of some of the supporting characters from "Panther's Rage", picking them up a few years later?

DON: Right. There are a lot of changes in all of them from W'Kabi, Taku...and especially Kantu
because he would have been two years older and at that time in life, it would have made a big change in what he was. There would have been some interesting things. I had always intended in "The Panther Vs. The Klan" to do at least a four page sequence of M'Kabi writing the Panther letter about what was going on in Wakanda. I didn’t want to completely cut him off, so you’ll notice that there are lines in almost all the issues that refer to his memories of Wakanda and what happened during "Panther’s Rage." There’s one bit where Wind Eagle calls him “Panther-devil” (laughter), but it’s not humorous this time and is serious. The Panther remembers how fondly he was to recall Yatte saying that to him. But here it’s done in an extremely different context because Wind Eagle is in a way convinced that.? Challa is some kind of agent of Satan. Yet to anybody who’s read "Panther’s Rage" it reinforces that all
defining of the memories of Wakanda.

WOMEN: And I feel those alignments are strong. I know I still miss people like M’Kabi, Yatte...and already miss people like Old Skull, M’Sulla, Quentin Chase...

DON: Okay, Quentin Chase is a very, very tender spot with me. If I never read Quentin Chase. He’s not a hero, in the comic book meaning of the term, but he is someone who, at least to me, displays instances of social concern and awareness...and acts on those principles even when it might cost him great expenses in his personal life. And I know some people felt his being sentimental because I had a scene between Chase and his daughter...or anytime you have a scene where the hero and heroine kiss; you’re setting up an interpersonal relationships, having their eyes closed tied in up in their comic books. They’re probably going to sleep with them at night instead (laughter).

WOMEN: (laughter) Ahem, I noticed it with Chase and also with Cage, that you’ve tried to pre- sent the good and bad sides of characters.

DON: Well yeah because basically in comics, you get caricatures and I was trying to get beyond that, get into the subtleties of the characters. We’ve always have situations and different traits and where we display bad traits. MARY HAMPTON, MARY HAMPTON, MARY HAMPTON, MARY HAMPTON, MARY HAMPTON, MARY HAMPTON, MARY HAMPTON, MARY HAMPTON. MARY HAMPTON, MARY HAMPTON. They’re a classic example of that. They use characters where they can show how different traits. They use such a complete asshole in some respects, yet in other respects are heroic. These definitions he really shows a little bit of dignity.

WOMEN: Yeah, in his union activities he’ll have great instincts, yet in other situations he comes across with his magic, “I’m the husband, you’re the wife” attitude.

DON: Yes and in that kind of attitude he’s involved,

With Quentin Chase, it would have been very easy to do a cop character who is very stereotypically another cop or a cop or a gum. And I think we’ve hidden Chase in-between a lot of other stuff, so it’s a hard job to be a cop. I had a lot of things planned for him that we’ll unfortunately never get the chance to do.

WOMEN: You were supposed to take over DEATHLOG and mentioned that you were thinking of put-

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WOMEN: But how would Chase fit in...?

DON: Ah! Because Deathlok would have to come into conflict with the inability to function period, if only because of his costume. Also, Chase would really have some idea with Wildfire in his and the CIA because once he became involved in the Deathlok book, then he had to rise up to him and tell him not to get involved.

WOMEN: I don’t think he would have backed off.

DON: You’re probably right. The stupid idiot would probably hang his head out there and make some sort of a moral stance.

WOMEN: (laughter) Well he’s always off-duty doing his on-duty work...

DON: (laughter) Yeah, Quentin’s kind of commit-

ted. I liked him a lot. I really did.

WOMEN: At the 1976 July Con in New York, on a Marvel Comics panel on, bringing in our writers and writers were on, the editors claimed that a writer is never taken off a book unless he/she could come up with a good reason. The book was no good to want to do that. Steve Gerber retorted “the glare from the wastebasket is blinding me.”

DON: (laughter) Well good for Steve. What did the people say in response to Steve when he said that?

WOMEN: There was some applause, and the panel was dumbfounded. They tried to switch the subject.

DON: You better believe it. That’s their tactic.

WOMEN: How do you relate this to your being taken over LUXE CAGE?

DON: Back before I knew they were going to drop the whole roof down upon my head—and you know that they’d been trying to do this to the X-Men and the editorial chairs were changing all the time. I’m pretty sure that’s what they wanted to do with LUXE CAGE. I never had the desire to do SPIDER-MAN or the FF because the books are too regimented and it’s like you’re the king of the town down...

I’m saying that as a writer, a creative per-
son, I was interested in getting tied up in the mainstream books. You can’t complain if you’ve been getting tied up in something maybe that’s the point that is selling the book. So to me, there’s no sense of freedom there. So I think that’s it. I think it took a year and then the flak really started to hit the fan. The things were being changed. They kept telling me I was on the book, then I was off it, then back on it again...so that’s why you’ll notice a kind of erratic thing in terms of the sub-

WOMEN: And then you get the book about Frank Robbins to do. I would not have done “The Fire This Time” (ed. note—LUKE CAGE #32) in the sequence I did it in if I had been doing the whole full time because I knew they would hand me my head. This is not the late 60s and when you start doing stories that are based in real places and make comment on them, it’s not as easily tolerated. A lot of people got upset and felt I shouldn’t have made any com-

WOMEN: About Jamaica, Queens. I didn’t because I felt it was an important story to really want to get some very real elements into the book because I felt CAGE was the perfect place to do that, much more so than any other Marvel book.

WOMEN: I think a lot of people misunderstood that story and felt it was simply a race story.

DON: It wasn’t. It was a story about how much ownership and accountability of the city, how much of a lot of people to be able to come with it. I could have, I really had some time come with it. The city because he once he became involved in the Deathlok book, then he had to rise up to him and tell him not to get involved.

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I’m saying that as a writer, a creative per-

WOMEN: Yeah, in his union activities he’ll have great instincts, yet in other situations he comes across with his magic, “I’m the husband, you’re the wife” attitude.

DON: Yes and in that kind of attitude he’s involved, with his magic which is “I’m the husband, you’re the wife” attitude.

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WO: They didn't like the idea that you went over their heads?

d: Yeah, but I never mentioned any names, and all I asked was "do you feel?" They were just tampering with so much I couldn't believe it. Then I was told I would be off the CAGE book. They'd even cut compliments I'd written in the letters pages referring to the splendid job Doug Moench and Paul Gulacy were doing on SHANG-CHI. Sheesh! And I thought the letters pages were one of the Bullpen's favorite places to plug other titles. Double sheesh!

WO: It seems as though there is a lot of infighting within the editorial offices. And I guess it refers to what we talked about before, that the books that are different are not to be tolerated.

d: Well at one point they told me I was "too close to the Black Experience", that they didn't want me handling the black characters. I don't know what they meant by that, but it's a catch phrase. They pull out catch phrases when they don't know what they want, or don't want. I've noticed that not with all editors but with many that I've dealt with in comics. I said that was really heavy news you're laying on me, that I'm losing the books, and I was told I was too close to it. Too close to what? My livelihood? Yeah, a little bit guys. The strange thing is, if somebody tampered with these same people's scripts, they would have been going around the offices screaming. And I never did that. If there were changes I didn't agree with, I tried to discuss it if at all possible. Not that I never did anything wrong, because I did, but I obviously had reasons for almost everything. I spent a lot of time in deliberation and I know that at least I had the best intentions when I did them at the time, that they would have some kind of validity and worth, and would give something to people. I think that's important, giving something to the audience. The only way I know to sit behind a typewriter and give everything I've got at that point in time: to try to do the best story I can.

WO: So you wouldn't say you're trying to preach, you're just trying to give the best you possibly can.

d: I'm trying to entertain, I'm trying to stimulate thought. I'm very interested in suspense, narrative, I'm trying to do atmosphere, I'm trying to preach them, plot, character. I try not to do wasted scenes. Every scene has a reason for being there. Sometimes it may have two different interpretations, depending on what level you want to take it on. Sometimes I may be talking about the characters on one level, and another, about something personal that's just happened to me in the realm of comics that some of the inside readers might catch or might not. I'm sure all the people who read the last K and BLACK PANTHER books will know that some of it is about the fact that these are my last Ks and BLACK PANTHERS: some of my attitudes having to write a last book, knowing it's my last book and that the life breath has been cut out from you before you had a chance to do it all.

WO: In terms of story, would you have handled any of your books differently if you didn't have to worry about Code approval?

d: Yes.

WO: How so? Male and female, or in general?

d: In every sense. The differences would have been in what we could have handled in the relationships between the characters. I certainly would have done more with T'Challa and Monica, Camilla and M'Shulla. One of the things I had come up with just before we found out it was the last book was having Camilla pregnant. As you know, neither Camilla or M'Shulla are married. One is black and one is white and that raised enough flak when it first came out. Craig told me at the time "Are you crazy? That will be your last book!" How little did he know that he was being very prophetic.

WO: Okay, Don, I and I'm sure all of your followers are very interested in what's next, what you're going to be doing, in comics or whatever. Could you tell us something about that?

d: I'm currently working on a new strip called "Dragonsnake".

WOE: And where's that going to be?

d: It will be in DEADLY HANDS OF KUNG FU, and as far as I know it's going to make it to print (laughter). I've been very fortunate that John david Warren, who is editing the kung-fu book, likes much of my material and we have a pretty good working relationship. We've discussed the project and he knows much of what it's about, and seems very interested about it. And I'm pretty excited about it myself. We don't have Code approval over the series so there's a couple of things we can do that I wasn't able to handle in the other books. And, we'll be working with Tom Sutton again, and that's great because I think Tom is one of the most under-rated artists in the comics business, especially in terms of telling the story. And as I said, I'm pretty excited about it. I think you might find it interesting.

WOE: That's great, Don, and may we on behalf of all your fans, wish you the best of luck.

d: Thanks, and as always, Hang In There!
PART TWO

CONFRONTATION
CAP VS. RED SKULL

Spanning more than three decades of conflict, Captain America and the Red Skull stand as perhaps the ultimate confrontation of good versus evil. Yet while their rivalry goes back as far as CAPTAIN AMERICA #1, March-April 1941, we'll concern ourselves basically with the 60s and 70s as most of us, self included, weren't even in existence back in 1941.

Hardly anywhere will you find a more consistent meeting of superhero and super-villain as with Cap and the Red Skull. When you get right down to it, no other Marvel villain, save Doctor Doom, has had more appearances than the Red Skull (the Sub-Mariner doesn't count as he, in truth, is a hero).

Just what can be attributable to the Skull's popularity? Perhaps it's that he and Cap hit it off so well in terms of opposing values: the perfect one-to-one relationship of hero and villain you might say. Or maybe it's that red mask of his. The Red Skull is so often seen with that red mask that his real face is totally neglected, making one think that there is no face beneath that hideous covering. It kind of reminds me of a guy named Doom. Even when the Red Skull's origin was manifested in King-Size AVENGERS SPECIAL #3, we still never got a single good look at his face. However, in CAPTAIN AMERICA #117-119, Cap inhabiting the body of the Skull, did remove the mask...but even when Cap applied makeshift make-up to his/Skull's face, we still never found out what the true countenance was like.

It was Hitler who created the Red Skull. Skullly was a mere bellhop in those days, but once the man of steel saw that face filled with envy, hatred and evil...enter the Red Skull. Also, it was Hitler's idea for the young bellhop to wear that infamous red mask, created to inspire terror in the hearts of all freedonkinds.

Bucky, Cap's kid sidekick, met his demise indirectly at the hands of the Red Skull. You know the oft-told tragic tale. Even though Baron Zemo was truly responsible, he was acting under orders from the Skull. Skeptics may check TALES OF SUSPENSE #80 for the info.

We all know of Cap's fate after that bomb hurled him and Bucky into oblivion. Yet what of the Red Skull? You had to ask. During his last WW II battle with Cap, the underground bunker in which they were battling was dramatically bombarded. Naturally Cap escapes, but the Skull got trapped under tons of debris. Even there, he was kept alive all the way up until the 60s due to suspended animation, the result of a
**Super Friends and Prisoners: A Look at Marvel & National's Other-Medium Adaptations**

by K.T. Robbins

"You'll take the TV road, and we'll take the movie road, and we'll be exploited it before you..."

The above lines, in one way or another, are meant to reflect upon the recent entries by National and Marvel comics into the field of other-medium adaptations. National, apparently at the direction of its new publisher, Jonette Kahn, is developing a line of DC-comics, while Marvel is concentrating on film adaptations, as well as experiments with TV and rock music.

The DC-TV lineup consists of SHAZAM!, SUPER FRIENDS, IRIS and WELCOME BACK, KOTTER. The SHAZAM comic, which pre-dates the successful Saturday morning success of the Saturday morning series, is restructured to conform with its TV counterpart, courtesy of Nelson Bridwell and Kurt Schaffenburger. The comics’ Billy Batson is being sent to radio stations and will be picking up an adult man’s mind. In this way, SHAZAM! TV is in line to have a closer resemblance to its TV companion. Being met with Sunday morning TV freaks or a SHAZAM! fan, this writer can offer no opinion on either subject.

ISIS started out as a companion feature to the TV SHAZAM. The most surprising thing about it is that it took forever to get, almost a year, to produce it. Basing judgement on the story appearing in SHAZAM #25, by Benny O’Neill and Dick Giordano, the series seems to be straight superhero adventure, rather than the cartoonish style of the Big Red Cheese. This is an original comic that has never been done before. Since female-led comics generally fail very quickly, it will be interesting to see how ISIS fares. Obviously, National is hoping that a large number of TV viewers will carry over to the comic.

SUPER FRIENDS, the Saturday morning JLA, seems to be National’s counterpart to SPIDER-BOY. STUPID DIGESTS. And, if the announced contents of the first Nelson Bridwell, Ric Estrada, Ace Orlando and Vince Colletta issue are for real, then this promises to be one of the most successful comics on the market. Interestingly, SUPER FRIENDS goes into comic publication at about the same time that the two-year-old cartoon goes to air.

WELCOME BACK, KOTTER is the only one of the TV programs with no relationship to a comic in its background. The SHAZAM comicbegu SHAZAM TV, DC TV, the SHAZAM comic was a poorly structured SHAZAM comic. The JLA begu SUPER FRIENDS. KOTTER has no such connections. What is has for a basis is one of the most successful programs of the last TV year, and National has hopes for it.

**The Land That Time Forgot**, adapted by Mary Wolfman and Sonny Trinidad, in the first (and only) issue of MARVEL MOVIE PREMIERE, is one of Marvel’s best adaptations. Wolfman combined the best of Burroughs’ novel and the Michael Moorcock/James Cawthorn script to present a well-paced adventure. In addition, Wolfman drafted a bit of a later Burroughs sequel, OUT OF TIME’S ARMS, to explain the eventual situation of the island of Caspak, which was not present in the movie.

Although the best movie adaptation is the joint Marvel/DC production of MGM’s THE WIZARD OF OZ, done by Roy Thomas, John Buscema and the Tribe, this was originally to be a Marvel project. However, at the last minute Marvel announced their plans to adapt OZ, DC also announced an OZ project. Rather than put two OZ books on the market, Marvel and DC joined names on the Marvel product, which preceded the previously announced SUPERMAN V. SPIDER-MAN as the first Marvel/DC comic. THE WIZARD OF OZ comic was marvelously faithful to the 1939 film. Permission was secured from MGM for the use of the features of the stars of the film and the result was that the only thing that could improve the story would be to find a way to bring the music of the film to the comic.

Currently, Marvel is getting into the film industry’s newly aroused interest in science-fiction movies by contracting for adaptations of two recent 5-films, LOGAN’S RUN and THE STAR WARS. These adaptations, Marvel has just announced, will be on the TV idea of Campbell. LOGAN’S RUN, to be adapted by Gerry Conway, George Perez and Klaus Janson, has been given a set number of issues, but THE STAR WARS has been set for a six-issue run courtesy of Roy Thomas and an unnamed artist.

The Bullpen has also announced a new color 5-film adaptation of the 5-film PLANET, by Mary Wolfman and Dave Cockrum. Whether this title is based on the classic of film of the same name remains to be seen.

The most notable of the movie adaptations is the Jack Kirby adaptation of 5001: A SPACE ODYSSEY. However, space operas are not the most successful. The strip, featuring the adventures of the Princess Paris of the Space Odyssey, is now being written by John Warner and Sonny Trinidad, was less successful. Squared into a single issue, in MARVEL SPOTLIGHT #25, the 13-page story was forced to omit some of the more dramatic scenes, such as the transformation of Princess Paris’s maid into a dragon, and the battle between the dragon and the cyclops.

Not to be left out of things, Marvel is experimenting with one TV-based comic in the prison of the PRISONER, adapted from the British series seen on American TV about seven years ago, and then began its comic career in November. Marvel has promised that this comic will fail to the cartoonish style of the Big Red Cheese. However, reports is that the Marvel plans to adapt the 17 episodes out, and Kelly Freas. Since female-led comics generally fade very quickly, it will be interesting to see how ISIS fares. Obviously, National is hoping that a large number of TV viewers will carry over to the comic.

The most curious of Marvel’s other-medium adaptations is their entry into the world of rock music. They have announced that a black-and-white comic, presumably a one-shot, is being prepared by Steve Gerber and an unknown artist which will feature the rock group KISS. Quite frankly, this writer cannot see the why the KISS comic. As far as their music goes, KISS is simply another member of the group of glitzy rockers, sounding no better than the rest of the scene. However, in the case of KISS, they have set any trends or revolutionized modern music. The only FRIENDS TV, the KISS comic has to noriety is the creative use of make-up by its members. Maybe that’s why Marvel is making a KISS comic: perhaps they feel anyone sporting Halloween faces as colorful as the members of KISS do belong in a comic book.
**The Complete Don McGregor Checklist**

**Amazing Adventures Featuring Killraven**

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<td>The Death Breeders</td>
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**Chamber of Chills**

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**Deadly Hand of Kung Fu**

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<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>1/72</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>The Ones Who Stole It From You</td>
<td>Auraleon</td>
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<td>38</td>
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<td>When Makes The Dreamer</td>
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**Journey into Mystery**

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<td>6</td>
<td>The Man With Two Faces (w/Gardner Fox)</td>
<td>Winslow Mortimer</td>
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**Jungle Action Featuring The Black Panther**

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<td>Death Regrets Beneath Wakanda</td>
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<td>But Now The Spots Are Broken</td>
<td>Gil Kane</td>
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**Marvel Preview**

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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Fall/76</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>The Reality Manipulator</td>
<td>Mike Ploog</td>
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<td>4/74</td>
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<td>Demons Of Slumber Mansion</td>
<td>Juan Boix</td>
<td>Pablo Marcos</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
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<td>This Is Vailant One, Signing Out</td>
<td>Juan Boix</td>
<td>Pablo Marcos</td>
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**Power-Man**

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<td>Of Memories, Both Vicious And Haunting</td>
<td>Frank Robbins</td>
<td>Joe Gillis</td>
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**Vampirreilla**

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<td>Welcome To The Witch's Cove</td>
<td>Luis Garcia</td>
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<td>Felix Mas</td>
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**Vampire Tales (Morbius tales denoted with *, Hordiah twist tale denoted with **)**

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<td>2</td>
<td>10/73</td>
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<td>The Blood Sacrifice Of Amada Saint</td>
<td>Rich Buckler</td>
<td>Klaus Janson &amp; Carlos Garzon</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>10/73</td>
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<td>The Evil Of Nantos Principle</td>
<td>Rich Buckler</td>
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<td>Bat's Biffy (from the story by August Derleth)</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>Light Of The Possessed</td>
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<td>Klaus Janson &amp; Carlos Garzon</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>6/74</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Blood Fire</td>
<td>Rich Buckler</td>
<td>Klaus Janson &amp; Carlos Garzon</td>
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<td>10/74</td>
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<td>Where Is Gallow Road And What The Hell Are They Doing There?</td>
<td>Mike Vosburg</td>
<td>Frank Chiaramonte</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>12/74</td>
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<td>High Midnight</td>
<td>Mike Vosburg</td>
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by Peter Iro

I first really started reading comic books in the early 1960s. Marvel, DC, Harvey funnybooks, war and superhero comics. My tastes developed fast and very soon the super-heroe books became second nature to me.

Early favorites included Justice League of America, The Flash, and Superman. Marvel had yet to enter the field. Soon, the revived versions of Green Lantern, The Atom, and Ramanem captured my slowly but surely growing pile of four-color fantasies.

Marvel wasn't too far behind, but I wasn't interested, even at the cajoling of a few kids who tried to convince me that the Fantastic Four were better than the JLA. Marvel simply didn't turn me on, having Cheesy printing and artwork that couldn't draw me in.

The two simply couldn't compare to Infantino and/ or Anderson (h.k.g.)

Time passed. I grew a few inches, segue to the second half of the 60s.

Marvel had improved in the meantime and I did begin reading, 'tho' at first not buying, their books. Before long, sooner than you can say "It's Clobberin' Time!", I was hooked.

I was coming into the home stretch, adolescence just a stone's throw away.

I responded to something in the Marvels that the DC's just couldn't. As a youngster, I wasn't all that physical. I was chunky, read a lot, and was a "futile" reasonably good student. My need to compete was satisfied with the Flash or Adam Strange comic book.

Flying off an alien menace on the planet Rann in the Alpha Centauri solar system was certainly more exciting than playing "football" on the yard.

The pans of growth became more apparent and suddenly everything was "kid stuff". Most of the kids who read comics quit reading them but a few of us, more withdrawn, less sure of ourselves, continued. Clandestinely, of course.

What was the charm the Marvel books had that kept me havinka? I suppose it was really a reflection of where I was at as a person at that point in time. Whereas earlier I was content in purely selfish acts of self-indulgence, being aware, both conscious and unconscious, of my relationships with those around me, I left me with many feelings of insecurity. Not the primitive "he's stronger than I" level, but

about life, where I was going.

Marvel must have appealed to me here.

In Marvel comics, everyone looked grim and angry, as if each character carried the responsibility of the world on their shoulders. Earth a speck in the cosmos against a firmament of explosions, grotesque creatures, evil machinations and fights and plagues.

It was a world I could easily get into, if not identify with. Superman was never quite like this. The characters populating these four-color pages had real problems...would Aunt May have a heart attack and die? Responsibility! An unconscious need for it, and the nerve had been struck. This was a whole new trip in comics, a departure from what I was used to as well.

Simultaneously, another phenomenon was occurring, albeit on a different front.

Comics virtually disappeared in the second half of the 60s. Parents had abandoned with many kids a collection of those vile threats to the American Way of Life and Things that were Normal and Decent. The DC stuff was really an attempt to recapture that lost and lucrative market which had been taken away. Marvel wanted to one-up DC at their own game...and succeeded.

Until the 60s, comics were a pre-adolescent pastime, yet with the Marvels, something different began happening. The kids continued to read, some with greater popularity, through the critical stages of development as individuals.

It was a symbiotic relationship: the readers getting off on the comics, and the comics in turn, gaining sales. Rather than the usual comic sales reaching new heights, a new market space once again became prominent. By the mid to late 60s, many of the former readers were in college, and with comics better displayed, perhaps a student here and there began to read. And in turn, with college kids reading, a new market was created.

By the late 60s, the former giants of the industry had more or less collapsed. The former 'giant killers,' Reed Crandall, and the Will Eisners, Jack Kirby, the Williamsons and Frank Frazetta were working in other fields. The few that had remained were unknown historically, and were certainly not as good as at their peak periods.

So while Infantino and Anderson were winning the awards in the early 60s, Kirby just about produced exclusive comic genius on them in the following years. It was almost as if comics were invented exclusively by Kirby at that. Perhaps more than any other individual, he had the medium at this stage and date.

He, again, the epitome of comics at this time.

As Kirby became more and more the backbone of every comic book, he called his strip, doing the layouts for most of the others, he was more controlling in that the (of the then) new approach to drawing comics, his drawing took on more and more of a shorthand look.

Until this time, he had been a fairly orthodox artist (his work even had anatomy to it), suffering through mostly bad inkers over the years: Joe Simon, Jack Abel, Don Heck, and eventually, Vince Colletta. His penciling may have been second rate before, Kirby became more enamored with technology, telescoping the grotesqueries of the Atlas days in this new environment, into a whole new mythology.

His work continued to take on more and more of a simplified, "abstracted" as I called it before, look as time went by. His equally highlight lines and "comic book" type were highly simplified versions of standard comic book art gimples and cliches. It also allowed him the opportunity to simplify his work as never before so that instead of depicting, for example, realistic machinery, he would instead portray the essence of machinery. This ability to give the more powerful images of basic constructs allowed him to spotlight the feelings wanted, and simultaneously, draw the material quickly.

Further, the epitome of mythology has been folioted over most of his work in the last decade plus, more likely because of his focus other occupation with gods and myths. If one is to call his work a mythology, it is not because of such surface qualities, but because of its reflection of Kirby the person, and his attitudes; a reflection of his psyche that can be read from not what he consciously created out but how it relates to why he did it in the first place.

His procreation with the omnipotent father-figure, lack of mother-figure (or there when, secondary and relatively powerless), and females who are taken romantic interests or essential support, somehow fit in much more comfortably, appealing to kids. I personally find the superhero genre to be a highly sexist one, which has frequently been (with few exceptions) orientated toward young boys. Kirby was, from this respect, on the wrong, being as valid a barometer of the field as any.

While his creative spark and sense of "fun" were still there in '69, Kirby's artwork was already deteriorating; Sinnott's inks being the single most stabilizing factor. Some of the deterioration did have to do with a growing dissatisfaction creatively at Merry O'Reilly Marvel. Going over to National, his work, conceptually
was as good as ever, but he couldn't sustain it for too long. His artwork was spirited at first as it hadn't been in years, but some of the consistancy, the "starch", was gone. His writing quickly proved to be worn over age at best, and somewhat embarrassingly, a script to a Japanese monster flick at its worst.

Kirby has always produced his best work in cooperation with someone else who maintained a reasonably strong identity, someone who provided a realistic relationship to his creativity, or a highly interpretive one who could embellish with a script of his own. In short, he has always worked best with another person who was able to funnel his enormous energies into a cohesive product.

Certainly Stan Lee was one (and the foremost at that). Joe Simon to a lesser degree, with Wally Wood and Joe Sinnott falling into this category as well.

Jolly Jack hasn't done anything drawing-wise (and to a large extent crystallizing his visions) to match the level of his work in the late 60s. My impression is that he is now living a reputation gained a decade ago, and that Rich Buckler does a better "Kirby" than Kirby does (accepting the rationalization, of course, that by "Kirby", I refer to the artist at his peak). Kirby seems to have joined Dick Ayers, Don Heck and Vince Colletta inacks' Heaven.

One thing that has bothered me for a long time about Kirby is that he is to quite a degree a manufactured "legend". If you say he's good enough, it's bound to catch on...you had to fill the Bullpen Page with something, and besides, it was good publicity. It wasn't without reason that DC referred to Marvel as "Brand I" in their letter columns. Maybe the "King" had something to do with it.

When he was still "Jolly Jack", Kirby wasn't necessarily any better or worse, but afterwards, the likelihood of criticism seems to have become non-existent. I've yet to read a real pan letter printed in the letter column of a Kirby associated title. Perhaps it's the lack of, and possibly defiance of, criticism that has stopped Kirby the artist from growing still.

Kirby's dynamism of a decade ago seems to be his own undoing today. We see a pale, carbon copy of his former self. Wheras theoretically an artist continues to grow and expand, Kirby doesn't and it seems he won't; a casualty of the inherent cannibalism of any commercially creative field. Even if he were performing at the level of a decade ago, other artists have surpassed him.

He's a cliché: stagnation in the worst possible way.

In myths, you can repackage an old idea in a new story. Kirby deals from himself really and in the span of a decade since his prime, he has begun to run out of ways to say the same thing over and over (this does not necessarily mean that the stories themselves are actually the same).

What will Kirby's role be in the future of comics? My guess is more a fading star and as a focal influence. As a matter of fact, I think Kirby's greatness will ultimately come, not in what he did specifically, but rather in how he influenced a medium at one stage in his and its careers.

What I'd like to see is a strong editorial influence on him, I'd opt for Archie Goodwin, who comprehends artists, creativity, individ- uality, yet also quality. I'd like to see Goodwin act as a catalyst for Kirby's work, as well as a heavy influence on the scripting, if not the actual scripting. Artwise, I'd like to see someone do to his pencils today, what Wally Wood did on the Challis almost two decades ago, or what Barry Smith did two months ago in the BICENTENNIAL BATTLES book. My candidate for this would be Tom Palmer. I would just love to see Kirby Machinery rendered in dry-brush and zipatone rather than those insipid squiggles. And faces, shading, weight- ing, dimension given their place in the art- work; subtleties which have one by one become steadily non-existent in Kirby's work.

I sort of doubt it would happen because Tom Palmer would have to receive higher rates, considering the time he'd have to put into it, and Kirby probably wouldn't sit, or stand for it; he's got a contract. I'm curious how long his contract runs and what'll happen after that.

It's sort of strange saying this after the above, but I love Kirby's work. I have many fond memories of it, THOR in particular. Some of my frustrations with his work stems from the feeling that he did so much better at one time and I want to see circumstances where the finished product will have the quality his work did eight years ago. Yes, people change; we are in constant transition and perhaps this is not the answer. Maybe for some hardcore fans of his old work, new work along that line would be as sacrilegious as the suggestion that someone doing the layouts for him.

I'd love to see an experimental strip or three with layouts by a Steranko (no first name these days) or a Gil Kane. Certainly, if Kirby can do layouts for other constant artists, it isn't a sin to have Kirby collaborate with someone else to come up with a synthesized product that has at least a chance of being different. One motivation for this suggestion is a curiosity in seeing just such a collaboration: the other being that perhaps approaching the drawing board differently after all these years might provide an insight, however slight, and a catalyst for something in his work as well as perhaps the chance to reassess himself as an artist, and give that potential spark a chance to come to life.

In ending, I think one factor in the det- erioration of Kirby's work has been the lack of foresight and understanding of the creative processes on the part of the comic book companies.

Time will be the one to tell...
A Treatise..." is an enlightening little book which may very well end up being a bible of sorts for the more spacey, science-fictional contingent of the comic book field, including fans and pros alike. In the introduction to his remarkable piece, Mark Gruenwald thus resumes its purpose:

"This paper will provide a detailed examination of the evolution of parallel Dimensions concept, and further, present a theory that binds all the varied and sometimes conflicting representations of Reality into a single, self-consistent system of universes. (1)"

In other words, and as he goes on to explain later in the introduction, Gruenwald has put together an elaborate and cohesive scientific theory, developed to account for the oft-used and time-honored comic book device of parallel worlds/dimensions, as well as travel between those dimensions, and in time. The relationship between these two may seem a bit tenuous at first, as do many of the mathematical and physical postulates established within the first few sub-chapters of the book, but as the Treatise progresses, accumulating evidence, corollaries and case studies, the entire construct takes on an undeniable inner logic and verisimilitude which one is hard put to refute.

On one hand, it seems absurd to attempt to resume an entire scientific theory which takes a half-hundred double-spaced pages to explain, but on the other hand, Gruenwald feels he should at least give a basic introduction to what shall no doubt come to be called the Gruenwald Reality Theory.

Gruenwald’s basic assumption is that each different dimension, or “Reality Line”, has a “vibration rate” applicable only to that one dimension. Also, “all matter vibrating at the same rate is tangible (real) only to other matter vibrating at the same rate” (2). Therefore, a number of parallel dimensions can co-exist in the identical three-dimensional space while remaining “independent and mutually inter-dimensional "travel" consists of the attuning of one’s bodily vibration rate to that of the dimension/parallel world/"Reality Line" to which one wishes to travel.

A story which has a textbook-like clarity to it is "What Mad World!” in FANTASTIC FOUR #118, in which writer Archie Goodwin introduced the world of "What if the Storm Siblings hadn’t taken that fateful flight along with Reed Richards and Ben Grimm?" the divergent factor—also the possibility of either combination of astronauts occurring—thus splits a theory that was heretofore a single Reality Line with a single vibration rate into two different, and mutually intangible, Reality Lines with different vibration rates (also distinct from the original vibration rate which, than referred to as "unrealized", contends Gruenwald, a slipper and disputable point which didn’t quite convince your humble reviewer), each unaware of the other until somebody (in this case, Grimm and Lockjaw) transcends the vibrational barrier. (3)

On the subject of time travel, Gruenwald states that it can be done, simply because the appearance of a time traveler in the past merely creates a divergent Reality Line. Gruenwald easily kills the hoary old chestnut: "Killing One’s grandfather would only produce a new Reality Line in which one has no dimensional counterpart. It will do nothing to affect one’s reality or one’s conscience." (4)

Each of these chapters (Dimensions and Time) is followed by a number of "Case Studies" culled from both Marvel and DC, and are quite relaxing and clarifying after the heavier points made in the chapters proper; about two dozen books/squares are studied in depth, twice as many again being mentioned marginally.

The third and last chapter, The Omniverse (with sub-chapters Omniverse, Immortality, Afterlife, Time and Entropy), taking the broad view, ties all the points together to the "single, self-consistent system of universes" mentioned in the introduction; it is a conclusion and an overview that adds a few thoughts on theology, destiny and the like, as taken from the viewpoint of the Gruenwald Reality Theory.

Aside from the bulk of the text, there are numerous appendices. The book’s biggest feature is the index, which indexes all entries after the first reading, one tends to know one’s way around, but the missing index can be annoying, particularly when looking up case studies. However, the book does contain:

- no less than fifteen pages of footnotes, marginal musings, references and extrapolations that (one hopes) help fill in the strictly scientific text.
- A glossary of about 35 words, evenly split between accepted terms (atomic, toll, focal point) and neologisms coined by the author for his theory ("chronal displacement inertia" being one of them) (5).
- A catalog of parallel earths (6), each characterized by one relevant factor, making them an easy and enjoyable reading. A catalog of case studies, e.g. Mr. Fantastik and Reed-Brook (a human Torch and (6).

An extensive bibliography of about 100 comic books, and a half dozen others (7) published by the sub-editor for each major company, plotting out the overlapping and interrelationships between most of the known Parallel Worlds.

The book is very well researched and excellently written. Gruenwald has an obvious knowledge of all the scientific writing, as well as considerable amount of style which make for a text one’s really on to. Asimo’s Guides to Everything. He is obviously a fan, and while he doesn’t allow his love for the medium—and its creators—to cloud up the text, he doesn’t either let his scientific approach repress the loving half-smile with which he treats some of the more entertainingly absurd aspects. Parts of the book are very funny, not in a joking manner, but with the wry humor speme pornography and the joy of discovery. His footnote referring to the Superman VS Spider-Man stories reads like this set back the layman’s understanding of Reality many years ago" (6), and his well thought out classification of Cary Bates as a mutant is hilarious. (7)

If you read this far, you know whether you want the book or not. I can only add that at an outrageously low price ($1.00 + $.50 postage and handling), the 88-page "Treatise" is a steal when one considers the quality of the writing, the number of points made and... let’s be corny—hours of pleasure the mulling over and exploration of the theories can give the reader. I recommend this book as an invaluable guide to the separate realities of the Comic Book World, as a fascinating mathematical construct, the great mental exercise (and as damn good reading. The ordering address is 1260 Westenas Drive, Oshkosh, Wisconsin 54901.

FOOTNOTES:
1. (p. 1) 2. (p. 12) 3. (Actually, as witnessed in FF # 160-161, the divergent factor vaguely couple in the "Johnny Store thing" that was "killed in Viet-Nam", but this wasn’t mentioned when Earth-F (Gruenwald’s terminology) was introduced in FF #118.
4. (p. 4) 5. (An addition from the reviewer: Gerrold’s "Man Who Poulded Himself" pretty much parallels Gruenwald’s "Immortality" and an engrossing time travel book besides.
6. (p. 7) 7. (A Review by Kim Thompson)
Human Torch and the Thing have frequently threatened to quit, but neither has ever gone any farther away than a super-powered plot. Not so with Sue... when she goes, she's gone, appearing only rarely, and then in a civilian role. Motherhood, a marital spat, or an identity crisis... anything will do. And each time she'd been replaced with an alienity that suggests no one missed her. Her successors, Medusa, Crystal and Thundra have been similarly dispatched when their time came.

With the early Avengers, the same pattern existed. They had their token woman, the Wasp, and when she left as part of a general team overhaul, the Scarlet Witch took her place. Here, though, things finally began to change. The Wasp reappeared without Wanda being phased out, and the Black Widow progressed from Hawk- eye's eye love interest to a sort of special status Avenger.

Which brings us to the present. There are finally a number of team books with more than a token female member. The practice of tossing a woman out like an old shoe and phasing her in and out of the story has largely been abandoned. The treatment of women has entered a new stage, though not necessarily an improved one. Now, after she has been phased out of the story, the writer comes up with a new, add-a-costume-and-serve, superwoman. For example: How long have we been waiting for the "Ms. Marvel" book, slatted for an improved Jean Gray? Hell, kiddies, Gerry Conway has thrown her off her own title, preferring to create a new, mean powered version of Captain Marvel's one-time Roman maiden (Candia Davenport). The most irritating of all the new ready made superwomen is that of the Valkyrie. This female fighter, created specifically to combat the existing feminist stereotype in her own words, to lay bare "the foolish notion of superiority." A commendable idea in many respects and one that might have worked had Steve Gerber stayed on that path as he brought some depth and life to her. However, Gerber has used Valk as compliance tool and not a successful result of the long line of "no" figures, Jack Kirby. Valk is an independent and superpowered version of Jack's wife, Barbara, who left this world long ago in a state of mental illness. Despite Jack's constant reminders of Valk's single-mindedness, his long suffering, the strip has been reduced to a single function, that of illustrating a husband's confusion and tentative desire to understand the changes that a new consciousness has brought to his wife.

When Gerber needed, or wanted, to write about "men's" work, Valkryie, left the Valkyrie in the trap's Women's been written into and out of the plot as a cheap shot. The Valkyrie is the roadblock of our story. Valka. The fault, dear readers, is not in Val's story. It's in me. (This doesn't necessarily mean that Steve Gerber still isn't a nice person. I consider most of his stories a pleasure to read...why just last month his elf showed up in the "Steed's Room"-nearly always a fatal-simultaneously crossing sex lines and making the elf an Equal Opportunity Killer.

Ironically, now that the Red Guardian has justified her existence and sparked an interest in the concept of an intriguing sub-plots. The other storyline Gerri Conway (remember him from another paragraph?) has decided to drop her in favor of an acrobatic called the Bollicina, the Ultimate in ready-made women, a composite of two highly unsatisfactory comic book cliches, her civilian identity, and from Kathy Walker, a comic from a "Millie the Model"esque book. The character "Patty Brown" has gained identity, she has appropriated the powers and costume of the Cat.

The Cat, an identity originally held by Greer Nelson (currently Tigra, and currently unemployed) was created to dash in on the first wave of women in feminist tales. It was clear that the writer, trying to verbalize his dissatisfaction with the original WonderWoman, explained that it was too obvious that a bunch of schemes had gotten together in a smoke-filled room and brainstormed themselves a super-woman" (ed. note: see THE GREAT COMIC BOOK HANDBOOK, page 9). This criticism could very aptly be applied to the Cat. She was too clearly an attempt to appeal to the feminist reader, and in many cases, male readers interested in feminist characters (the distinction is subtle, but important). Instead of a person, the Cat was a phony, a representa- tion of the women's lib made up of all who knew nothing. She was as close as Marvel could get to a female Superman, a flying, bakery,300-pound, 46-38-40, treasuring on the Black Widow's toes. Wisely, the identity was left to rest.

It's possible that bringing her back was the only way for the Scarlet Witch comic to have lived on. Gerber made a female character, but there is a kind of spotty inbreeding in which all the characters are wrapped up in the persona, and the characters are not likeable; individuals who interact with them like to pattern them into simplicity and comply. Chris Claremont is another of the good guys. While some might argue that Storm is one of the best-written characters, I've been complaining about it. I contend that the charge doesn't hold up because she was created as part of an instant team, the all-new and her motivation to action remains. Storm is one of the best-written characters, I've been complaining about it. I contend that the charge doesn't hold up because she was created as part of an instant team, the all-new and her motivation to action remains. Claremont portrays Storm as a richly textured and interesting character. The other one learned and grew.
"WHATEVER HAPPENED TO ATLANTIS?"

ATLANTIS WAS ON A GREAT CONTINENT—at a level far above the sea. For such a disaster to occur, a long shifting of land masses would have been necessary.

I was in contact with the city just before the space storm. So I must have been on a drifting, powerless ship for hundreds, perhaps even thousands of years. Incredible!

We have seen a light deep within a temple-like edifice.

WHEN I WAS LAST ON EARTH, ATLANTIS was a bustling metropolis, the most active and alive city in the galaxy!

COULD THERE BE LIFE HERE EVEN NOW?

This is all very strange—and very convenient. I feel as though I was awakened in space to be lead to this very point.

AN ELECTRICAL STORM OF SOME UNKNOWN ORIGIN WIPED OUT THE POWER ON VICTORY'S SPACE-SHIP LEAVING HIM UNCONSCIOUS IN DEEP SPACE. UPON AWAKENING, HE FOUND THE SHIP STILL ON COURSE AND NEAR TO THE DESTINATION TOWARDS WHICH HE HAD BEEN TRAVELLING: EARTH. VICK'S LANDING WANTS TO BE THE SITE OF EARTH'S MIGHTIEST CITY—ATLANTIS But to his astonishment, the ship plunged into the ocean, and after leaving to check the damage, VICK discovered the great city had sunk!

WHICH MEANS AN ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF TIME HAS PASSED IN THE INTERVAL—TIME FOR ATLANTIS TO BE PLUNGED INTO THE OCEAN--A CATACLYSMIC PHENOMENON WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN FORESHADOWED FOR CENTURIES.

I WANT SOME ANSWERS, AND PERHAPS THIS IS WHERE THEY CAN BE FOUND.

IF I AM A PAWN IN SOMEONE'S GAME, I MAY AS WELL PLAY IT OUT.
Swimming into the temple, Vic finds himself in a huge interior courtyard. It is circular in shape, and surrounded by dozens of small chambers, one of which is the source of the light.

Odd that all these rooms—only one lighted?

As he enters the chamber, Victor's reasoning process is halted. The sight before him now is the most stunning yet: in a strange cell of some sort, a figure.

The cell is filled with a liquid, obviously water...

"Ugh... Umm..."

The triarchs, three among the distant planet Galbarok, what is one of them doing here—imprisoned on Earth—a sunken city?

Out a type which induces a suspended animation. The interior pressure is equal to what it is not, however, all I have to do is break the glass.

"Done! Now to get him out.

He appears to be regaining consciousness. I hope he can stand the shock.

I've got to see him, if I can...

If he was imprisoned after Atlantis sank, he may know what happened. Ah, he's coming around.

I'm out-front at last! How is it I'm under water?

Whoever you are, I thank you, but I don't...

I don't know why you've freed me, but I've sworn a holy oath to destroy your mind!

And so I shall!

Thus speaks the triarch who shall avenge Galbarok on the day he slays Jupitor himself!

Ithrown into the darkened courtyard by the force of the blow, Vic recovers quickly.

He has more strength than is natural for one of his race—and means to kill me...

I'd rather avoid further conflict until I figure out how to handle this.

I don't see him coming after me—perhaps I have an advantage in speed...

At any rate, I'll return to the ship and see if I can get it to operate again..."
VIC approaches his ship damaged slightly when it crashed into the ocean, where Atlantis was supposed to be.

"See Wundermunic..."

VIC turns as the TRIARK DELIVERS ANOTHER BLAST.

VIC recovers more quickly than either expects.

Breaking the surface, TRIARK sees the figure VICTORY against the sky.

Breaking the surface, VIC turns as the TRIARK delivers another blast.

SITARIM!!!

"What worried me is what he said about JUPITER. Why did he say he would avenge Galbarok? By murdering him?"

Is TRIARK MAD? Does this somehow connect with what has happened to me?

And why haven't any attempts at contacting me from JUPITER since I woke in outer space?

"Moments later, the hull of a spaceship designed to withstand meteor swarms collapses inward. The TRIARK swims thru the gaping hole, but seems his quarry has vanished."

"WHO?"

"IT'S THE WATER! OUT OF IT, HE'S STRONG, BUT BEatable! He must somehow adapt his powers!"

"IT'S THE WATER! OUT OF IT, HE'S STRONG, BUT BEatable! He must somehow adapt his powers!"

"OH GREAT! Can I fly too..."

"Encouraged by the apparent reversal of the odds, VIC Favors VIC's counter-attacks!"

"ARRRRGH!"
Well, here we are with our first lettercolumn! We received a number of interesting notes, and would like to thank everyone who thought enough of our first issue to drop us a line. Without further ado, your letters...

Willie-
I have just finished WONERKAZIS! #1 and really enjoyed it. I agreed with most of Bob Rudi's opinions on the DC Revival Cruise, especially in regard to The Doombot, for #1 of my favorites. The debate over the Ruhr-Batman battle was engaging, and presented the opinions of many fans, I believe. Dean gave us an intriguing article, and I look forward to more of Victory.

Don Greene
(Thanks, Don. The folks who wrote in liked Vic, and so we'll be keeping him in WONER for most issues. -WAB)

Willie-
WONERKAZIS! is the best fanzine I've seen all year. The real winner in this issue was Kim Thompson and his top-notch interpretation and comparison of the spirit and the Man-Thing in 'The Background Heroes.' I commend Kim, and hope to see more Thompson articles in the future.

Dave McDonnell
(We've been to rave about everything in the book. Response to Kim's article was mixed; personally felt it was the best written fan article I've ever seen. And I want to thank Dave here for his place of WONER in his "Media Report" in TPM. -WAB)

Willie-
Enjoyed WONERKAZIS! #1 very much. So much so that #2 is enclosed for the next three issues.

Ron Misehimer
(Higher praise we couldn't ask for! -WAB)

Willie-
I've seen other 'sines which claim to be FAN-sines, but they have pro work in them. Now, I respect the pros, but I really like real fanzines! You did an excellent job on Victory and so did Pete on Savior. Reuben Frans Jr.
(Thanks, Reuben. I agree with your evaluation of Pete Iro-he's one of the best. -WAB)

Willie-
The Savior was so good I can't believe you wrote it. 'I don't mean I didn't think you could write stuff like this! Savior is movie material!' -Tim Quilchig
(Yes, Tim has a way with words. Actually, it's a big deal for me to get this kind of compliment from a guy I consider to be the best all around writer/artist in Fandom. And I couldn't get thru this column without praising his TM CORBUTT'S SUPERHERO COMICS. His ads are always in TPM, and his work is always first-rate. -WAB)

Willie-
Your strip, Victory, was by far the best artwork and storywise? I can't wait for the next issue!

John Beatty
(Eat your heart out, Pete! Thanks, John, and I just hope you like this ish as much as you enjoyed the first one -WAB)

Willie-
I'm expected to get a fairly well put together mag—but what do I get instead? A masterpiece! This is the sine of all sins! -Mark Pacella
(Mark included some wonderful sketches in his letter, and will hopefully be represented in these pages from now on. -WAB)

Willie-
The idea of rotating editors should keep fresh ideas coming out issue after issue. Sometimes Fandom has the potential to be very good as I found the second half of the article very interesting, where JZ goes after particular books.

Fred Milano
(Most of the folks who wrote in commented that they liked JZ's outspoken style. No Squeeze box this time, but maybe in the future. -WAB)

Willie-
I must say you've got a pretty decent sense of humor. I love your art and I would like to know if the cover you are doing is for sale.

Dave Friedland
(Well, Dave was one of several folks who were interested in buying that cover. We have no set policy as a group about selling artwork which appears in WONER—each artist has his own opinions on that. My own feeling is that I'd rather not sell art done for zines. -WAB)

Willie-
You could say that WONERKAZIS! was a nice kick in the ass for me. It has restored that ol' "sense of wonder" about comics and Fandom which was forgotten. It certainly had enough of the fannish feel.

John Hazen
(John is a good friend, and it's nice to have his support. We wanted to recapture that feeling Fandom had a few years back but has lost to an unfortunately slicker look today. -WAB)

Willie-
Enjoyed your artwork, especially the Simonese illus. Savior displayed Pete's talents nicely...

Bill Hutcheson
(Bill puts out a nice zine called GRAPHIC: his address is 500 Creative St., Hayin, IA. 1987. Good feeling to have other fanning folks telling us we're doing a good job. Thanks, Bill. -WAB)

Willie-
Duck Rogers should have been a strip...

Michael McClaud
(Hite and several others were kind of indignant that there was no Duck Rogers strip. I wouldn't want to do one anyway, but if I did, I'd get sued by Marvel-whaddaya want? -WAB)

Willie-
I enjoyed all the articles but hope there will not be any more Howard the Duck for awhile, anyhow. Every fanzine you pick up has Howard in it!

Glen Edarts
(I'm with you, Glen! I might add just if we could do strips about established characters, it'd be doing Subby in every issue. -WAB)

Willie-
WONERKAZIS! It was great! Especially the two strips!

Don Portenberry
(Only one strip this time, but more in future issues—including one by Tim and myself—tentatively planned for #4, to be edited by Kim from France Europe. -WAB

Now, this all sounds like so much pure escrow but to tell the truth, we received not a single negative letter. I would like to thank all once more and also apologize for trimming many comments. Several of the letters would have taken up a whole column, and so I opted for a Murray Bolt-indoffish type of column. Well that's it. Don't forget: all comments on this issue, send to Dean...