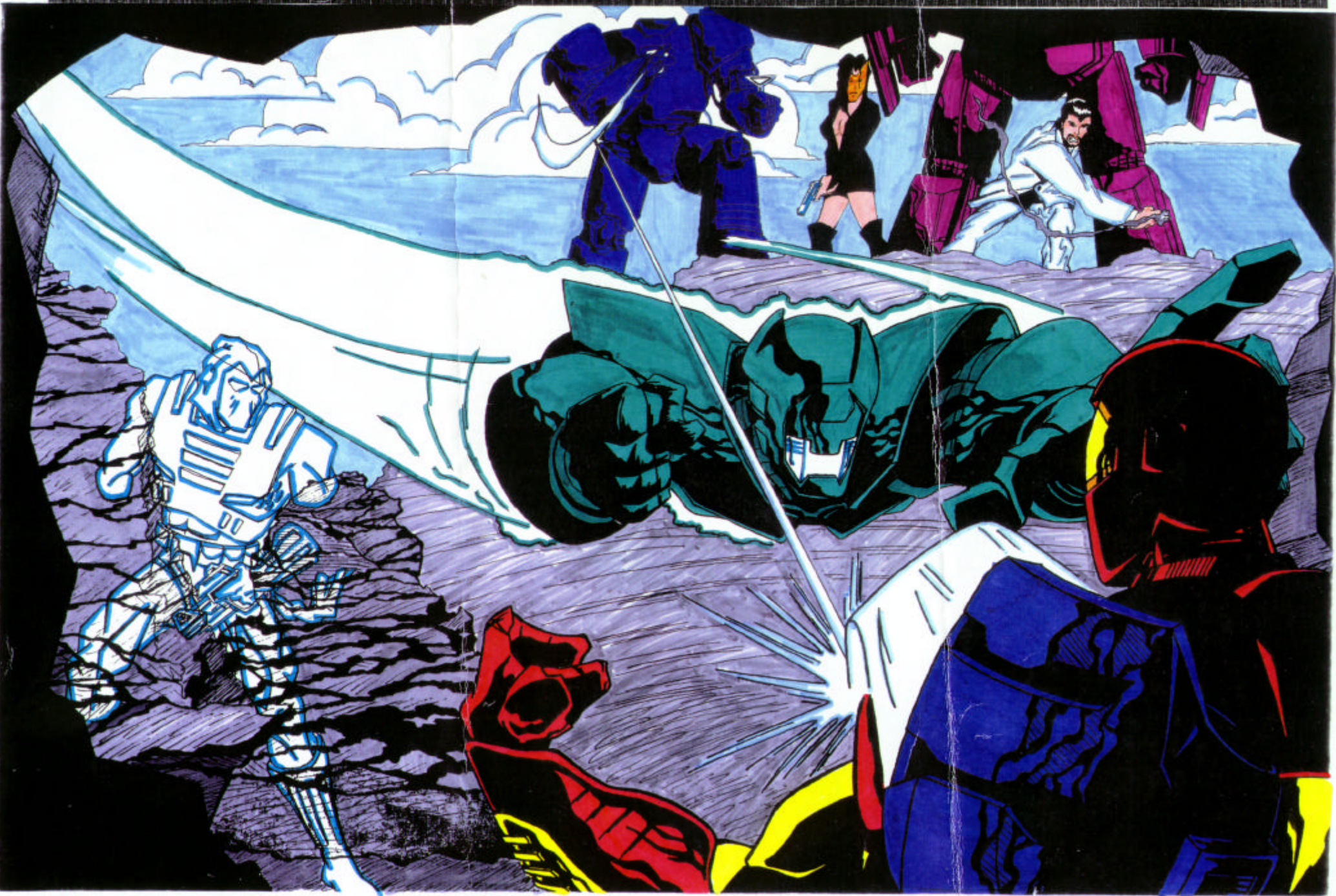


ADVANCED IRON



The logo consists of the letters 'A' and 'I' in a bold, stylized, italicized font. The 'A' has a triangular cutout in the center, and the 'I' is a simple vertical bar with a small horizontal bar at the top.

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Iron Fan, 10341 Leola Court #1, Cupertino, CA 95014.

This Halloween issue is a little late (school weighs heavy on the shoulders of several of the creative team here), but we ARE here and we'll be back again next month. It seems like the first weekend of the month will be our target mail-date from now on, since the advanced info from Previews is available then. Len's been out of touch for a bit, for a number of reasons (including an operation to remove a bone spur!) but called up just this week to let us know how things are going. Thanks Len!

And *now* on with the *AI*.

BYE BYE BENNING:

Some months back, we asked for your input regarding the character of Veronica Benning. We didn't get very much response. Maybe this was an indicator of the lack of interest in the character. If that's the case, then you'll be happy to hear that she's been removed permanently. Len says she'll show up in a few months, but then she'll be gone for good. Watch out girls! Tony's going back to being the playboy that we've all come to admire.

GHOST IN THE MACHINE:

Both Len and Scott will be leaving War Machine! This came as quite a shock to me. I believe that having different writers on all three (I'm not counting the Marvel Action Hour) titles can only hurt the consistency. What do you think? Write editor Nel Yomtov and let him know!

IRON FAN (BAD NEWS / GOOD NEWS)

The Bad News is that Iron Fan will be delayed even more than I originally thought.

The Good News is that part of the delay is due to the sheer size of it.

The Bad News is that I'm going to edit it down to less than half of its current size (over 100 pages!)

The Good News is that you'll still get everything -- including an excellent Interview with David Michelinie. And anything that doesn't fit in this issue will go into the next one.

SOS (Save Our Shellhead):

Do you love the artwork, but hate the excessive use of re-used background shots? Do you love the Mandarin's maniacal laugh, but hate the cardboard dialogue of the main characters? Do you thrill to the opening blurb ("A man of Iron Will, Iron Determination. . ."), but gag at the shameless commercialization behind the standard opening (i.e. listing each of several MINOR villains with wamo type cheesy signs). We're looking for your reaction to the Iron Man cartoon series. Please fill out the enclosed questionnaire and help us cull out the bad and create a spotless new Iron Man.

ABOUT THE COVER:

Iron Man's greatest enemies? Here are his greatest *dead* enemies anyway:

The Ghost, Titanium Man, Obadiah Stane as the Iron Monger (headless ever since he vaporized his face in issue #200), Madame Masque, and Dr. Dewitt with his armored juggernaut are all back from the dead just in time for Halloween -- almost -- to give Iron Man the worst nightmare of his life!

-by Jason Stephens

STARK REMARKS

by Mike Kalibabky and Allen Del Caro

"That's not armor—that's a city!" Artist Allen Del Caro commenting on the giant-sized Iron Man armor in *What If? #64*, "What If Iron Man Sold Out?"

First let me apologize for not pictorially presenting many of the cool, exciting things I mention in this column. Yes, I have a scanner, but scanning color images into a black and white document and then photocopying said images produces a smudgy graphic. And printing in color is economically out of the question. At least, I hope, you, the reader, can take a gander at the stuff I mention at your local comic store. Again, sorry.

Former *Iron Man* writer John Byrne, who in my opinion has been suffering from a lack of hero worship since the advent of Image Comics, mentions in the letter col of *John Byrne's Next Men #28* that the majority of the letter columns in DC and Marvel comics are handled by the writers of the various books. So does Len Kaminski edit and reply to the letters presented in "Printed Circuits"?

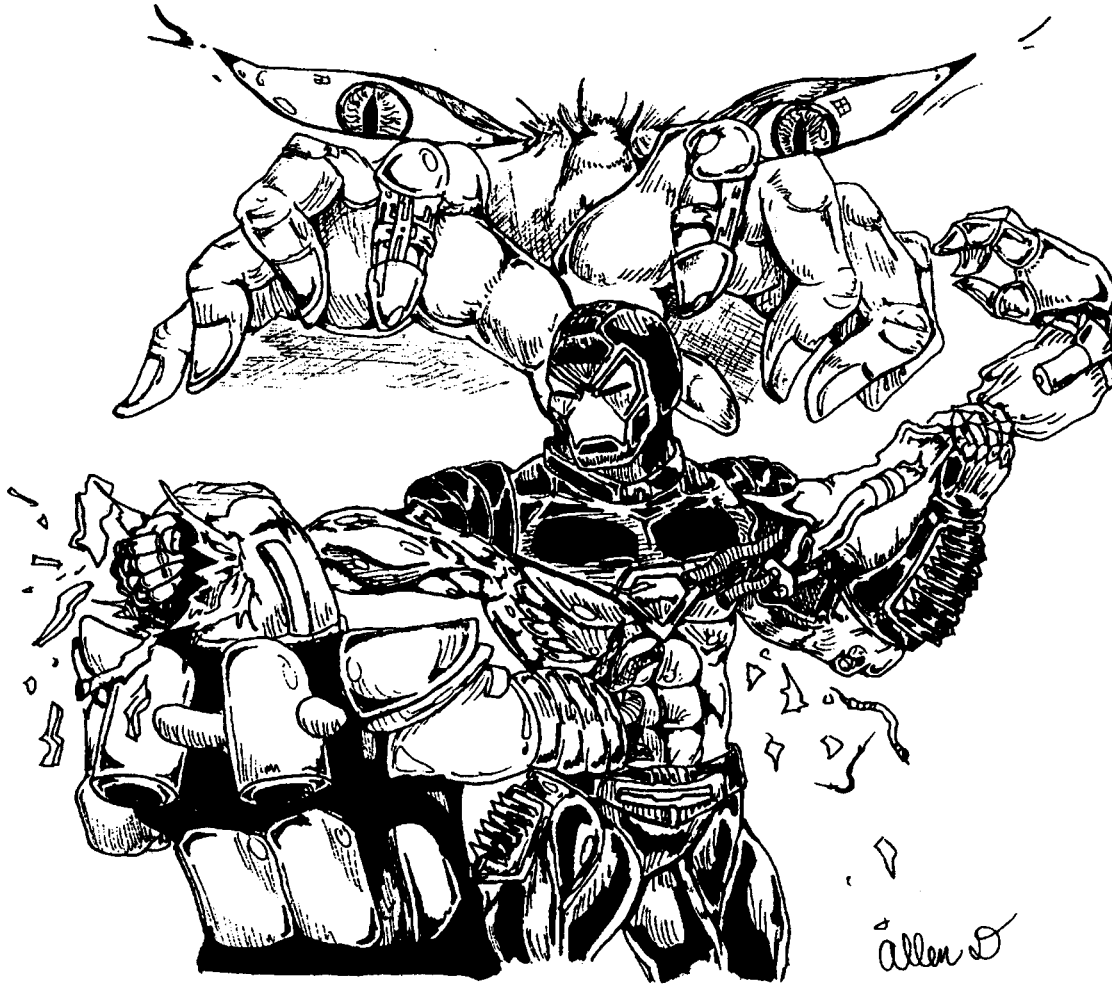
And yes, the "hero worship" comment was a



shot. To me, every statement Byrne now makes in the

various comic book fanzines, dealer promo publications, and, of course, his letter column in *JBNM* is a poorly disguised "Oh, look at me, I'm so GREAT, worship my work" anthem. But I did thoroughly enjoy his "Armor Wars II" storyline and his great run on *Namor*. And speaking of *Namor*, did you know that the computer-generated typeface (font) Byrne now uses for basic lettering on *JBNM* was originally created by him for use in *Namor*? Sure, the typeface isn't as cool as the one Richard Starkings (MY current hero) designed and created for *Ghost Rider 2099*, but then again Mike Saenz's groundbreaking computer-created artwork on *Shatter*—great stuff in spite of its crudeness (and a very charming crudeness for all of us who have grown up with the Apple Macintosh computer)—is a laugh compared to what did with *Crash*, the Iron Man graphic novel.

I still like John Byrne, although he has to get over and live with the "Image thing" and the fear that the popularity of his work is fading.



The fans ain't stupid, John. Just quit driving us away (or driving us nuts) by blowing your own horn—like the way Image did to make you so paranoid in the first place!

Hey: Isn't "The Dragon Seed" storyline (*Iron Man* #'s 271-275) the precursor to the upcoming "Hands of the Mandarin" epic? Hmm... And who penned "The Dragon Seed?" Yep, John Byrne, the man whose genius has seemingly touched every corner of the comic book universe. As I mentioned, John, the fans, Iron Fans especially, ain't stupid.

Now go check out back issues of *Shatter*, especially the *Shatter Special* #1 from First Comics if nothing else. I said go! NOW!

And who does the "Printed Circuits" letter col? I think it's Mike Marts.

Meanwhile, I really like what Yomtov and Marts have added to the "Printed Circuits"

letter column in *Iron Man*: advanced preview dialogue boxes AND sneak peaks at the covers of the on-coming IM-related titles. Now if they could just expand the column to TWO PAGES, we'd be all set. Just do it, guys.

I finally got my 1994 Marvel Universe Cards War Machine hologram. I picked it up at a con for \$12.00. Pretty cheap considering the success factor in trying to obtain it via the purchase of single packs or the shotgun approach of buying a whole box.

It arrived! My Marvel/Nabisco Iron Man tin, that is. Really nice, too. The small (4" H x 3" W x 2.5" D), full-color tin sports illustrations of past and present Iron Man armors (including the War Machine unit), while the drawing on the lid is an interpretation of Iron Man in the current armor zooming off into space. On the

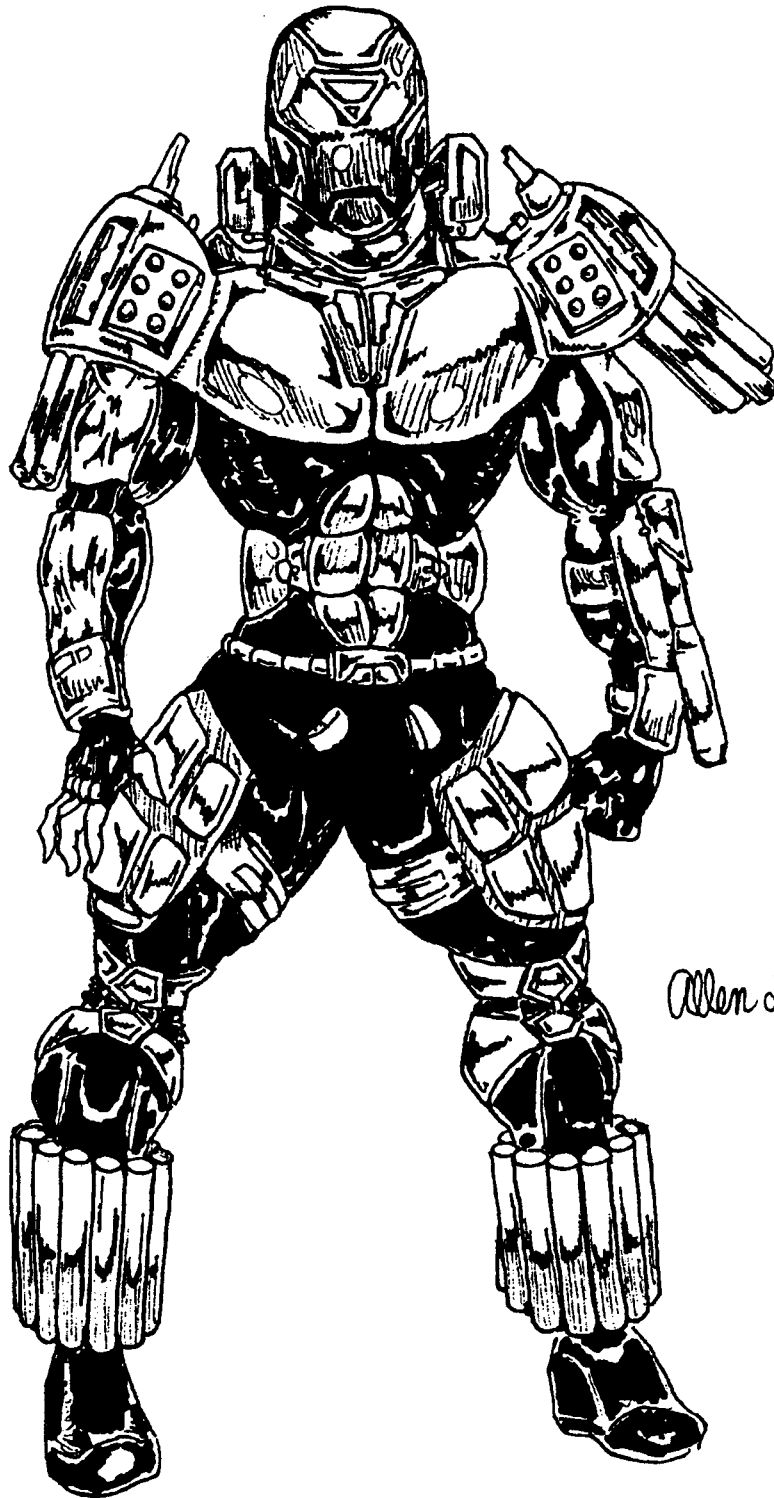
bottom of the tin is a short shtpeel on Tony Stark/Iron Man. As for the cost of the unit—cheap! Two proof of purchase seals from various Nabisco cookie products (I LOVE OREOS!) and \$1.99. Funny thing: It cost \$1.21 to ship the tin to me. I highly recommend the tin to any Shellhead or War Machine fan. Thanks, Nabisco. Well done, Marvel!

Free at Musicland: A *Marvel Action Hour* promo of the oncoming comic adaptations of the animated series! Yes! (Of course by now, the real comics have been released.) This promo gives a good, solid taste of both the Iron Man and FF *MAH* comic adaptations, along with a l-o-n-g listing of all the tv stations that will be broadcasting the *Marvel Action Hour* animated series—complete with days and times!

Did you get one? I mean the "Hands of the Mandarin" promo checklist giveaway at your local comic shop? No? Well, the first ten people who write me will get one. I stocked up.

There is a sweet illo of the Force Works team on the cover of the *Marvel Quarterly Report* for the second quarter of 1994. Of interest from the report: "Marvel entered into a multi-year, multi-product licensing agreement with Acclaim Entertainment, Inc. to

develop, market and distribute videogames based on four leading properties—X-Men, Spider-Man, Fantastic Four and Iron



Man—and possibly others.”

With little cash outlay—less than \$10.00—I managed to get the “commons” Prototype card of the new Ultraverse Skybox Master Series set. The dynamic Dave Dorman painted rendering of PT blasting rock with a repulsor is quite dramatic. Skybox should be proud of this surprisingly popular card set. I guess that’s what happens when the card art is top-shelf.

Just who is running Force Works? Man or machine? Interesting conflict in *Force Works* #5 when the Chaos Computer “decided” that the crisis in Soloria was over—Tony agreed with his creation (no shock there), while the rest of the team didn’t. Man vs. Machine vs. Man... Or is it Man vs. Machine vs. Iron Man. Cool. Funny thing: The Chaos Computer needs Wanda’s input to function properly, so, in a way, she helps determine what is a crisis situation and what isn’t. I hope this type of conflict continues and grows within Force Works. It’s the very same type of debate—the good, good, goodness of (blind, yes, blind) technology and how it will ultimately save mankind—that runs in the background of *Iron Man*.

And what did you expect, Tom Tenny to stay on as the *Force Works* artist for more than four issues?

Bwah-ha-ha! Len Kaminski’s dreaded issue of *The Transformers* (#16, May 1986). “The Plight of Bumblebee,” has fallen into my hands courtesy of my artist pal, Allen Del Caro. But hey, it was good! I don’t know why Len flinches at the mention of ol’ issue #16 ... well, other than it was, uh, heh-heh, *The Transformers*, and the lead character of the book was Bumblebee, snicker, the Transformer (Autobot) that is a yellow Volkswagen. But hey, it was a good issue! Really. Corny cute. I recommend it. One other very interesting thing about this issue is the creative team: Len Kaminski, writer; Tom Morgan, Inker; Nel Yomtov, colorist. And Elliot Brown did the splash page art and layout that are without a doubt a precursors to his work on *The Iron Manual* and *Punisher Armory*. *The Transformers* #16, gang. A sensitive, fun, and interesting read by Len.

Go get yourself a copy. And don’t forget to grab that issue of *Shatter* I was telling you about.

Two interesting things about *Green Lantern* #56. One, the last page of the story, a splash page, was a knock-off of the last story page of *Iron Man* #142, where Shellhead, clad in deep-space armor encounters a Roxxon space station. IM’s response upon encountering this massive man-made celestial body, “Ho-ly-I!” In *GL* #56, the emerald one comes across a huge craft of his own. The response, “Hoo-Boy.” Character and spacecraft placement in both splash pages are identical! Interesting. Two: On the last page of the book itself is an ad for *Justice League Task Force* with the banner heading, “FORCE NEVER WORKS WITHOUT JUSTICE!” Curiously enough, the typeface used to make the banner was the one used on the cover of the Force Works comic. All the comic stores I frequent did not have a current copy of *JLTF* for me to peruse. I guess the headline should have read: “FORCE NEVER WORKS WITHOUT READERS!”

Did any of you Emerson, Lake & Palmer fans notice that the main music theme for the Iron Man ‘toon was written and produced by Keith Emerson? Real Keith Emerson fans, such as myself, noticed Emerson’s trademark riffs even before the credits rolled to confirm who done it. Anyone catch the clink-clanking sound of “factory noise” sprinkled throughout the piece?

Get Mouthy. Confirmed: The ‘toon version of the standard Iron Man armor’s helmet DOES have a mouth slit AND there are YELLOW grids running along the top of the helmet. Done deal. Based upon the armor designs depicted upon the free animation cels packaged with the September issues of *Force Works*, *War Machine*, *Marvel Action Hour Starring Iron Man*, and *Iron Man*, it appears that all the ‘toon armor helmets have mouths. *sigh*

Spider-Man Magazine #8 features the origin and bio of Tony Stark/Iron Man in its “Mighty Marvel Hall of Fame Spotlight,” while issue #9 presents an Iron Man story and an

explanation of how Shellhead's incredible armor works and operates!

Marvel's September/October 1994 issue of *Pro Action* includes "Marvel in Motion," a behind the scenes look at the *Marvel Action Hour*. Included are some thumbnail sketches and color stills from the Iron Man 'toon that I haven't seen anywhere else. One set of sketches and adjoining text explains how Supervising Producer Ron Friedman designed the fold-out Iron Man armor-briefcase storage unit.

Gee, why were the bolts removed from the IRON MAN logo on the comic's cover?

Was the 'toon voice of Century purposely given a British lilt as a tribute to the fact that *Force Works* scribes Abnett and Lanning are from Merry Old England?

It happened AGAIN. This time on the back of the 1994 Marvel Masterpieces Iron Man card: "When millionaire industrialist Tony Stark dons his suit of high-tech armor, he becomes the technological warrior called Iron Man!" Millionaire. Millionaire? Who wrote that, and where's my whip?

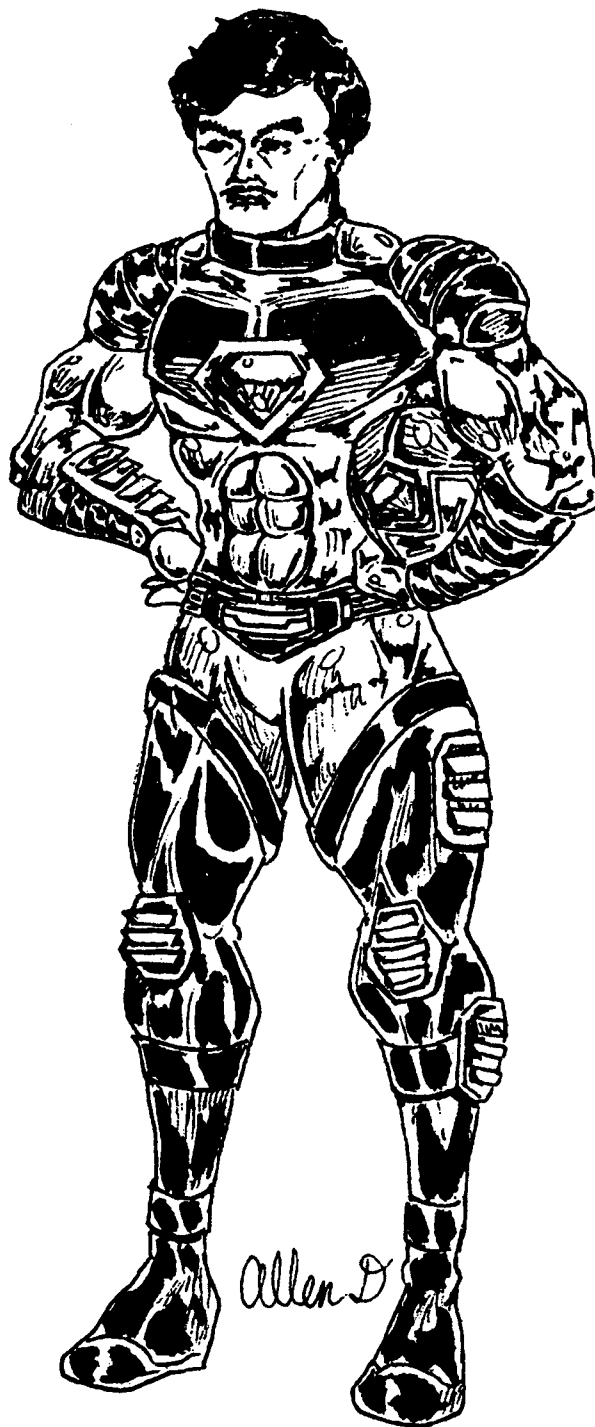
The Iron Man and War Machine Holofoil cards are delicious, as are the entire Holofoil MM '94 subset.

SCRAPPED METAL: Did you know that the bio-chip implanted in Tony Stark was originally supposed to grow into some type of entity within Tony Stark's body? This concept was supposed to have been developed by Bob Layton prior to his departure from *Iron Man*.

Mike Kalibabky
5325 McNiven Road
Chisholm, MN 55719

October 2, 1994

Mike and Allen encourage all Iron Fans to drop them a line at the address above.



The Invincible Iron Man, Tony Stark, and War Machine are TM and © 1994 Marvel Entertainment Group

SEEING IT FROM THE STEPHENS SIDE

The "Bob Layton Era?" The definitive Iron Man era? Two years ago, I definitely would have turned those two questions into statements and put them together as an undeniable fact. Two years ago, how could you not have?

For those of you unfamiliar with the impact Bob Layton had on our favorite comic book, let me take a little time now to fill you in, and to refresh the memories of those who do remember. Layton, whether he was a penciller, inker, or co-plotter, was associated with *Iron Man* for many years, and he was always helping out with the plots in some form or another. He was responsible for either creating or co-creating many of the supporting cast members and villains that we've seen in *Iron Man*, particularly in the 1980's. He gave Iron Man's armors the first truly convincing appearance of metal by making them sleek and form-fitting, highly reflective, and dynamically powerful. Speaking of armors, he also designed the look of many (or possibly all) of the specialty armors that were seen before 1990.

Before I say another word about Bob Layton (now Editor-in-Chief over at Valiant Comics), I need to mention the name of another guy (who stayed with Marvel) -- David Michelinie. He was the writer on *Iron Man* during the time Bob Layton did art breakdowns and co-plotted. They had a working relationship much like the one that Len Kaminski and Scott Benson probably have on *War Machine*. If you can't think of a good example of Dave Michelinie's writing style, here's one you'll probably recognize: "The Armor Wars" -- what many Iron Fans consider as one of the most extraordinary highlights in Iron Man's history. There is no doubt that Dave Michelinie knows how to write a fantastic story, but somehow, somewhere along the line, his name got lost under Bob Layton. For some reason, the vast majority of fans that get their letters printed in *Iron Man*, refer constantly to the "Bob Layton Era" of Iron Man. I also see this with fans at comic book conventions. I once heard a kid who was about thirteen years old mention to an editor at the Marvel booth, "Cool! What are you guys doin' to celebrate Iron Man's 30th anniversary? Are you ever gonna have Bob Layton come back and write the book?" One of the editors behind the booth said that it probably wasn't a possibility since he's one of the big cheeses over at Valiant now.

The editor also said, "Bob Layton was more of a penciller, inker, and co-plotter than a full fledged writer, wasn't he? Iron Man's not really my area, so don't quote me on that." Well, I remembered that quote -- who would have guessed that someone *would* have a chance to quote him on it in a worldly-published fan magazine? I'll reserve his name, however. My point is that, for some reason, many

fans are content to plug their ears, shut their eyes, and cut off all other outside input while they stand there saying over and over as fast as possible, "Bob Layton Era, Bob Layton Era, Bob Layton Era, Bob Layton Era...." Most of these people wouldn't accept the fact that a new era could be better even if it hit them right in the face. They probably don't mean any disrespect for Dave Michelinie -- they're just going with the name that they saw in the credits most often over the years. So, I hope David Michelinie will forgive me if I just refer to the era using the term that has been tacked onto it by people out of my control. I love ya' anyway, Dave.

I could go on and on about Bob Layton and Dave Michelinie to people that aren't familiar with Iron Man's history, but most Iron Fans know all of this information already, and for those that don't, this is enough background for my purposes here. Suffice to say that many, many fans of Iron Man constantly compare and contrast current issues and occurrences with the "Bob Layton Era." However, due to the natural evolution of things, I believe it is time for a new definitive Iron Man era to be named and used in future years for comparisons. I am of course referring to the "Kaminski Era." It has a nice ring to it, doesn't it?

What is so nice about the Kaminski Era is the fact that Len Kaminski brought back every single aspect of the Layton Era that John Byrne ignored, and expanded on it -- changing it enough to make it his own. You don't believe that he's had enough time with the book to deserve this title? Oh, ye of little faith...

Let's look at what Mr. Kaminski *has* done:

- ◆ **Revitalized the way Iron Man's technology and read-outs are shown in the comic**
- ◆ **Created HOMER**
- ◆ **Created the Masters of Silence**
- ◆ **Added his own specialty armor, the War Machine**
- ◆ **Brought Tony's life full circle with the reacquisition of Stane International**
- ◆ **Finished off John Byrne's plot and killed Tony Stark**
- ◆ **Made Rhodey Iron Man again for a brief time**
- ◆ **Got rid of Kathy Dare**
- ◆ **Created Atom Smasher**
- ◆ **Made Rhodey deal with serious consequences, such as guilt over the Living Laser's apparent death**
- ◆ **Defined Tony's childhood and young adult years better than ever before**
- ◆ **Brought back an all new and improved Stark, both mentally and physically**
- ◆ **Created the idea for an all new "telepresence armor"**
- ◆ **Helped write Rhodey off on his own**

- ◆ **Made Felix Alvarez Vice President of Stark Enterprises - something that should have happened a long time ago**
- ◆ **Returned Tony's love life to the spotlight**
- ◆ **Brought back Happy Hogan**
- ◆ **Helped create an all new Iron Man armor with emphasis placed on modular attachments rather than entire specialty suits of armor for those unusual situations**
- ◆ **Launched *Crash and Burn*, forever taking care of Obadiah Stane's legacy**
- ◆ **Restructured and breathed new life into Stark Enterprises in absolutely the finest "behind the scenes" Iron Man issue I have ever seen - # 306**
- ◆ **Slammed the book shut on Marcy Pearson - something else that should have been done a long time ago**
- ◆ **Slammed the book shut, HARD, on the Controller (in the 1994 Annual) and brought to surface a hard-hitting, frightening issue that no other writer has dealt with too much... the fact that technology takes more and more control over Stark's life, but hopefully he's had enough early warning to stop his cyborg advancement from going any further**
- ◆ **Brought back the Mandarin for what is practically guaranteed to be a story to rival *The Armor Wars***
- ◆ **Wiped away Tony's "Layton Era" beach house - I hope he gets a new Kaminski/Morgan house**
- ◆ **Made a great new character, with a lot of room for development, out of Philip Grant**
- ◆ **Created VOR/TEX**
- ◆ **Reminded us of the ever present danger of Tony's alcoholism, without really "bringing it back" and also dealt with the "technology vs. human soul" issue again with VOR/TEX**

That's about it, for now. It really puts it in perspective when you see it all laid out like this, doesn't it? You can easily see that the Layton Era has been covered up with newer and better things. Len has changed the Iron Man universe so much that comparing current issues to the Layton Era is like comparing two totally different universes. I mean, for all practical purposes, Tony Stark is now a cyborg! How's that for change?

In conclusion, it looks like the "Layton Era" has become the "latent era." **Do you still prefer some older, more classic era of Iron Man?** If so, let me hear from you at the address at the end of this column. Let's open our minds a little. I don't remember a poll ever being taken of the top Iron Man "eras." If you're interested in finding out, send me your votes and reasons why.

Remember, there's no poll without **you**. Also remember that it doesn't have to be a writer. If you personally believe that John Romita Jr.'s "noir-style" Iron Man with the super huge boots contributed to the character more than any writer or editor or colorist ever could, let's hear it!

--- THE ADDRESS---

Jason Stephens
3606 N.E. 78th St.
Kansas City, Mo. 64119

Off The Top Of My Head: "Where's My UPC Box Art?"

We all have those little quirks that we complain about. Mike Kalibabky's is the coloring of those lines on Iron Man's helmet, and here's mine: I assume you've all noticed that for the past year or more, no Marvel or DC "direct edition" comic has had those cool little pictures taking the place of the UPC symbol. Now, these direct, collectors' versions are distinguished from the newsstand versions only by the words, "Direct Edition." It looks like what I thought was a temporary thing is permanent. What really sucks is that it happened *just* as Iron Man's 30th anniversary was getting underway! For a few weeks, there was a 30th anniversary Iron Man picture on almost every Marvel comic! I thought that it was rather funny that Iron Man was going to be on every single "X-book" cover for an entire year, just like Spider-Man's anniversary was on nearly every Marvel cover. For whatever reason, however, the "powers that be" decided on the new system. If anyone knows exactly why, I'd be glad to know about it and share the answer with all of you.

Other Iron Man Projects: "*Collector's Preview: Iron Man*"

I picked up a copy of Marvel's second Collector's Preview. It is of course all about Iron Man and Force Works! This, however, comes as no surprise to you since you read the first installment of my new column in the latest *Advanced Iron*. There are two reasons why this is so awesome. One reason is because it's Iron Man. The second is because of the fact that it has all of the information you could want on the future of *Iron Man*, *Force Works*, and *War Machine*, the *Hands of the Mandarin*, the Iron Man cartoon, and the Iron Man and Force Works toy line.

There is just so much that this magazine has, I'm going to have to sum it all up: There's an interview with Len Kaminski, Scott Benson, and Michael Marts

about *The Hands of the Mandarin*. The interview is set up in a really interesting way because it was simultaneous. You get a chance to see how Len Kaminski and Scott Benson interact with each other because the interviewer wrote the article with all of the conversation intact (even the funny stuff). Some points raised were the facts that reading Iron Man is like watching an epic movie, while Rhodey is like -- as Scott Benson put it -- "a little intimate film" or an "independent production." Scott Benson said this about Tony Stark to Len Kaminski, "I don't want to insult him, he's your character -- but he's got a lot of hubris." Kaminski said, "Everything about Tony Stark is in much grander terms [than War Machine]." Nel Yomtov was supposed to attend but couldn't because of the Long Island Rail Road strike.

There's a separate interview with him. **There's an interview with the writers of *Force Works* -- Dan Abnett and Andy Lanning -- about the crossover and what everyone involved is trying to establish with the villains in the story.** Century fans take note -- there is an interview with Century himself at the beginning of the magazine. **Any one who missed that Marvel Age issue that I warned you to pick up -- issue 140 -- can see some of the same pictures of the cartoon artwork and actors that you missed out on -- plus some new stuff as well.** There is also an episode guide of the Iron Man cartoons -- 13 in all -- of the first season. **We've also got an article in here about the future directions for *Iron Man* and the other books. Len says here that he is going to finally get Tony Stark away from all of the horrible, victimizing situations of the past years. He's also going to work more with the modular ability of the Iron Man armor, and various helmets, gloves, etc. for certain missions. "I want to Give him a wardrobe big enough to fill dozens of closets," Len Kaminski said.** There's another interview in here that focuses on more personal questions for Tom Morgan, Len Kaminski, Scott Benson, Dave Taylor, Abnett and Lanning, and Tod Smith. **There is a very informative article on the "weird sciences" that are employed in the Iron Man books. It discusses cyberspace, "chaos theory" (like in Jurassic Park), etc. and where the writers got their background for most of this stuff.** For all of you artists out there (look who's talking), there's a public critique of one artist's progress with various Iron Man submissions that tells you exactly what to avoid, what to concentrate on, etc. **Finally, Avi Arad spills the beans on Marvel's newest toy line in an interview that includes pictures of a number of the figures. The Iron Man figures look awesome. Just in case you're over thirty, forty, etc. and you're sitting there, reading this like you don't care about toys anymore, I'm highly suggesting that you take a serious look at these when they come out. Every Iron Fan has got to have at least one of these 5" and 10" figures. If you're over thirty and you plan to get every**

single one, then you get my gold star for the day. I don't have one with me right now, but just picture it in your mind -- it's beautiful isn't it?

Do I even need to go on about this magazine? You *have* to get this! Seeing as how it's a large, magazine-sized issue, you might have to check out the special rack -- or whatever -- at your local comic book store. It's only \$1.95. I know that all of the stores here in Kansas City order small quantities of these Marvel "magazine-format" books, and it's probably the same in most places, so if you still haven't gotten this thing, get out right now and grab it, because it probably won't be around much longer.

Iron Man in the Near Future: The Iron Man Toy Line

I'll be brief with this section. I just wanted to fill you in on how the toy line shapes out. You can skip this section if you've got the *Collector's Preview*. The figures are much more sleek than the last Iron Man toy. Since he's got his own division of Toy Biz's figures now, there is going to be a lot more time and money devoted to getting Iron Man and everyone else to look right. The main Iron Man armor and the War Machine armors do not snap onto the figure -- thank God. As far as how the specialty armors work, there is some confusion. The interview with Avi Arad in the *Collector's Preview* is unclear on this. Arad mentions a Tony Stark figure in a suit and a Rhodey figure in briefs, but no such figures are listed on the "shipping dates" list that they printed in the magazine. This is either because they forgot, or these figures come with the specialty armors. The pictures shown of the primary armors clearly show that they are too small to contain a figure inside. No pictures are shown of the special suits, so I don't know what to tell you. Another possibility is that the specialty attachments snap on to the primary Iron Man armor and come with a Tony Stark figure just because they want us to get our money's worth. At least, I hope that's the case. The skinny Iron Man armor has large, bulky pieces that I am pretty sure snap off. This would scale the figure down for you to place the other armor pieces on. Again, this is just speculation since the interviewer wasn't specific. I do know that no corny power move is built into the Iron Man armors -- like Toy Biz has put into their X-Men figures. The Iron Man toy line's cool feature is that you can interchange parts and weapons. I'm glad the designers were satisfied with just that. **By the way, parts of the armor have been coated with a special process that makes them look and feel like shiny metal.** They look awesome. The way I understand it, the 10-inch figures that will come out later are totally covered with this process. The only accessory that will be introduced on the first go around is Tony Stark's car. It has a feature that switches the Stark and

Iron Man figures inside. Put Stark in the car, hit the button, open the door, and you've got Iron Man sitting there. What a collector's item!

Here's a shipping guide for the figures (provided in the *Collector's Preview*)

11/27/94 - IRON MAN RED AND GOLD ARMOR

IRON MAN HYDRO ARMOR

WAR MACHINE

Spider Woman, Mandarin, Blacklash, The Grey Gargoyle, Tony Stark(?), and Rhodey(?)

1/15/95 - IRON MAN SPACE ARMOR

IRON MAN STEALTH ARMOR

IRON MAN HOLOGRAM ARMOR(red/silver - Silver Centurion suit)

Hawkeye, Modok, Blizzard, Whirlwind, Fin Fang Foom, and Two Mechanical Dragons

4/15/94 - IRON MAN SOLAR ARMOR

IRON MAN ARCTIC ARMOR

IRON MAN HULK-BUSTER ARMOR

Century, US Agent, Dreadknight, and Titanium Man

Your Responses: Dwayne Wilder & Michael Kalibabky

(Type size reduced to keep this whole thing under 9 long pages!)

I said in my last column that one of the major reasons for starting it was to provide the largest, *monthly* source for Iron Fan letters, and here's the first, which almost didn't make it until the next column because when I had just finished this, and was ready to send it to Bill, my printer's ink cartridge ran out of ink! Dwayne's letter arrived the next day and I stuck it in. Dwayne's reason for liking Iron Man as much as he does is the fact that it is grounded in reality (even though it quite often stretches and diverges from the path of our reality), stating, specifically, that he likes characters who use their brains to solve problems. Dwayne also wrote in response to one section of my column in particular, "Off the Top of My Head," when I said we needed to see an Iron Man/Dr. Doom fight. He agrees with me that Dr. Doom would probably win if the writer gave us a true, no-holds-barred fight, stating that "his genius is on par with Reed Richards and both of them are at least one step ahead of Stark. Although, Stark *is* the engineering type who gets things done in the practical world. He could win if the situation was right." Dwayne also contributed something new. He demands to see the return of the Ghost. I can say that he's not alone. I've read many letters in *Iron Man*, and *Iron Fan* that demand the same thing. I also think it would make for a kick-butt story. So how about it, Len?

Remember, *anything* that you see in this column, whether it's from me or another Iron Fan, is fair game to write in and talk about. I stated in my last column that at times, hopefully, the entire column can write itself and be spurred on by topics that all of you come up with on your own and demand that I deal with. It also doesn't have to be


anything that appears in my major section, "Seeing it From the Stephens Side" (which I will still take better title suggestions for). "Off the Top of My Head" devotes an entire paragraph to a very simple topic that just, well, popped off the top of my head, and that normally wouldn't get more than a sentence to cover it. However, the fact that one of you decided to write in about it makes it a viable topic. Pick anything and just send the briefest of letters, or postcards, if you so desire. If any of you read *The Ray* from DC, you'll know that the editor said in one of the earliest letters pages of that title that if the readers didn't write in, he had a long dissertation prepared on how the staples are put into comics. Letters poured in, and there wasn't enough space to print what he was all set to talk about. This can be *your* column if you want. Take it away from me; give me so much of your own responses, suggestions, topics, etc. that I won't have time or space to discuss anything I had originally planned. For those of you who don't know, there's a contest going on in this column. Bill suggested that I give away an original 11x17 finished and inked drawing, and that's what I'm doing. Whoever writes in the most, along with the best suggestions (such as a possible new title) and the most contributions to our ongoing topics will receive this drawing of any comic book character they want, and a reduced, color copy. If any of you want to own an original drawing by Iron Fan's cover artist, Jason Stephens (myself), that **won't ever appear anywhere else on the face of the planet**, this contest is for you. Last time, I didn't know when I'll be determining the winner, but now I think we'll set the official date as January 15th, 1995 (my mother's birthday is as good a date as any). This will give us plenty of time to have some good, diverse topics coming in. It'll give me time to see who writes continuously and faithfully with the best ideas, also. I do hope you respond. Also, for those of you keeping score, Dwayne Wilder has a slight jump on all of you with the first letter! Thanks, D.W., may I call you D.W.?

Here are some topics you can address if you want: What do you most like to see in Iron Man? Personally, I *like* Tony Stark being sly and egotistical like Len Kaminski said he was. I look for all the glamour and glitz that Len Kaminski is capable of throwing in. I love the epic, grand proportions of *Iron Man* instead of the down-to-earth *War Machine*, even though I read and enjoy all of the Iron Man books.

I think we should see all of the rich toys Tony Stark could possibly have, including a new mansion for the guy. **How do you like this modular concept with all of the attachments for the armor?** Len Kaminski hasn't dealt with this as much as he would like to, yet, but promises to do so in the near future.

Also, I just want to say, "Thanks," to Mike Kalibabky for the letter he sent me. He gave me some very nice compliments and good wishes. Since he was writing a friendly letter and not one for the column, I have no relevant quotes to stick in here... but I'm going to do it anyway, "I try to dig up Iron Man related stuff from every nook and cranny in the Marvel Universe." There! Words from the man himself; the great Mike Kalibabky of Iron Fan is reduced to a mere letter writer in *my* territory! Mike knows I'm just screwing around with him, he's a great sport. Thanks again, Mike!

You're all so cool,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason Stephens". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Jason Stephens

THINGS TO COME

A lot of my preview information comes from a book called PREVIEWS, which should be available at your local comic shop.

IRON MAN VS DOCTOR DOOM Trade Paperback (ships 20 December) ----->

by Dave Michelinie / John Romita JR / Bob Layton

Reprints issues #149-150 and #249-250. Just looking at the numbers should tell you that these were special stories from the start. What makes them even more special is that they were done on two separate runs by the most highly touted Iron Man creative team ever. If you don't have these stories in your collection already, they're a must have! Oh, and by the way, Dr. Doom might figure into some upcoming Shellhead stories wants he gets back from his FF sidetrip.



FORCE WORKS #9 (ships 3 January)

by Dan Abnett & Andy Lanning/ Calafiore/ Rey Garcia

Force Works heads to Australia to try and prevent a plague that threatens the continent's population. This issue introduces a new character, Dreamguard, who is "an Aborigine with amazing powers" (sounds kinda like the X-Men's Gateway). This issue also introduces Jim Calafiore, who has done work on Valiant's Armorines and Magnus. He'll be around for at least four issues.

WAR MACHINE #12 (ships 10 January)

by Len Kaminski & Scott Benson/ Chlystek

Kaminski & Benson explore racial tension and parenthood. Jim Rhodes returns to his home town of Philly and discovers that he is a father! The racial tension comes from his parents' reaction to his new white girlfriend. As for action? Well. . .the new villain, Terror Device, will provide plenty of that.

MARVEL ACTION HOUR FEATURING IRON MAN #5 (ships 17 January)

by Eric Fein / Anthony Williams / John Nyberg

This is the beginning of a trilogy chronicling the origin stories of the primary characters. I'm assuming these stories correspond to episodes 9,10, and 11 of the animated series (see the list on the next page).

IRON MAN #314 (ships 31 January)

by Len Kaminski / Tom Morgan

This issue introduces a new villain! Hired by an old nemesis, the Roxxon Corporation, Tony's former college professor is charged with bringing down Stark International. The debut of this foe marks a return to the Tony Stark that longtime readers know and love; the freewheeling playboy who struggles with an unrelenting drive to succeed. For the next few months, we'll gain greater insight into Stark's early years, as Iron Man builds an essential new space station for the U.N.!

MARVEL ACTION HOUR SNEAK P REVIEWS

The following are synopses for the shows which haven't been aired yet.

"THE WEDDING OF IRON MAN"

As Tony Stark is marrying Julia Carpenter, AKA Spider Woman, we flashback on the events which brought the couple to the alter, only to learn that their marriage vows have nothing to do with love, and everything to do with the Mandarin.

"IRON MAN TO THE SECOND POWER: PART ONE"

MODOK and The Mandarin create a duplicate Iron Man which they use to commit a crime for which the real Iron Man will be accused. That crime - stealing the world's only known supply of Dark Water Fever Antidote. The Mandarin then employs a team led by Hypnotia to reactivate the long defunct Fever Virus which the Duplicate Iron Man then uses to blackmail the world. Meanwhile, Tony Stark is missing and the world assumes that he and the real Iron Man are behind the blackmail scheme.

"IRON MAN TO THE SECOND POWER: PART TWO"

While the Duplicate Iron Man threatens to release the Dark Water Fever Virus on Los Angeles, Spider-Woman and the Scarlet Witch find the real Iron Man mining gold in the depth of the sea. The real Iron Man then confronts his Duplicate in a battle ending in victory for Iron Man and an end to The Mandarin's scheme.

"THE DEFECTION OF HAWKEYE"

Hawkeye does not show up for a confrontation with The Mandarin's forces during the testing of The Overland Tanker, one of Tony Stark's brilliant new inventions, and later refuses to explain his absence. Then Julia trails him to Hammer Hills, a development owned by Justin Hammer, and it looks as if Hawkeye may have gone over to The Mandarin. Iron Man and his team examine Hawkeye's history to learn if they have a traitor in their midst.

"THE ORIGIN OF THE MANDARIN"

After winning a skirmish with The Mandarin and his forces while wildcatting for oil in the desert, Iron Man and his team recover The Mandarin's hologrammatic diary. The diary replays the story of how The Mandarin got the ten ring gems which give him fantastic powers. However, the diary also proves to be troublesome for Iron Man when it becomes the key which allows Mandarin into Iron Man's Hall of Armor.

"THE ORIGIN OF IRON MAN: PART ONE"

While checking out a disturbance at a Stark Enterprise owned Volcano Powered Factory, Iron Man is ambushed by Fin Fang Foom and the rest of Mandarin's forces. Taking refuge in the bowels of a glacier in high mountain country, the badly injured Iron Man must use his Armor Computer to replay his personal Memory Module to keep his life support systems functioning while his armor repairs itself. Meanwhile, both Tony's team and the Mandarin's forces search for him.

"THE ORIGIN OF IRON MAN: PART TWO"

As his armor's Memory Module replays scenes from his life and explain how Iron Man came to be, Tony Stark clings to life in the glacier as his friends and the Mandarin's thugs search for him. If he isn't found, the story of his origin will turn out to be his obituary.



MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS #169

by Len Kaminski / Scott Benson / Cary Nord

Len and company chronicle part 1 of "an exclusive look at the past of the deadly Mandarin and his unique present day changes.

MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS #170

by Len Kaminski / Scott Benson / Cary Nord

Len and company chronicle part 2 of a story that promises to help you "discover the Mandarin's brand new powers and his new goals for conquest. Sounds like a perfect companion to the HOM storyline.

OFFICIAL INDEX TO THE AVENGERS

by Murray Ward/Various artists

with a cover by Darick Robertson and Andrew Pepoy

The ultimate master list of the Avengers! Everything you wanted to know and more on Earth's mightiest heroes - including 'ol shell head. This issue indexes the contents and credits of Avengers #122-180

IRON WARES

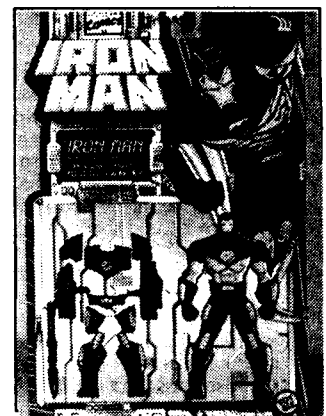
Yes, they're on their way! Here's a little info on the Iron Man figures form Toy Biz.

IRON MAN 10" ACTION FIGURES: Each articulated.

- IRON MAN
- MANDARIN
- WAR MACHINE.

IRON MAN DIE CAST FIGURES: Poseable, die-cast miniatures that ship two per blister card:

- IRON MAN vs. MANDARIN ----->
- WAR MACHINE vs. MODOK



IRON MAN FIGURES:

- IRON MAN (with Snap-On armor pieces) -----
- IRON MAN-HYDRO armor
- WAR MACHINE
- SPIDER WOMAN
- MANDARIN
- BLACKLASH
- GREY GARGOYLE