

# ADVANCED TROOP

#33



*Featuring*

**IRON  
CLOWN**



# ADVANCED IRON 33

**ADVANCED IRON** is published by Dave Huber for the fans of **Iron Man** and other armored heroes. Subscription rate : \$4.50/issue (color covers). \$3.50 (B&W covers) postage included. Outside of U.S. add \$1.00. Make checks payable to "Dave Huber." All likenesses of Marvel characters are copyright ©1997 Marvel Entertainment Group. Articles and artwork are the possession of the contributors and may not be reproduced w/o permission. *Advanced Iron* 3206 Crystal Ct. Wilmington, DE 19810 (302) 479-7101

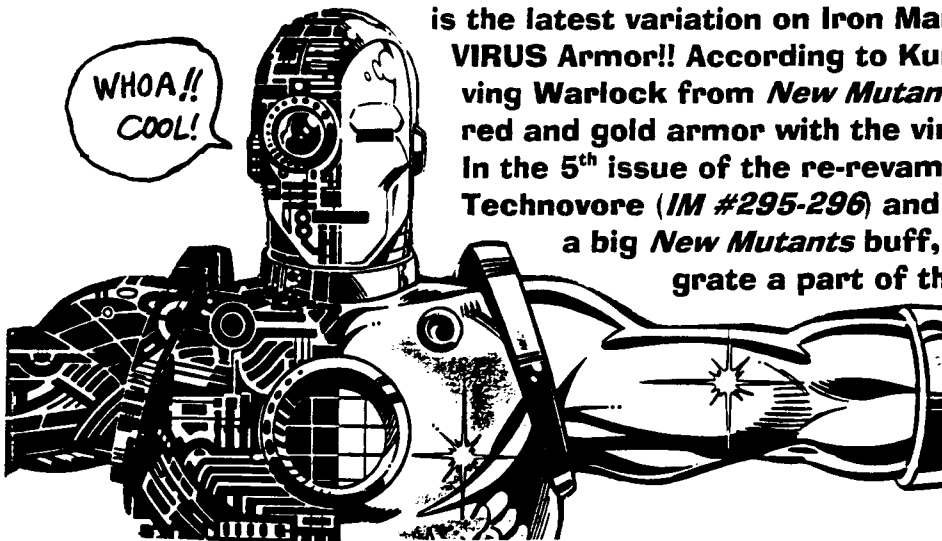
## HAPPY BELATED APRIL FOOL'S!!

A number of factors have led to our delay this month (as I'm sure some of our columnists will tell you), but nevertheless, **HERE WE ARE!!** On the top of the agenda

is the latest variation on Iron Man's armor – the **TECHNO-VIRUS** Armor!! According to Kurt Busiek, he plans on having Warlock from *New Mutants* fame infect the classic red and gold armor with the virus – and Tony along with it! In the 5<sup>th</sup> issue of the re-revamp, Kurt will bring back the Technovore (*IM* #295-296) and Tony will fall in love!! "I was a big *New Mutants* buff, and I wanted a way to integrate a part of them into *IM*," Busiek said.

(New readers out there – this is a joke!)

## AND SPEAKING OF NEW READERS



Here are the folks who'll lead you through *AI* #33:

**ARNO BAKKER** offers up views European in "Ramblings From Across the Pond."

**DWAYNE WILDER** guides you through the best of *IM* in "The Wilder Side of Iron Man."

**ROGER OTT** highlights a old "baddie" in "Ironing Board."

**ALLEN BUJAK** opines in "Iron Filings" and serves up new armor designs in "Armor File."

**JEFF PEARSON's** "Pandora's Box" fan fiction story debuts in *A.I.* !!

**BILL EGAN's** "A.I. Eye on Iron Man" showcases fan reviews of the latest *IM* offerings.

**DAREN DOMINA** talks collectibles and more collectibles in "Iron Wares."

**BILL MEIGGS** raps about great and lame *IM* artists in "Reflections in Metal."

**BART NEY** ponders "armored" video games and electronics in "Virtual Iron."

And special thanks to our fan artists who offered up some kickin' doodles this month:

**JASON ZUSHMAN, TOM CHIARAMONTE, ALLEN BUJAK, BRUCE SEATON, BART NEY, BILL MEIGGS and ROGER OTT.**

# ADVANCED IRON ONLINE

<http://members.aol.com/aivault/index.htm>

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## MAYBE YOU KNEW, MAYBE YOU DIDN'T...

... **Sean Chen** was Bob Layton and Dave Michelinie's choice for artist had they gotten the book....

.... Did 'ya like **Greg Cox'** *Operation: AIM* better than his *Armor Trap*?? It's probably because Greg had an inflexible deadline for the latter book. Greg has informed *A.I.* that he's currently working on a new novel – "I've just agreed to do an AVENGERS/X-MEN crossover novel. The plot has yet to be worked out, but Iron Man will surely play a large part. Current plans are to use the original Iron Man, not the Heroes Reborn version, but that might change," Greg says....

.... Still looking around for **Avengers: The Legend**?? Well, stop. According to Kurt Busiek, the book was scrapped when Mark Gruenwald died....

.... When the **Fantastic Four** get *their* relaunch, it's been rumored that **Karl Kesel** and **Tom Grummett** will get the writing and art chores....

## Roger Ott: Our New "Greatest Hits" Artist

"Taking the reins of "Iron Man's Greatest Hits" after **Troy Brian** is quite an honor for me. The man is extremely talented, as you can currently see by visiting our ravishing website (plug plug!) and I only hope that I can continue to uphold the high quality of craftsmanship that our resident web-designer brought to the pages of *AI*." -- Rog

## HELLFIRE GENERATION WEBSITE

Comic Book Club member **Kris Bigelow** (also an outstanding Spanish student, by the way) has designed a website devoted to video games, animé and other high-tech stuff. *Definitely* worth a look for Iron Fans. For our new readers, the Comic Book Club is an after-school get-together for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students at the school where I (Dave) teach. Many kids work on their own comics, as well as trade and sell comics and cards. Kris' site can be reached at:

<http://www.voicenet.com/~kbigelow>

## News From Our Past (Contributors, That Is...)

**Mike Kalibabky**, long-time columnist and driving-force behind *AI*, sent me some very cool information just the other day. First off, Mike wrote a letter to **Dave Michelinie** asking him about the power of **beta particles**. He writes, "I have a copy of the October 1, 1986 *Amazing Heroes* magazine that features an interview with you. In the interview you discuss beta particles as the probable power source for the post-Armor Wars (*Stark Wars*) armor, as mentioned on page 16 of

Iron Man #231. Now fast-forward to Action Comics #731, wherein the villain **Cauldron** states (on pg. 11): 'This mechanism runs on beta power. Beta particles pass through all matter in the universe, even the Earth itself, every second of the day.' I appreciate this little taste of Iron Man within the pages of Action. Reminds me of the good old days."

Ever see that Iron Man "Time Slip" bit from *Marvel Vision*? Mike wondered if the creator, **Guy Davis**, is/was a C-3PO fan since the design in *Vision* looked so much like him. "No," writes Joan Hilty of DC Comics. "Guy is a 'Star Wars' baby just like every other 30-year old in the US of A. but not a fanatic and didn't even have C-3PO in mind at all – honestly. It was just all outta his own head."

## Egan Comes Through...

Our own **Bill Egan** (who, for our new readers, was the *founder of AI* and editor/publisher through issue #28) talked with **Kurt Busiek** at the WonderCon last week. Check out these tidbits about Kurt's plans for IM:

1. Tony Stark will be an adult again
2. There will be some important changes in the armor that are related to Tony's health, but not to a heart condition
3. Tony Stark will be the hero as well as Iron Man. Kurt sees the character as one of the most dynamic and well rounded characters in the Marvel Universe. So he plans to explore Tony Stark as inventor, industrialist and playboy as well as armored hero.
4. Tony will probably move to Seattle, since that is the new seat of technology.
5. There will NOT be any Force Works or War Machine
6. Kurt thinks Mrs. A is dead, but is willing to put her back into the story line if that is not the case (where the heck did the rumor of her death come from anyway).
7. Kurt IS willing to work with Bob Layton, but only if Bob is willing to work solely in the capacity of an artist.
8. He's already received a copy of AI, and is willing to listen to direct fan input from us. But he will NOT read any scripts or stories.
9. He's looking for ideas for Villain ideas from the fans. I suggested corporate raiders, like Justin Hammer. I also suggested GHOST. Kurt personally prefers foes like Midas and other early IM antagonists.
10. Speaking of Corporate Raiders, we will find out about Madame Masque finally --- and Bethany may have something to do with it.
11. Tony will be driving a "Prowler" like car, with a compartment for his armor.
12. It is highly likely that Pepper Pots will be back again, and Jarvis will definitely be back. But he frowns on "filling up" on regular side-kicks, so we may not see more than these two.

### ABOUT THE COVER AND INSERT - ALLEN BUJAK

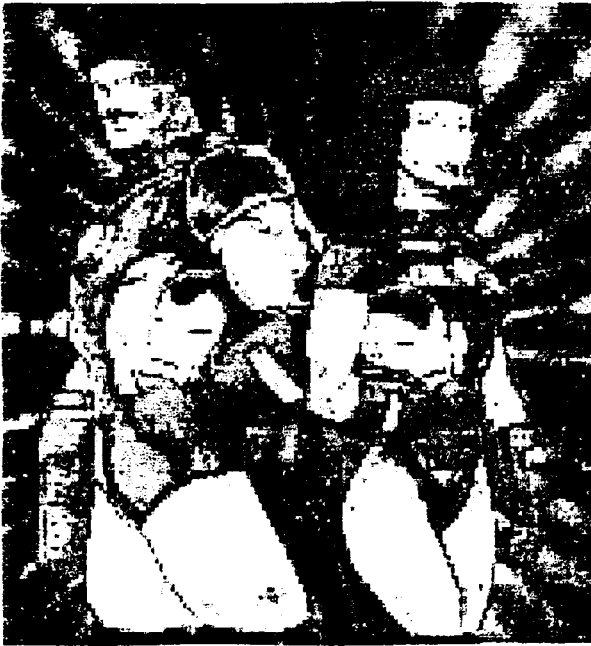
#### THE COVER:

The Iron Clown returns - decked out in a new suit based on Heroes' Reborn! This time he's also got a clown car - and not some trashy sub-compact. This clown's got taste - a BMW! Now we just need to know how many armored heroes are in there.....

#### THE INSERT

This image is dedicated to my friend Annette. Without her help I would never have gotten the image to look this good - great eyes, babe. Stingray locates a secret AIM base in an alley (notice the graffiti on the brick wall behind him). Inside are high-tech looking storage containers - but what else is in the shadows? This image is available for download on our website!!





## ***IRON FAN #5***

**COMING THIS SUMMER 1997**

**Featuring:**

- \* Plot synopsis of *Iron Man #118* by Dave Michelinie
- \* Complete episode guide for the IM cartoon series & background info on the IM cartoon
- \* Review of issues #100-150 by Guardsman David DiPasquale
- \* Magazine article: "Man Magnifier" powered armor

But we're not done yet. We need *your* input. *Iron Fan* is primarily a fan-oriented 'zine, so we're looking for more in the way of fan fiction. We need two 3-5 page stories and one 10-12 page story. We also would like to see your artwork. Please contact us at [IRONFAN@aol.com](mailto:IRONFAN@aol.com)

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## ***ADVANCED IRON***

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Iron Man fan!!*

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# RODMAN

THE MOVIE



A JASON ZUSHMAN PRODUCTION  
MCMLXXXVII



## ARNO BAKKER'S

# *Ramblings from Across the Pond*

....A European perspective on the state of the industry

Disclaimer

[all the opinions expressed in this column are those of the writer, not the publication]

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### Alas, it wasn't meant to be...

It would've been just perfect: **Bob Layton** and **David Michelinie**, the best-ever **Iron Man** creative team, making their triumphant return to the title ... knowing these two gents it would have meant the start of another *Golden Era* in the history of the **Golden Avenger**, a return to the title's former brilliance, it would have been the best thing to happen to **Iron Man** in quite a long time. It would have been just perfect but alas it wasn't meant to be: The powers-that-be at **Marvel Comics** decided against a return of the **Layton/Michelinie** combo, instead opting for **Kurt Busiek** and a still unknown artist.

This leaves me with mixed feelings: on one side I'm quite disappointed with **Marvel** (and Editor-in-Chief **Bob Harras** in particular) because they didn't pick my (and a whole lot of other's) all-time favorite **Iron Man** creators as the new creative team but on the other hand the guy they did pick is one of my favorites too. So I'm not mad at the **big M** for this stunt, just disappointed. I don't know what the exact reason has been to not pick **Bob Layton** and **David Michelinie**, maybe their proposal just wasn't what **Marvel** had in mind for the title? Maybe it was something else (finances? inter-company politics? a grudge carried against one or both of them?). As long as I don't know the exact reason I won't aim my poisonous arrows on **Marvel** and I'll reserve my judgment.

As things stand now (there is an agreement in principle but the contracts haven't been signed yet as far as I'm aware) **Kurt Busiek** will be the new writer. It isn't clear yet (at least not at the time of writing this) who exactly the new artist will be however **Busiek** stated recently on *Usenet* that in his opinion any of the names under consideration would do a terrific job. So hopefully this means **Marvel** has some big talents lined up for the job. And looking at the creative teams that are already in place for the *Heroes Return Captain America* (**Mark Waid** and **Ron Garney**) and *Avengers* (**Kurt Busiek** and **George Perez**), which are both *big-name high-quality* teams, I don't expect **Iron Man** to receive a lesser treatment. It would sure be great to once again have a stellar creative team on the book, it's been far too long since we had a writer/penciler combo who lived up to the high standard that was set in the past on this title. So hopefully **Marvel** won't disappoint us in this respect.

In any case, at least half of the team (the writer part) will be of very high quality. **Kurt Busiek** is one of the best writers in the business, this is the guy who did the brilliant **Marvels**, who's doing the nearly equally brilliant **Astro City** (one of my absolute favorite comics, if you've never checked it out be sure to do so, I don't think you'll be disappointed), the critically acclaimed **Untold Tales of Spider-man** and the new very cool **Thunderbolts** team book. We are talking about a real craftsman here, a writer who can write intelligent stories with real depth and lots of characterization. I assure you this is no **Terry Kavanagh!** **Busiek** (who, by the way, has already announced we've seen the last of **teen Tony** as far as he's concerned) is very enthusiastic about getting the opportunity to work on **Iron Man**, a title he wanted to write more than any other long-running **Marvel** title. He is very eager to get his take on the **Golden Avenger** out of his skull and onto paper (he says he's been cooking up **Iron Man** ideas for about twenty years) and has about six years worth of stories already jotted down. And looking at what he wrote about **Iron Man/Tony Stark** on the **Iron Man** Message-board on America Online (which was also printed in last month's *Advanced Iron*) he seems to perfectly understand the essence of the character. In my opinion, with the exception of the **Michelinie/Layton** combo, **Marvel** couldn't have picked a better man for the job...

## Retro Marvel

**Marvel Comics** really seems to be on the way back lately. In recent years the company had become a very pale imitation of its former self. Somewhere along the way the **House of Ideas** had lost the formula which made them so great in the past and it was having serious troubles finding it again. Things started going downhill during **Tom DeFalco's** tenure as Editor-in-Chief and got decidedly worse as a result of the editorial reorganizations that followed. **Marvel** set a first step on the road to recovery when they appointed former X-family editor **Bob Harras** as the new Editor-in-Chief. Unlike **DeFalco**, **Harras** is a man who does seem to have the vision and capabilities to properly manage such a big line of comics. And in the relatively short period of time that he has been at the helm he has already managed to turn things around. The deadwood has been cut away, the remaining titles have all received good to great creative teams and high-quality new series are being released. **Marvel** seems to be on course to regaining at least some of their old glory.

To get inspiration for the future **Harras** and his editors seem to have looked to the past. Especially the late 70s and early to mid 80s, one of the best periods in the history of the **Marvel Universe**. A lot of characters from that period are once again given a shot at the big time. First **Elektra** received her own series last year, then early this year **Ka-Zar**. Next out of the door will be the new **Heroes for Hire** book (starring **Power Man & Iron Fist** among others) followed by a re-launch of **Alpha Flight**. But this is not all of the 80s revival: The old **Marvel Team-Up** title (an old favorite of mine) will also be revived again (with **Tom Peyer** as writer and **Pat Oliffe** as artist) and new **Moon Knight** and **Master of Kung Fu** series are rumored to be in the serious planning stages. So it seems **Marvel** is going truly retro on us. Which is quite a smart thing to do in my opinion. In the past (mainly in the **DeFalco** days) **Marvel** seemed to purposefully ignore their backlog of characters when new ongoing series were concerned, instead concentrating mainly on newly created characters. This was a risky route to take because while known characters usually have at least somewhat of an established fan base, new characters have no such thing and you can never be sure if there will be a big enough demand for the title. As a result you could see many of the series starring newly created characters die an early death. So from a business point of view it is smarter to release new series starring known characters. Which is something **Bob Harras** and his people seem to have realized. **Marvel** has so many great characters which are/were hardly ever used, it would be a shame to keep them all in limbo so it's a good thing this retro movement is taking place now.

Revitalizing the **Marvel Universe** isn't the only thing that is keeping the top-brass at **Marvel Comics** busy these days. Taking their cue from **D.C Comics** which is quite successful with their **Vertigo**, **Helix** and **Paradox Press** imprints **Marvel** is now planning a similar expansion. Four new imprints are expected to be added to **Marvel's** publishing schedule later this year and during the next year. Two of these (the Science Fiction imprint and the creator-owned **EPIC Comics**) I already told you about in an earlier column, the other two are: An imprint aimed at the younger readers (tentatively called **Marvel Kids**) and a Horror imprint (quite possibly *non-Comic Code Approved*). I'm very much in favor of this attempt at diversification by **Marvel**. I've always been of the opinion that such big publishers as **D.C** and **Marvel** should cater to more than just the superhero crowd alone. It's too risky for such big companies to gamble on just one product line. **D.C** had already reached this conclusion a couple of years ago. As usual **Marvel** was a bit slower in reaching the same conclusion but it would seem it has now seen the light too.

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If you have comments, suggestions or questions feel free to drop me a line. Either via Cyberspace ([A.G.Q.Bakker@caiw.nl](mailto:A.G.Q.Bakker@caiw.nl)) or via the postal services:

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# The Wilder Side of IRON MAN

by Dwayne Wilder

## REACTION FROM ME TO YOU

So, it's **Kurt Busiek** and an unnamed artist for our armored hero. With the choices, **Bob Layton** or Kurt Busiek, we couldn't lose! Sure, my sentimental favorite was Bob. And I appreciate the way he informed us of his status -- Bob is a class act. I'm disappointed Marvel didn't like his proposed Iron Man direction. (Maybe, we could get a look at the ideas in a future AI? Dave?! - *it's in the works!* - Dave)

I sincerely hope Bob and **David Micheline** do get a Marvel project! Even a limited series would be good. Keep building those bridges, Bob! You never know when you'll need them. Good luck to you from a grateful Iron Fan!

## MORE ON KURT BUSIEK

I believe Kurt will do great! You've heard me say "*Untold Tales of Spiderman*" is the best comic book being produced. Well, guess who the writer is?! Mr. Busiek!!! In Kurt's remarks (over the Internet) printed in *AI*, he stated how he felt about Iron Man and the Avengers. Kurt said the Avengers were the core of the Marvel Universe and Iron Man was a unique and special character/hero.

I can tell I'm going to enjoy his run on *Iron Man* and the *Avengers* (are we in Heaven or what?!). I have always believed the Avengers (and related characters) were the backbone of the Marvel Universe. Sure, Spidey is more popular; the **Fantastic Four** was the first and the **X-Men** are the "cash cow" but the core is those heroes who banded together to fight "...foes no single hero could withstand." For most of the 70s, this phrase was at the top of the splash page of each

*Avengers* issue -- right before the words, "Stan Lee presents...The Mighty Avengers!"

Call me weird, call me impressionable or even naive, but I was caught by those words and what they invoked. To see heroes working together as a team (not out of familial obligation or circumstance, e.g. the FF) was simply the epitome of superhero comics. I believe it is great literary fare! The dynamics of teams and organizations are very complicated and difficult to write/create. But somehow Marvel took their best heroes and did it every month.

I am excited that someone like **Kurt Busiek** is in charge. I believe he will put the "hero" back in superhero. I have read from different sources that his *Astro City* is the best superhero comic. My experience with *Untold Tales of Spiderman* and *Marvels* concur. It's going to be a great fall!

## NO SOAPBOX - JUST INFO

Okay, so I overreacted about Marvel's bankruptcy! Sue Me! Three months into it has Marvel doing "business as usual" and no real mention of it. Apparently, no rights will be sold or even leased. Recently, the "little guys" have beat back Ron Perelman. I think this is good. At least, the "little guys" have come concern about what Marvel does. From what I understand, Mr. Perelman does not.

Those court dates are still there and anything can happen. But it appears Marvel will come out of this in better shape. With new direction in all areas (**Peter Parker** as Spiderman) and new ideas (**Kazar**), this couldn't be happening at a better time! I think September 1997 will be "Marvel Reborn!!!"

It was just the shock of filing Chapter 11 and the bad possibilities which got me when I heard

the news. I'm still not completely calm yet. But I'm optimistic! So much *could* have happened! All the rumors alone made for an unsettling time. Hopefully, cooler heads are prevailing. I know mine's a lot cooler! (And don't you say one word, Dave!!)

### DWAYNE'S CAPSULE COMICS

Let's look at another issue of *Tales of Suspense* from that great year of 1966. Iron Man is beginning his fourth year of existence and Marvel is doing a great job with him.

*Tales of Suspense* #77 was written by Stan (the Man) Lee. Pencils were by Adam Austin and inks by Gary Michaels. The lettering job was by long-timer, Sam Rosen. This May 1966 issue begins with Tony Stark as the **Mandarin's** captive. Our hero's attache case (containing his armor) has been thrown into a moat. And to make matter worse, Mandy is activating *Ultimo!*

Our villain explains (don't they all!) to Tony Stark how he created *Ultimo* as the greatest living weapon ever conceived. Mandy used his scientific expertise and the mystic powers of Eastern philosophy to bring *Ultimo* to life. There is some wonderful art showing the android being "born" inside a volcano.

As the Mandarin

concentrates on getting control of *Ultimo*. Tony tries to sneak out. Of course, Mandy catches him and blasts him with a power ring. The force knocks Tony out the door and down many stairs! His chest-plate saves his life. The Mandarin leaves him for dead.

Tony makes his way to the moat as *Ultimo* arrives at the castle. Tony Stark, after swimming for his case, returns as Iron Man. He goes into battle knowing the odds are against him. *Ultimo*

is stronger, but isn't this why we call them heroes?!

To give *Ultimo* something to do, Stan has the **Red Army** attack the castle (remember, we are in Communist China, 1966!) Of course, *Ultimo* easily defeats them. Iron Man tries to stop him but just dodges energy blasts mostly. Tony tries to devise a strategy to attack the gargantuan but is caught by *Ultimo*. The last panel of this continuing story shows *Ultimo* preparing to slam our hero to the ground (don't you just hate that?!)!!

The **Captain America** feature was a flashback story about WW II. Steve Rogers (Cap) is wondering about his former love, **Sharon Carter**, and how he lost her in France during the liberation. He believes her dead but, of course, she survived. The story is unique due to the team of **John Romita** penciling Jack Kirby's layouts (and it looks great!).

There's the *Bullpen Bulletins* with the

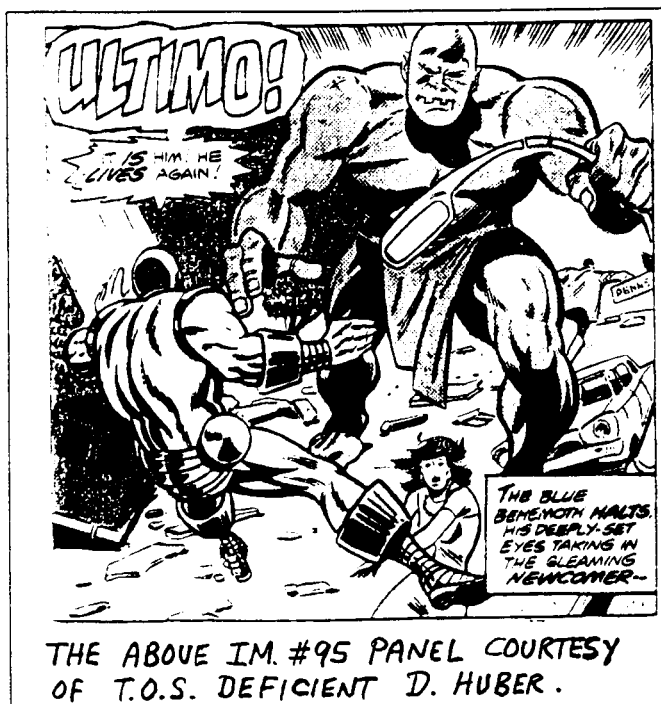
**Mighty Marvel Checklist**. One tidbit of information, the **Fantastic Four** was selling 33 million copies per year in 1966! There's an ad for the *Mighty Marvel Marching Society* (only one dollar to join!).

There were six letters on the letters page: *Mails of Suspense* (weren't they clever?!).

There is also an ad for an **Iron Man T-shirt**: \$1.50! It has the red and gold Avenger breaking a chain!

And that's *Tales of Suspense* #77 in a

capsule!



### YOU WANT MORE? YOU GOT IT

Let's go back to the oldest Iron Man story I have, *Tales of Suspense* #53. I know I've been going way back in Tony Stark's history lately but this is where the classic stories are!!! *Issue 53* is only 14 issues from the beginning of Iron Man! This May 1964 issue was plotted by Stan Lee



with script by N. Korok. Art chores were handled by Dashing Don Heck and letters by Sam Rosen.

The story is about Iron Man's second confrontation with **Natasha Romanov**, the **Black Widow** (the first was the previous issue of *TOS*). Marvel was at the beginning of their revolution (about 18 months into it at this printing), so the creative energy was put into new characters almost every issue. Stan knew he had a good one in the Black Widow. With the Cold War going strong, a Russian enemy for our iron American hero was perfect. Stan made her female (and followed his "insect" name process) to add that extra element for the playboy Tony Stark character. She was a great success and returned in issue #57 (debut of Hawkeye).

The action begins with Tony Stark completing work on his "Anti-Gravity" device. He alerts the Defense Department (remember he's an arms manufacturer at the beginning) and tells them it can "move mountains." There is a demonstration and a news leak which gets the Black Widow's attention. She'd been in hiding (even from her superiors) after losing to Iron Man.

She reasons she can correct her position by stealing the "Anti-Gravity" device and delivering it to her Russian bosses. So, she sets up an appointment with Mr. Stark (see how easy this espionage stuff is!) goes in, tricks him and steals the device.

As Tony changes into Iron Man, he muses how he pretended to trust her to find out what she wanted. But she won the first round. Meanwhile, Madame Natasha (Stan hadn't given her a last name yet!) contacts her boss to explain what she had. Tony searches for her but can't find her. So, he decides to duplicate the device. But he can't since its discovery was an accident. He recharges and begins looking again. It doesn't take long as he sees cars, buildings and tanks flying in the air! By calculating the position

of the objects, he finds the Black Widow. Iron Man quickly dispatches her Russian henchmen.

The Black Widow shoots Iron Man with the ray and orders the men to take him. She stops the ray for them to get him but Iron Man wins the battle. So, the Black Widow drops a building on our hero and proceeds to her next target, Fort Knox. Iron Man escapes and follows her. He saves some tanks. Then, uses his "proton electric charge" to nullify the device. The spies are caught but the Black Widow escapes again.

My favorite Iron Man line in this issue is "That's the trouble with you Commies! You just don't dig us!" *Tales of Suspense* was the Iron Man book! It featured the words "The Power of Iron Man" as its title. To show you how close *TOS* #53 is to the beginning of the revolution, it

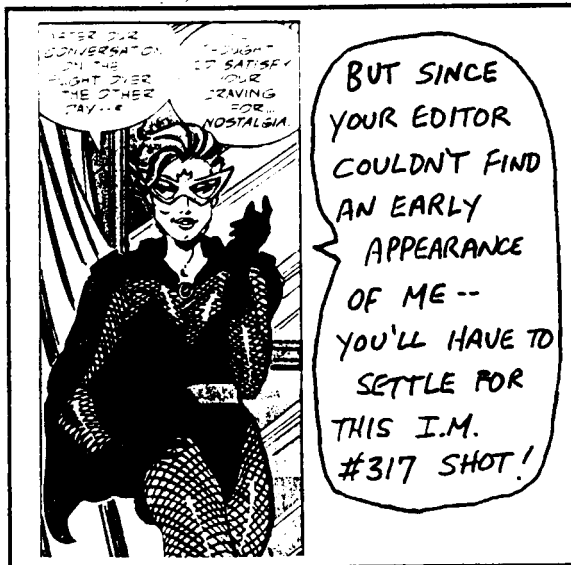
came out the same month as *Fantastic Four* #26 and *Spiderman* #12. There were no letters page or Bullpen Bulletins. The origin of the **Watcher** was a back up story in this issue.

And that's *Tales of Suspense* #53 in a capsule!

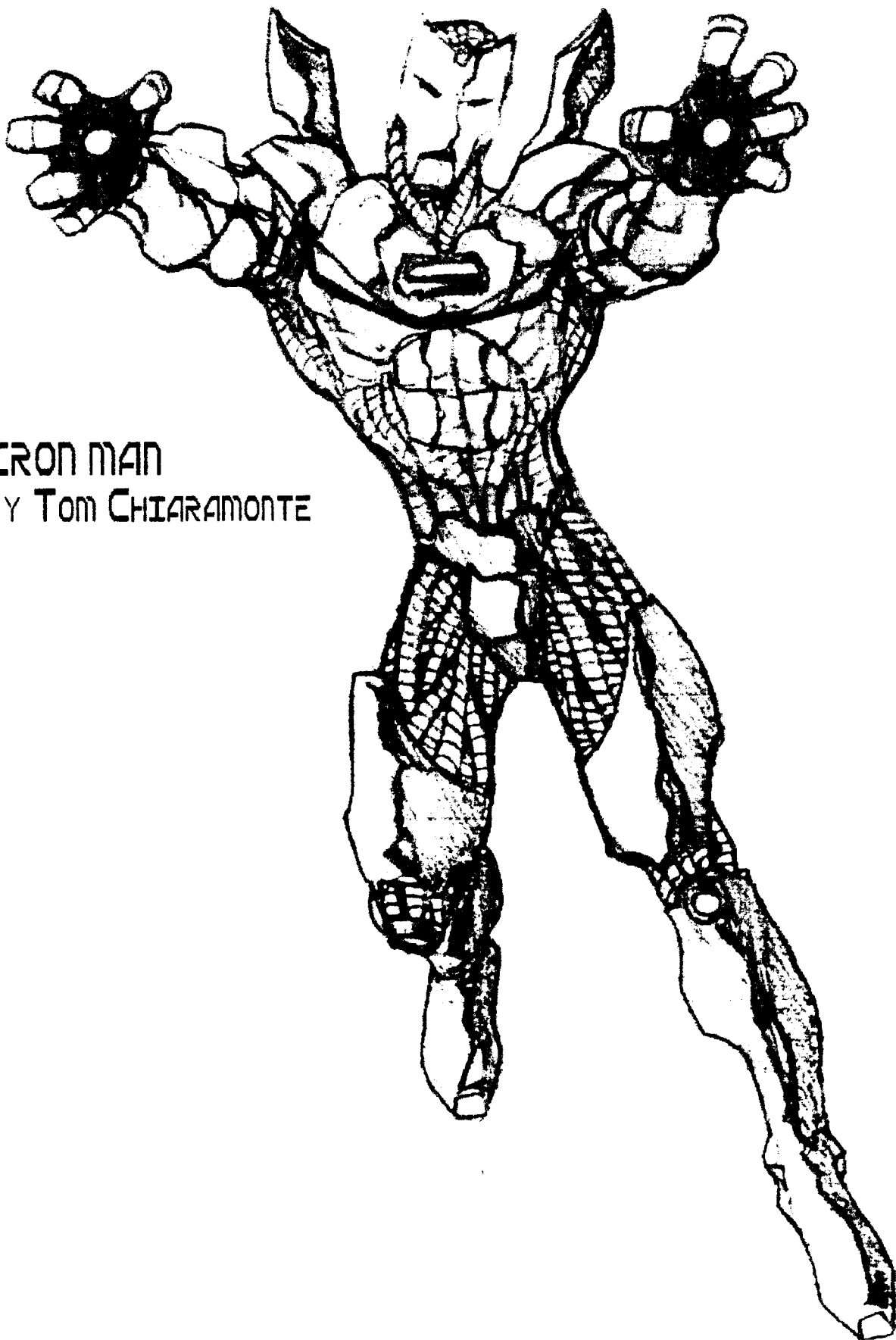
### THE UPFRONT DEPARTMENT

Just a thought on *Iron Man* in circulation circles. The title is doing great! It is *the number one* title of the

"Heroes Reborn" series. It is in the **Top Ten** on most lists. I'm not going into detail here (other columnists will do so!) but this bodes well for the post-"Heroes Reborn" era. Before we know it, September will be here!



**DWAYNE WILDER**  
**509 N. MCKOWN**  
**SHERMAN, TX 75092**



IRON MAN  
BY TOM CHIARAMONTE

# ROGER OTT'S IRONING BOARD

## BAD VIBES

With the ability to generate high-level seismic vibrations, he was one of Iron Man's greatest adversaries, and if that isn't an April Fool's joke, I don't know what is. His name is **Vibro**, and he ranks as one of the Golden Avenger's lamest villains, and that tag comes from Marvel itself (*see Iron Man: The Legend if you don't believe me*).

Alton Francis Vibreaux (*interesting name*) was a seismologist and engineer who, while in the employ of a ruthless businessman named Franklin Fortney, was testing an experimental nuclear-powered seismic energy-absorption apparatus (*say that five times really fast*) in the area of the San Andres Fault when an earthquake caused the earth to open up and swallow Vibreaux and his machine. Believing that Vibreaux was dead, Fortney left the site with no remorse for the 'deceased' seismologist. Actually, through some unknown means, Vibreaux's seismic absorption device was grafted to his body and he survived, although he was severely disfigured and mentally deficient, most likely from the trauma of the accident. Calling himself Vibro, he sought out Fortney, who had just been rescued from a hijacked oil rig by Iron Man's replacement, **James Rhodes**. Shortly after, Vibro and Iron Man clashed, and IM beat him easily (*the whole battle took less than two pages*). Rhodey turned Vibro over to the police, but he soon escaped and again came into conflict with Iron Man. This time, Rhodey was defeated. Shortly thereafter, Rhodey's friend **Morley Erwin** made a deduction that the strength of Vibro's powers was possibly connected with his proximity to the San Andres Fault. Using that information, Rhodes and his companions lured Vibro away from the fault, where Rhodey once again defeated him.

Shortly after being imprisoned in Nevada, he was brought back to California for trial, where once in proximity with the fault again, his powers returned. By this time, James Rhodes was himself suffering some mental instability in his role as Iron Man. In the battle that followed, several innocent bystanders were endangered, prompting Tony Stark to reluctantly don a suit of crude armor he had designed as work therapy during his second recovery from alcoholism. Stark managed to force Vibro far enough away from the fault to diminish his powers and render him unconscious.

Sometime later, Vibro escaped from the **Vault** (*the prison for super-powered criminals*), his mind seemingly somewhat restored. He caused a massive earthquake in Los Angeles, bringing him into conflict with the west coast faction of the **Avengers**, of which Iron Man was a member. Although Iron Man himself did not engage Vibro in battle, he was still defeated by other members of the Avengers.

Not long after, Vibro once again came into conflict with Iron Man, who was suffering some physical deficiencies at the time, but nonetheless still managed to defeat Vibro with little trouble.

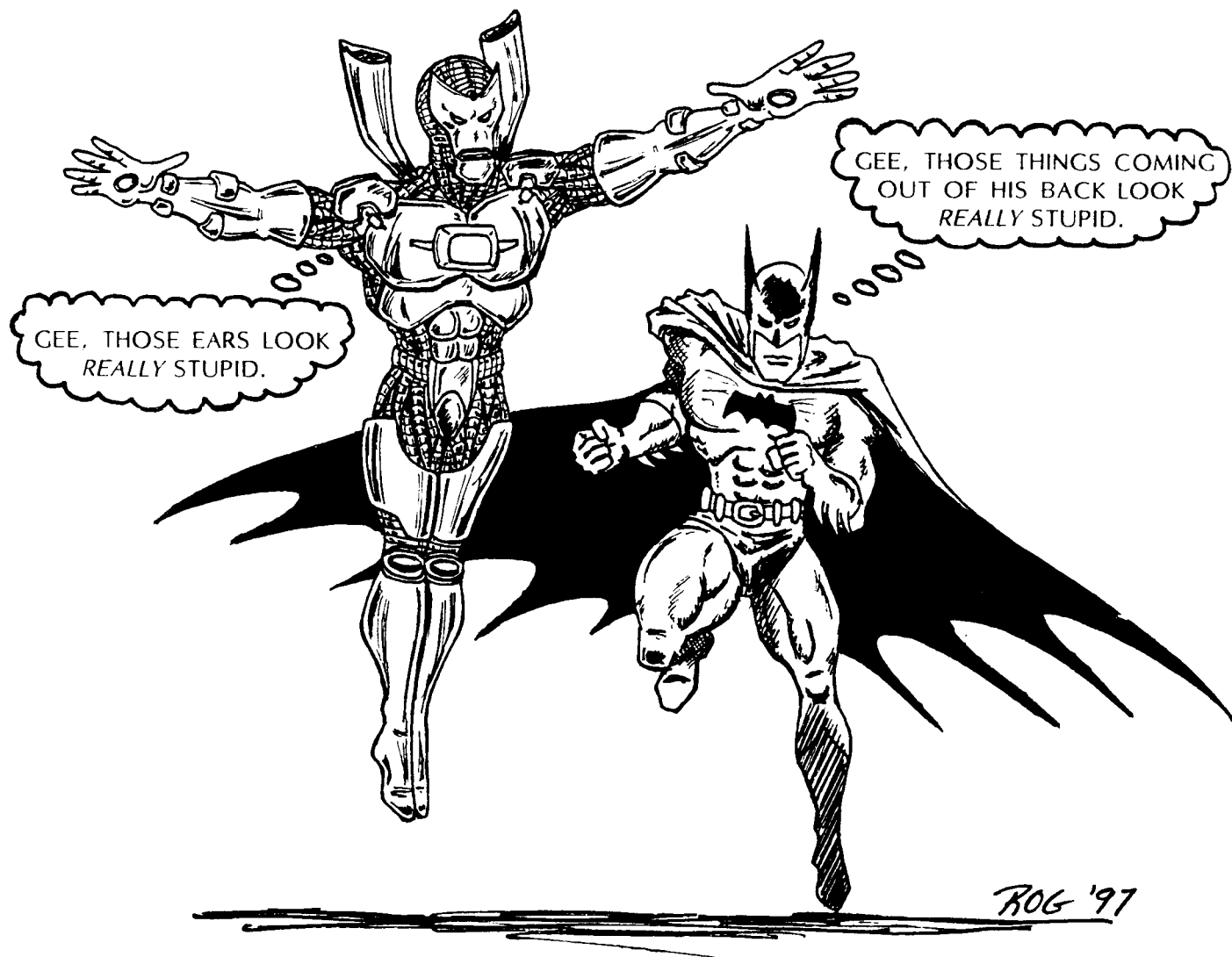
**FIRST APPEARANCE:** *IRON MAN #186*  
September, 1984

**OTHER NOTEWORTHY ISSUES:** *IM #S*  
187, 191-192, 267; *AVENGERS WC #58*

**QUOTE:** "UUNNH!" (When Rhodey popped him cold after a measly nine panel fight)

--Vibro - *IRON MAN #186*

# THE NEW DYNAMIC DUO?



Iron Man meets Batman. Why not? Bats has teamed with and/or fought against the Hulk, Punisher, Spider-Man, Captain America, and Daredevil, so why not Iron Man? Think of the possibilities. Tony Stark and Bruce Wayne are both brilliant industrialists who own large world-spanning businesses. This fact alone should be precedent enough to bring these two together, either as allies or adversaries. While their heroic identities have very different fighting styles, imagine Stark and Wayne together in the board room, hashing out some way of saving the world, then Iron Man and Batman fighting for the cause. It seems a logical connection to me, along with the fact that Batman has himself occasionally worn armor. I'm not a huge Batman fan, but this crossover is something I think would be interesting. In fact, I have a plot formulating in my head as I write this. And hey, If not a crossover, then how about an amalgamation? Iron-Bat? Well, I'm not sold on the idea of IM with a cape, but who knows?

Next Month: *IM'S MOST DEVASTATING FOE*

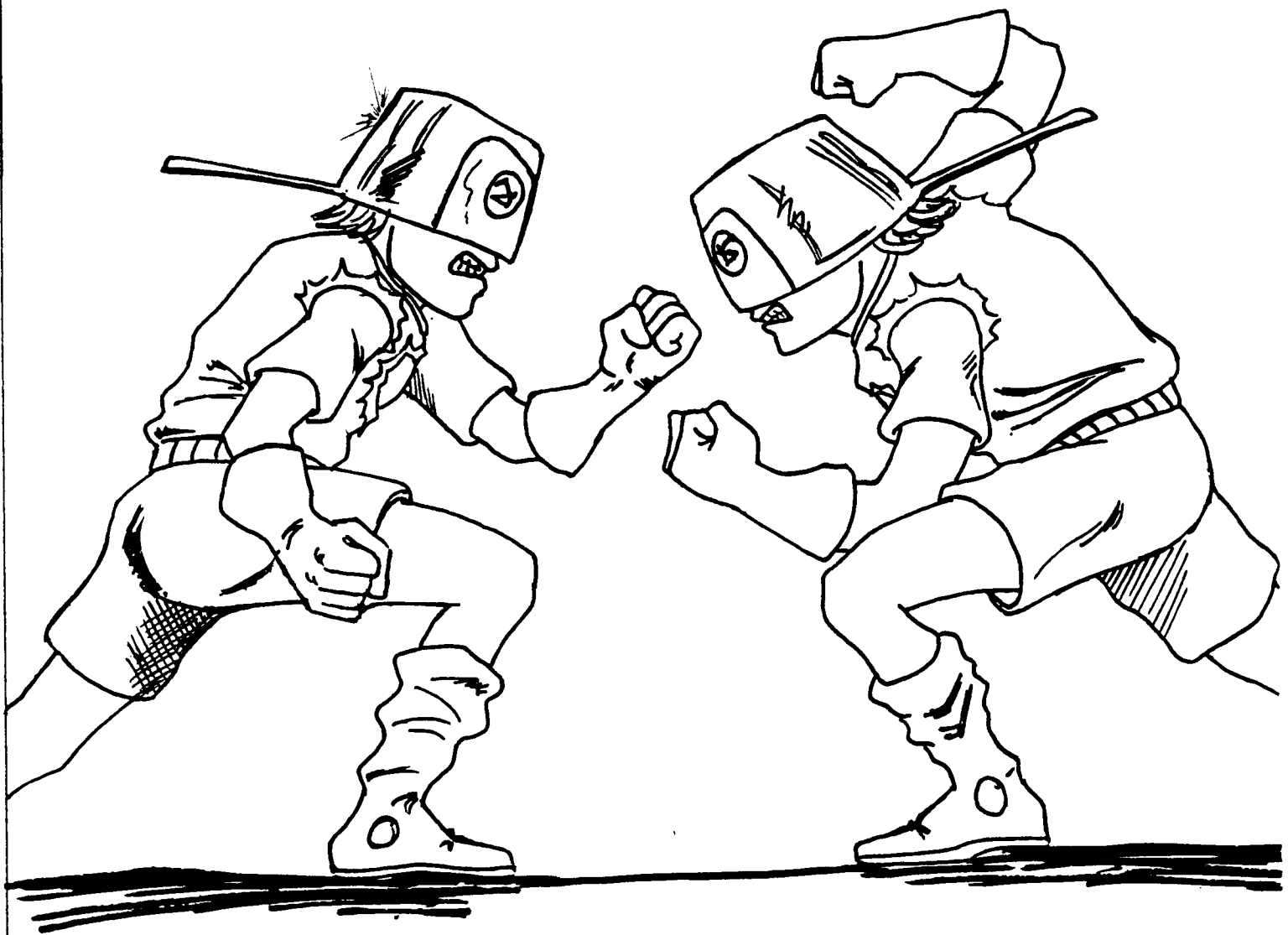
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IRON MAN'S  
GREATEST HITS



IRON MAN VERSUS IRON MAN  
FROM THE INVINCIBLE IRON MAN #178

FOG '91









Welcome to another edition of Iron Filings! You may have noticed that I also write **THE ARMOR FILE** for AI, but where that's a technical column, **IRON FILINGS** is intended to cover all other aspects of the Iron Man mythos.

### **IT'S NO JOKE!! DEPARTMENT**

Despite this being an April Fool's issue, there's no kidding with the sales numbers for Heroes Reborn. Fantastic Four and Iron Man are going strong - although suspiciously Iron Man seems to have settled at #7. I wonder if this is a plot by FF fans everywhere? (all information from WIZARD Magazine).

	4/95	5/95	6/95	10/95	11/95	2/96	3/96	4/96	5/96	6/96	9/96	10/96	11/96	12/96	1/97	2/97
<b>P</b>	1 to 25										2	8	7	7	7	7
<b>L</b>	26 to 50															
<b>A</b>	51 to 75	75						69	73	68						
<b>C</b>	76 to 100		95				83	79								
<b>E</b>	Not On List															
	No Data															
<b>ISSUE#</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>327</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>v2#1</b>	<b>v2#2</b>	<b>v2#3</b>	<b>v2#4</b>	<b>v2#5</b>	<b>v2#6</b>

### **WHAT A MOVIE! DEPARTMENT**

Before anyone starts wondering what movie I'm going to recommend, let me just say, I'm not. Why the title? Well, I recently saw a trailer for the new movie - "Batman and Robin" - I have to admit, it did sorta seem like a good Hero movie. Then I saw it - Arnold Schwarzenegger as Mr. Freeze - and I hear him say perhaps the most lame line in all of movies - "Kill the heroes". And then it dawned on me - Batman is dead. As hyperactive as Batman Forever seemed, Batman and Robin seems to be worse. With two villains and three heroes (four of those characters are largely undeveloped) - there's a lot in this film. And keep in mind it's not a 5 hour epic - this is a two hour movie we're talking about!

What really got me about all this was how much I loved the first Batman movie - it was really great because it showed a true Dark Knight - a character that was dark, yet noble, and heroic. It got me thinking about how easy it would be to mess up an Iron Man movie - with a bunch of gimmicks and special effects that would clutter the story of the man inside the armor. Just look at how Hollywood views the Batman franchise - Jim Carrey and his shtick in one movie - along with a wasted Tommy Lee Jones - with Nicole Kidman thrown in as window dressing. And now, we have Arnold Schwarzenegger as Mr. Freeze (a role made for Patrick Stewart) and a humorous Batman in George Clooney. Where's the detective? Where's the crime-fighter? In Batman Forever, the heroes got lucky - one lucky move at the end of the movie is what saved them. It wasn't deductive reasoning - it wasn't the solving of a crime. The villains made their "hideout" obvious and the heroes went right for it.

So when we all wish for an Iron Man movie - we have to be extremely careful with what's done to it and the characters. Do we want a movie that we'll take anything Hollywood throws at us? I don't think so. But even if we get a great movie - Hollywood can destroy a franchise for the fans and still have it make money. Hopefully when James Cameron gets to do Spiderman, we'll see what a real hero movie can be like. Until then, we can hope that Joel Schumacher (director of Batman Forever and Batman and Robin) will be too busy making the 5<sup>th</sup> Batman movie (yes, he's already on board for a 5<sup>th</sup> movie) to even look in Iron Man's direction - he's not up to it.

### **SOUNDS LIKE A WINNER DEPARTMENT**

Yes folks there's more good news in tinsel town. Coming this summer is Shaquille O'Neal as STEEL. From what I've seen of the costumes and what I would guess is Shaq's acting ability, this is going to be one bad movie. Don't get me wrong - I hope I'm mistaken - we need hero movies to do well, but Shaq's done one whole movie (which bombed) and a slew of commercials - he's not the first person I'd see as being able to do a role like Steel.

Also in the movies, Nicholas Cage is going to be playing Superman. Yeah - I can't see it either - but at least he's not going to be Tony Stark.

Lastly, there will be 5 Nick Fury TV movies on Fox - and guess who they've cast - David Hasselhoff!!! That's right - lifeguard turned soldier - oh yeah, this sounds real good. I wish I were joking right now.

*A.I. FAN FICTION – BY JEFF PEARSON*  
**"PANDORA'S BOX" – chapter 1**

Stark Enterprises is one of the most highly successful pioneers of today's high tech world. Its sole owner and President, Tony Stark, is one of the most brilliant minds and inventors of our time. He works silently in his workshop, doing what he does best, creating...or so he wishes. Without looking around, he can picture in his mind the details of this opulent office he now sits in the middle of. Every detail, from the patented leather chair to his 150-year-old desk the chair sits behind, screams elegance. Behind the desk, the wall is lined by bookshelves filled with rare books such as first edition printings of *1984* and *Frankenstein*. On the other side of the room, an original Monet hangs prominently on the wall. In the corner, is his workstation where he loses himself while madly attempting to record every detail when inspiration strikes his brilliance. Every detail of his office tells visitors and employees alike that this man is successful. However, it is the hidden features of the man's office that if you knew about them, would truly tell you of his genius. This is the part of the job I hate he mused to himself as he barely acknowledged the babbling from his lawyers across the conference table. I would rather face Titanium Man in my underwear than listen to this another minute. As if in answer to his silent prayer, a soft ring chimes in his ear. "I apologize for interrupting Anthony, but I have an alert code 'I-ST'" The voice belonged to HOMER. HOMER was a combined creation of Tony and Abe Zimmer who was currently head of the Special Projects Engineering Division at Stark Enterprises. HOMER was an artificial intelligence computer. At times, he seemed to border on sentient. He ran the day-to-day functions of the Stark complex. What was not generally known was that he also designed and built the last few generations of Iron Man armor. At times, HOMER's accomplishments amazed even him.

"That's all right, Homer" Tony replied to the disembodied voice.

"Ugh, Mr. Stark, are you all right? Whom are you speaking to?" came the whine from across the table. This directional intercom system is great for privacy matters but I must remember that not everybody is used to seeing people speak to thin air Tony thought.

"These are very urgent matters that must be dealt with immediately" the whine continued.

"Gentlemen, I can appreciate the urgency of these matters..." said Tony as he rose from his chair.

"Which is why my Chief Operating Officer, Felix, will attend to these matters immediately. Mrs. Arbogast?"

"Yes, Mr. Stark", came a female voice over the intercom system, startling the already confused lawyers.

"Please show these gentlemen to Felix's office and tell Felix to give them his top priority. Also, reschedule any and all appointments for the rest of the day. I have some matters to attend to and don't wish to be interrupted."

Tony crossed the room to his desk. By the time Tony finished, Mrs. Arbogast was at the door, showing the still stunned men out. One of them was finally able to recover enough to protest, "But Mr. Stark, we must discuss...". That was all he could utter before he was politely but firmly escorted out the door with a "This way gentlemen". Tony heard none of this exchange. He was dimly aware of the sound of the door closing. He knew what the alarm code 'I-ST' meant. It was one he had hoped to never hear. The ST meant 'Stolen Technology' based on his designs of the Iron Man armor was detected. The priority of 1 meant the technology was powered on currently in use. When he found out that people using armor and weapons based on his stolen designs to commit crimes, he swore to reclaim what was stolen from him no matter the cost. The last time, the resulting Armor Wars cost him everything. Some of the relationships with his friends still had not recovered.

"Homer, enable the security lock on my office door please." Tony moved around to the back of his desk.

"Lock Engaged, Anthony." Once he received confirmation from HOMER, Tony turned around and approached the bookcase directly behind the desk.

"Homer, Activate Elevator; IM. Security Code; Mallory"

With barely a sound, the bookcase directly behind his desk slid forward and to the left exposing a pair of doors. As Tony approached, he could feel a slight tingle on his face as hidden sensors scanned him. Once his



identity was confirmed, the doors opened and Tony stepped in. As he turned around the doors closed, and the bookcase returned to its original position, leaving the office of Tony Stark to its silent witness.

Winchester, New York, Professor Xavier's School for Gifted Students:

"Wolverine, I'm open", shouted Jubilee. Wolverine passed the basketball he had been defending against Warren Worthington III in a friendly game. After a tense moment, the ball reached her and into a hand. But it wasn't hers. Jubilee stared in shock as Psylocke triumphantly dunked the ball through the hoop. A short distance away, Rogue and Hank McCoy, also affectionately known as Beast, strolled along and listened to the playful interaction between their teammates. As they approached the lake, they spotted a small boat peacefully floating in the middle. They recognized the occupants; Scott and Jean Summers taking a few peaceful moments from saving the world to act as they newlyweds they are. As she watched, Rogue felt her stomach tighten.

"Oh Beast. What am ah gonna do?"

"To what are you referring to, Rogue?"

"Ah love Remy, but ah know ah can't give him what he needs. How can you have a relationship when you can't even touch the other person? Ah would kill him if we touched for even a few minutes because of mah powers."

"Rogue, you and Gambit are both strong people that share a strong love. And love will always endure in the end. Fear not, where there is a wall, there is always a door through. However, I have recently been assessing your situation and I think I may have something that may assist you in your endeavors. Excuse me please." Without a glance backward, Beast bounded off towards the mansion-leaving Rogue alone in her depression.

In the lab, Hank McCoy came bouncing in. "I know I left that here somewhere". He started digging through piles of equipment long forgotten. The only witness to his hunt was the silent corpse of a Sentinel, partially disassembled after their last battle. "Eureka" he exclaims, raising his prize into the air. "I knew saving this collar from our last excursion to Genosha would be advantageous."

Two days later, Rogue walks into the lab, hardly noticed by an intense but haggard beast. "Beast", Rogue admonishes "you have been in here for two full days. You've hardly touched any of the food brought to you and you haven't slept. What is so gall-darn important that y'all need to kill yourself to figure out?"

Beast looks up and finally notices Rogue.

"Pardon me Rogue. I did not hear you come in".

"So ah noticed".

Beast looks down again at the pieces all over his workbench. It was unrecognizable as the collar he held up in the air only two days ago.

"The technology in these are fascinating. They function along similar lines as the Professor's Cerebro. As you know, mutants possess a unique variation of bio energy from their human cousins. This bio energy is what allows a mutant to activate his powers. There are base signatures that all mutants share. This is what allows Cerebro to detect the mutant in the first place. While the specific attributes of each individual's energy are as personalized as a person's fingerprints. Cerebro uses this to identify known mutants and unknown mutants. I believe it is also how the Sentinels function in their mutant detection. The engineers on Genosha have discovered a way to absorb this bioenergy thereby rendering a mutant powerless. But I have not figured out how they channel this energy. The power conversion circuits look familiar but I can't quite place them. I seem to recall seeing something similar when I was with the Avengers".

Rogue could see the realization in Beast's face.

"Oh my stars and garters". Beast exclaims.

"Excuse me Rogue, I must place an urgent call to Stark Enterprises."

**Be sure to check out Jeff Pearson's brand-new website devoted to the Golden Avenger at:**

**<http://users.deltanet.com/~jeffp/HallofIron.html>**



# EYE ON IRON MAN

Iron Fan's provide their reviews of .....



## Iron Man #7



-- Dave Huber, Wilmington, DE

Perhaps a necessary character development issue, but one that didn't impress me very much. Most interesting angle: the possible appearance of Doc Samson?! The Hydra-Mandarin interlude was anti-climatic (for me, at least, since I'm privy to Mandarin's secret...!), but the Happy-Pepper tryst was, well, cool!! Cliché dept.: Happy smoking a cigarette after the "tryst." Next issue -- Rebel is back!! And he is NOT anyone we know!! If he is, yell at Scott Lobdell, not me!!



-- Brandon Hopkins Asheboro, NC

Iron Man # 7 didn't have the usual story depth that I'm use to seeing in Iron Man. It almost had no story at all! It has to be among the most flawed Iron Man issues yet. It opens with Madame Hydra and the strangely different Mandarin. It kinda lets you take the hint that this isn't the Mandarin like we've seen him before. The whole climax to the story (and I must say a wretched one) was Happy Hogan getting killed by the suddenly alive Rebel. Frankly I think the artwork could have been beefed up a bit. And whoever's drawing this book DOES NOT know how to draw women, they all look deformed! But hopefully this whole Heroes Reborn thing will end soon, I hope.

### OVERALL RATING for #7:



1/2

# SOLID STEEL



-- Bill Egan, Cupertino, CA

Whilce Portacio is back! I admit I had some complaints in the past, but Whilce's absence taught me a lesson. I still don't like the way he draws women, but the rest is fantastic. The Mandarin was truly wicked. I especially liked the dragon symbolism (hearkening back to Mandy's origin). Though the illusory sequence is a bit disorienting.

As far as the script goes, there were some low points: Thor's reference to the Armory as Iron Man's "Hole". But in other parts the art, plot and words just came together. For example, when Tony realizes that Pepper has packed the armor in the briefcase. It's a bumpy ride, but I liked it.



**TIN FOIL** - It is among the worst art and/or the worst storytelling you've ever seen. It hurt to read this one - use it to clean the table.



1/2 **ALUMINUM** - Definitely a filler issue drawn and illustrated by amateurs



**PLEXIGLAS** - He did what?!?!? Might be good, but is definitely not Iron Man (i.e. major continuity or art flaws)



1/2 **SOLID STEEL** - A good run of the mill Iron Man issue



**TITANIUM** - You enjoyed it. It put a smile on your face, but suffers from minor technical or artistic flaws



1/2 **ADAMANTIUM** - Among the best work, but lacks that certain something.



**INVINCIBLE** - Both the art and the story are the best you've ever seen in the pages of Iron Man



# EYE ON ARMORED HEROES

*As an expansion to the standard review section, I'm covering two non-Iron Man books this issue....*

## **IRON LANTERN #1** by Amalgam Comics

For those of you who may have been off the planet for a while. Amalgam comics is a joint DC/Marvel venture. Each issue follows the exploits of a character (or characters) from the Amalgam Universe who bears a striking resemblance to Marvel character and a DC character. In fact, you might say that the Amalgam character is an ...amalgam of a DC and a Marvel character. Now Hal Stark joins the ranks of Super Soldier and Bruce Wayne. Agent of Shield.

Hal Stark is an amalgam, of course, of Hal Jordan (Green Lantern) and Tony Stark. It has often been said that DC's Green Lantern and Marvel's Iron Man shared a special bond. In a sense Green Lantern is DC's competition for Iron Man the way Spider Man is Marvel's Competition for Superman. So much so that their plots have often been compared. Nothing could illustrate this point better than IRON LANTERN. The characters: Pilot Pepper Ferris. Mechanic Happy Kalmacu, and Design Engineer Stewart Rhodes. The setting: Stark Aircraft. The villains.....well. I'll let you discover those for yourself.

IRON LANTERN is somewhat silly in parts and so where GL and IM at points in their careers, but it is a really good read for people familiar with either one of these characters. You may even find it hard to distinguish how much of each character's trappings is invested in each of the story elements. All in all it's a perfect AMALGAM. And after all, that's what these books are all about.

AMALGAM RATING: **INVINCIBLE**

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## **X-O MANOWAR #6** by Acclaim Comics

Yes, it's Bob Layton's brilliant brain child. But if you haven't seen him in the last six or so months there have been quite a few changes. For one, Eric the barbarian (one of my favorite parts) is history (no pun intended). He's been replaced by Donovan Wylie, a brilliant young man with a completely opposite inclination to Eric. He reminds me of kind of a young and inexperienced Tony Stark (hmmmm where have I heard that idea before). The Acclaim heroes have gone through a rebirth similar to that of our favorite Marvel heroes. In the case of X-O, this rebirth has made the characters much more Stark/Iron Man like. It's not really X-O anymore, but I'm not complaining. Somehow Mark Waid was able to do what the Marvel folks couldn't when they tried to make a young Tony Stark.

Oh, don't get me wrong. There are also original parts. The armor is now a symbiot of whoever wears it and is bonded to him for life (except in this issue, but I won't give away the plot). The characters all have 90's attitudes and some of them are quite over the top (Tish Boudreau is kind of a combination of Dirty Harry and Brigitte Bardot), but they work well together and make for a very interesting ride. And I mean that literally for this issue! This issue really works on a visceral level, but the plot does come off as stilted and the characters a little too comicy on reflection. But I can definitely recommend it!

X-O RATING: **ADAMANTIUM**

Your responses to these reviews are welcome! Send them to AI care of the "Eye on IM"

# IRON WAIVES

April 21, 1997

by Daren R. Domina

I'm tired; there's just too much work to do. (By the way, Mike K.--I haven't forgotten about you). I've been to a number of shows since my last column, including the MegaCon in Orlando, FL. (a comic book convention), a fairly large toy show in Orlando, and the very large Atlantique City collectibles convention in Atlantic City, NJ. I went to Orlando to visit family and timed the visit so I could go to the Florida shows.

**Orlando Toy Show:** This show was advertised nationally and held in the Baja Shrine (don't ask me, but of course you've heard of a "shriners' convention"). A small auditorium was filled with dealers. I noticed a lot more cars and Hot Wheels dealers than would be in a show in the northeast. It took me about two hours to carefully look at everything. Fortunately, I found one or two unusual things. I found a set of bubble gum cartoons (like bazooka joe) which featured Marvel Superheroes from 1978. Three of them featured Iron Man. I didn't want to buy the set for \$40 so I talked the dealer into selling me the IM cartoons for \$10. I also found an unlicensed IM 1996 rubber figure by "Yolanda" which looked like IM except for a Terminator-type arm. I also got some duplicates of the 7-11 plastic cups from the 1970s (there are two IM cups (solo and with Daredevil from IM #89), and two Avengers cups with IM). Overall, the prices were much lower than a comparable New York show.

**MegaCon at the Orlando Convention Center:** I didn't know until I arrived in Florida that Bob Layton was going to be at MegaCon (his name didn't appear in the flyers I had seen) I was really excited. But . . . unfortunately, while driving to pick me up to take me directly from the Toy Show to MegaCon, my sister's car was rear-ended and my mom and sister suffered whiplash. I went with them to the doctor etc. and missed going to MegaCon that Saturday. I wasn't happy. I rented a car and drove to MegaCon on Sunday. Unfortunately, Sunday was pretty dead. I had really looked forward to meeting Bob but he didn't come on Sunday (representatives told me he was there on Saturday with his wife). (In fact while I was waiting I hunted around & bought some stuff for him to sign but the selection sucked and prices were too high). I was really dejected. Not only that but the show sucked (for me): few people and a poor collection of toys and collectibles (other than the usual Star Trek & Toy Biz figures). Although if you are into X-Men, Spawn or some of the independents you would have liked it. But all I wanted was to talk to Bob Layton, Moebius (who didn't show) and to purchase some IM collectibles.

**Atlantique City in Atlantic City, NJ:** I didn't want to go because I knew the show was aimed towards more traditional antiques and collectibles, rather than toys, the bus ride was going to be over 2 1/2 hours and I wasn't too excited after MegaCon. But I got up at 6:30 a.m., took the bus and arrived bright and early in New Jersey. I then (unintentionally) cut about 100 people in the ticket line and strolled in. (tickets are \$17.



not cheap). The place was large but after two hours I had gone through the entire room and found nothing! I was not happy. But, then I discovered another smaller room which had more toy dealers. I got my first up close look at the five cancelled Iron Man figures. Dark Aegis looked very cool. A set of the five figures had gone for \$2,000 in a telephone auction a few months ago (\$2,000 was the minimum bid--there wasn't a lot of bidding). This set was \$3,000. I thought about it but declined. There was also a rare Spiderman tin Marx car from the 1960s which has a picture of Iron Man's head on the side. It was selling for \$650. I gave this one more thought but also declined. The illustration of Iron Man was a common one in the 1960s and was depicted on several superhero toys made by Kenner in the 1960s, such as the Easy Show Projector and the See-A-Show viewer, both of which I have and both of which sell for over \$150. I picked up some neat stuff (including the Merry Marvel Marching Society record with IM illustrations) and got some discounts (i.e. haggled down prices) from some dealers who recognized me from New York and Florida. I also haggled down a couple of dealers by 50% by suggesting and proving to them that I knew the proper market prices for their stuff better than they did. All in all a fairly productive visit. Although if you go be prepared to spend the day--I was there almost nine hours, not counting travel time.

*Toy Biz* 1997 Updates: The toy publications erroneously reported last month that, in addition to the Avengers assortment (Heroes Reborn Iron Man, Thor, Scarlett Witch & Loki), *Toy Biz* was also coming out with a toy assortment based on the Heroes Reborn comics. Wrong. Other than Iron Man, no Heroes Reborn figures are scheduled. The fifth figure in the Avengers assortment, as yet unannounced, looks like it will be a mail-away Captain America, the same figure in the Spiderman Electro-Spark assortment, but with a normal shield, not a sparking one. Higher ups at *Toy Biz* have not discounted the possibility that if the Avengers figures sell well, that the line will be expanded with more figures (Hopefully Kang). Three other Iron Man related figures will be coming out in 1997. The Spiderman insectoid armor assortment will contain the Beetle figure and the new version of the Wasp (as transformed in the Crossing storyline), and the Hulk transformations assortment will contain the Maestro (an evil alternate future Hulk first seen in the Future Imperfect storyline). Why is the Maestro related to Iron Man? Well, in the Maestro's time, all of the other superheroes are dead, and he keeps their costumes etc. as trophies or souvenirs. So, on the sash that go across the figure's chest are smashed and dented versions of Ultron's face, Juggernaut's helmet, and, yes, Iron Man's helmet. It looks pretty cool. The Maestro even has Thor's hammer and a chipped version of Captain America's shield. Oh, remember way back when Toy Biz had plans for Tony Stark's sports car? Well, they turned it into a funky car for Spiderman. There were also reports that the Iron Man & War Machine 9" Mega Armor were finally coming out: the originals were repainted into Mega Armor's for Wolverine & Spiderman. Unfortunately, it looks like they will also be repainted into Mega Armor for two X-Men figures.

Look for: **Amazing Math** for kids, **Crown Pro, Inc.** magnets & tags (details last issue) & Iron Man bandaroo. Oh well, out of space. See ya.

DRD, 342 Madison Avenue, Suite 1660, NY, NY 10173: 212-889-2674.

# REFLECTIONS IN METAL

## The Art of Iron Man

By Bill Meiggs

Well, it's that time once again. First off, I need to apologize for this month. Regular readers -- God bless you -- have seen my attempts at illustrating an ongoing story called "**Iron Curtain**" featuring **Iron Man** and his **Force Works 2** team. Unfortunately, I was unable to complete my artwork this month. Now, being a little lazy had a small part to play in this, but being busy at my two full time jobs and an unforeseen injury to my good right hand were the major culprits. I work as a Paramedic for my city's Fire Department and I tore some ligaments in my right hand while working to extricate a patient pinned in a wrecked car. Don't worry -- the patient was removed OK and we got her to the Trauma Center where her injuries, while serious, were taken care of and total recovery is expected. Oh yeah -- I'm going to be OK too! A few weeks and I'll be back to normal.

OK, enough freaking excuses -- let's talk IRON MAN ART !!!!! This month I'm going to focus on the newest Iron Man sensation, **Ian Churchill**. If you have only been collecting *Iron Man*, boy you have sure missed out on some damn fine artwork. Ian's been penciling *The Avengers* starting with issue # 6. Seeing Iron Man on the cover with the Avengers and **Fantastic Four** would make you buy this book with no problem. This was part of the "Industrial Revolution" story-line that crossed over in issues of *Iron Man*, *Avengers* and *Captain America*. What the storyline did was put Iron Man in a position to join the Avengers.

When we finally get to see Iron Man in this issue of Avengers, we first get a little silhouette of Shellhead and a shot of his gauntlet. Then on the next page -- BAM!! Awesome full page, power, kick butt IRON MAN looking like he's ready to open up a huge can of Whoop Ass on somebody !!!! Man, that page really looks cool -- one of those poses that just looks GREAT!! Churchill really has a fine handle on this still-new set of armor. No two artists have drawn it exactly the same yet and this is no exception. I can understand that, having drawn it several times myself. Churchill's Iron Man, although looking a little like Portacio's, isn't quite as technical-looking. Personally, I think Churchill's version looks more powerful!!

When you see the two page splash with Iron Man and **The Thing**, you'll see what I'm talking about .. it's not too often that you see a shot of Iron Man's back that looks so awesome and powerful. Oh yeah -- the Thing looks pretty damn good too! In issue # 7 of *Avengers* you get more of Ian's fantastic pencils. The panels with Shellhead flying above the streets of New York City with **Thor** are great. Yes, if you are an Iron Man fan (and why else would you be reading this column in this Fan Mag if you weren't??) you gotta get these issues!!!!

As I write this column, it's uncertain who will be the art team for *Iron Man* after the "Heroes Reborn" story-line ends. **Kurt Busiek**, who will be writing *Iron Man*

will not give any clues as to who is in the running. Man. is that guy tight-lipped !!  
Ian Churchill would make an awesome candidate!! The only problem I see would be he  
is working for **Rob Liefeld's Extreme Studios** and I'm not sure what kind of contract he  
has there ...?? We'll have to wait and see.

Hey, is it just me or are you people tired of this two artist thing on *Iron Man* ?? I  
mean I like Portacio's stuff and I'll tolerate Ryan Benjamin, but this "you do this  
part and I'll do the rest" crap is getting LAME !! I hate to vent but HEY!! ENOUGH!!  
One guy do the whole book. OK!??

Question Time!!! Who would you like to see be the art team on *Iron Man* after  
this Heroes Reborn thing?? What have you thought of the story-line, (Oh, and of course  
ART ) so far ....???

You can answer these questions , and I'll print the results here next month...!!

You can E-mail me your answers, opinions or snail mail them to me at the addresses  
below .....

Next month -- the return of "Iron Curtain" ... as long as the hand heals!!!!

Keep the pencil to the paper...!!

See Ya.....!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

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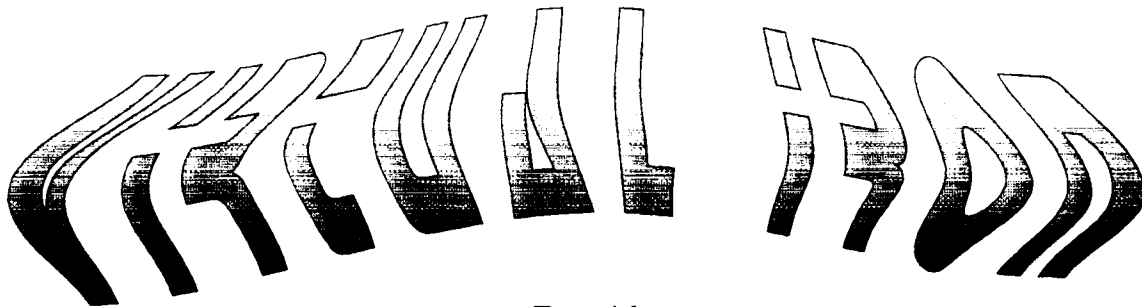
PS ----- If our Editor gets  
it in time you'll see a pinup I did  
previous to my injury. It depicts  
the new Iron Man armor..hope  
you enjoy...!!

**Bill**









by Bart Ney

### ***GREETINGS***

Welcome to the electronic armory! How's that for an intro? Virtual Iron is our tie into the gaming world dealing with Iron Man and other battle suit games. Not alot going on in the Iron Man gaming world of late. I won't waste too much time in the greeting this month, let's get to it!

### ***WAR OF THE GEMS***

I finally found the time to rent and play this game. First of all it is always hard to go back to a system that has been made obsolete and play a new game after you are happy with 3D rendered figures, lightsourcing, texture mapping and the myriad other technological advances today's consoles have over the Super NES. The War of the Gems' gameplay is similar to all the sidescrolling fighting games since Kung Fu Master and Karateca. The main difference being the use of the Marvel license.

You start out with Iron Man, Captain America, the Hulk, Wolverine and of course Spider Man. As you kill off each character they are no longer available to you until you "free them". I got sick of the game before I ever freed anybody. There is also a fighting mode where you can take each of the heroes to learn their moves against the evil characters in the game.

I really don't want to blast this game too bad because what can you really expect? If you are an Iron Man collector then you probably want to give this one a look since he is prominently featured. There is also the evil Iron Man who looks fairly cool but is so pitifully weak that the game makes you fight two of them at once (and they still suck!).

The game has a good grouping of characters but there is nothing innovative going on here. Pick this one up in the clearance bins! It sure makes Iron Man/XO look good!

### ***STARK SHADOWS***

The latest issue of Fantastic Four (#8) has a great cameo by Tony Stark. Reed bumps into him at a museum archeological exhibit. Tony asks Reed to keep him awake as the keynote speaker reminds him of a boring professor they had in college. Later Stark embarrasses Johnny Storm! Now this is the stuff of classics.

Iron Lantern was definitely interesting. I think it slightly favored Iron Man but I could be wrong. It showed me that Krafty Kurt Busiek does know Iron Man history. Iron Lantern has about as much validity as the current Iron Man (ouch). I guess I am really getting tired of heroes reborn and am eager to see Shellhead return to the Marvel Universe and his former numbering.

## ***JAPANESE GAMES***

I finally bought a Japanese game for my modified playstation. Of course being the fan I am of simulators and technology the game I grabbed is "Macross Digital Mission VF-X". It is based on the Japanese anime "Macross" which was used as the first chapter of the Robotech saga we saw here in America.

I should start off by saying that in order to play a game designed for the Japanese market you need to purchase and install a small chip. If not you can still play them by starting with an American game in your Sony and then switching them just after the Sony insignia comes up. I warn you though this will hurt your drive and really is not worth it.

The game itself is pretty fun. It has some definite problems with draw in (creating backgrounds in a timely fashion) but all in all the game is fun. There are few games out that let you fly a transformable mech and even less that try and have a simulator feel. That alone makes this game unique. Throw in a very bankable license and you have a winner. You get to fly 6 different veritechs (ships) from various versions of the Macross saga.

The planes transform into 3 modes: fighter, robot and an intermediate mode called Gerwalk (Ground Effective Recon With Locomotive Knee joint). In Gerwalk mode you have the ability of vertical takeoffs and landings. Some of the cool vantage points you get from this mode would look really great in an Iron Man simulator!

It is a little strange playing a game in Japanese, but one of the interesting things I've noticed is that it seems whenever something technology based needs to be expressed, it is written in English. When you kill your prey the words "Broken Enemy" appear on the screen. Hey I did not say it was the best English!

The game also came with some cool stickers of Japanese chicks! (Singing Idols) Hey for all this and next day air, the \$95.00 I paid seems trivial!!!!

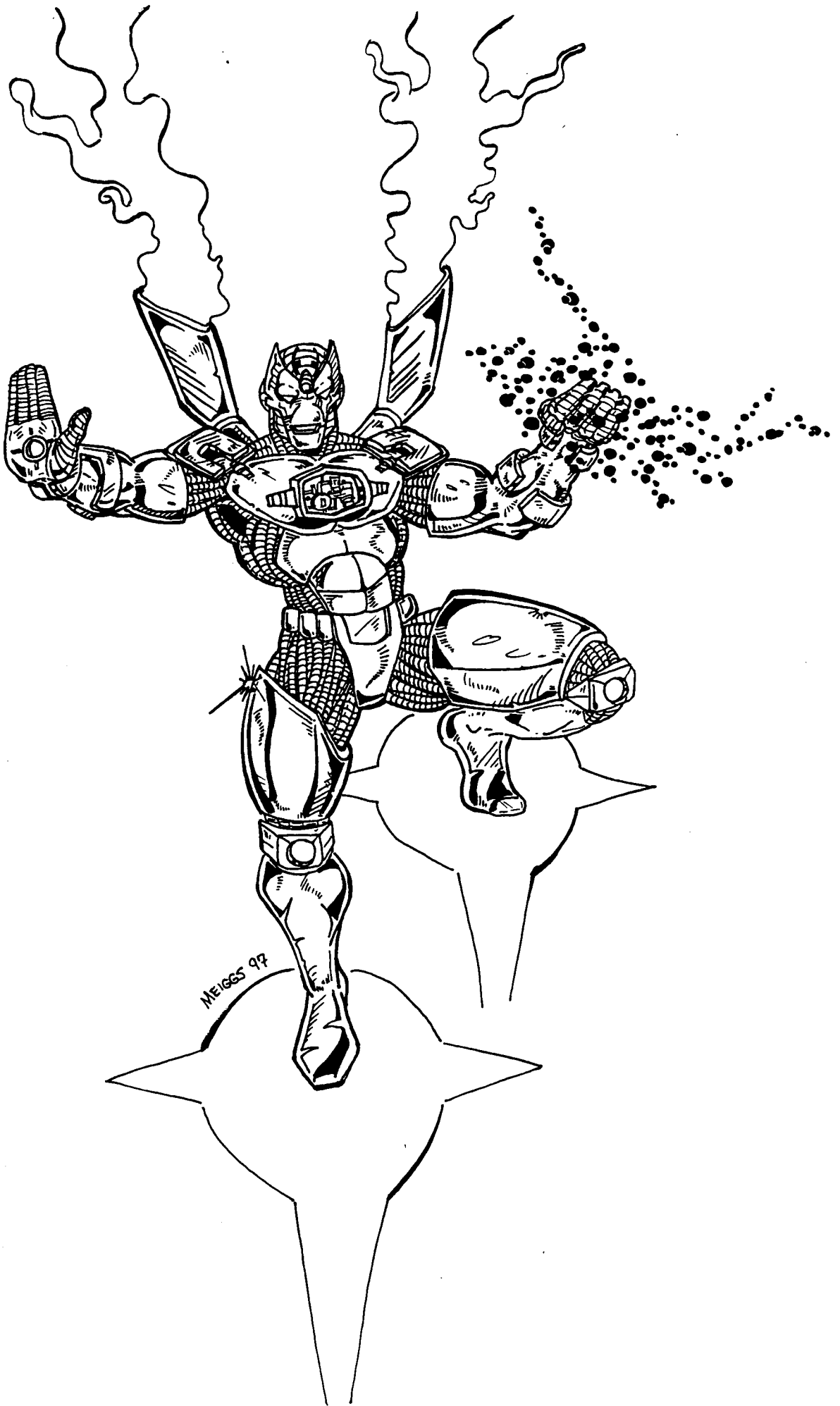
## ***YOUR BIG SHOT***

Virtual Iron is an open forum. I'd love to hear from anyone who has an interest in Iron Man and/or video games. Any of your relevant points may be voiced here! So if you want to be part of Iron Man's universe, don't be shy. If you would like to contribute something to this article feel free to contact me with the following information:

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## ***NEXT ISSUE:***

Virtual Iron continues it's evolution. The second Stark Design Journal is also on the word processor and we will be looking at more of Tony Stark's influence in the real world.



# THE ARMOR FILE

BY ALLEN "SHELLHEAD" BUSIAK

Welcome Iron Fans to the only open forum for a technology based discussion of Iron Man. For the uninitiated, **THE ARMOR FILE** highlights a fan designed armor every month. Any armored hero is fair game, though the primary focus is the Marvel Universe. When there are no other submissions, I feature an armor of my own design. I warmly welcome any submissions - with any level of detail you wish to go into. I, personally, enjoy rendering realistic armors - but any illustration of any kind of any armor is welcome here. Now that we all know the premise of this article, let's get started.

## REVOLUTION INDEED!

I've dreaded this idea for a month now - and since I promised, I have to get to it - damn. Well, here goes - my review of **INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION**. To be blunt - yawn! Before you all go ape on me, I have to mention one thing - I hate stories that deal with Loki and characters like the Enchantress and Kang. I've just never gotten into those villains and any story with them is unlikely to hold my interest.

I can certainly say that was true of **INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION** - it didn't hold my interest. In fact, I saw the potential there for much more of a confrontation between Doom, the FF and the Avengers. I mean, it's about time the ties between these characters was more fully developed. And once they'd all realize who the others were, it would create some interesting situations. I hope they decide to do this in the future.

But then, **INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION** wasn't a total loss on me either - it had some really great moments. Despite those moments, there was the same affliction that bothers every crossover in the history of man - too many characters, not enough time. For all the good moments of the story, there simply wasn't enough of them. No one character got a lot of development - and really they all got cheated. The best part of a crossover is seeing how certain characters interact - but part of the fun of that interaction is that they characters not be under pressure.

Think about it - here you have several heroes in the middle of a crisis - how will they act? Heroic of course. They will all think of others before themselves. They will all be looking to get the job done. So the interaction between these characters is limited in that they are all pursuing the same goal all the time. If we got to see the heroes relaxing, waiting for something to happen, then we'd get to see some realistic interaction. But in a crisis - any crisis - everyone is so focused on the job that if they are professionals, they force themselves to work together successfully.

All in all - **INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION** didn't prove to be quite as enlightening as I'd hoped. With a crossover that big, we should get some bang - a lot of it. And while there were good moments - overall I was left flat.

## TIMES THEY ARE A CHANGING

By now you've all heard that Kurt Busiek is going to write Iron Man when the character returns to the continuity this fall. I can't say much about this being good or bad news - mainly because I don't know much about Kurt's view of the character. There has been some info on-line - and it certainly sounds promising thus far - but we don't know what direction the book will move in - and that's the key info.

If Marvel has the right idea in mind - we'll see several things happen. Stark will be very much the playboy billionaire - with Stark Enterprises intact. Rhodey, Bethany and everyone else that populated the book before the Iron Kid debacle will return as supporting characters (including Abe Zimmer). And we'll see a suit of armor that looks like it's actually been finished.

Kurt seems to be most concerned about how to do things his way - and stay true to his vision of the character, and I have to say I think that's the best part of all. As entertaining as Heroes Reborn has been, it's something that I, for one, always thought was surreal. We have gotten some good issues - and believe it or not, there are a couple that I put among the best Iron Man issues of all time.

But there's one thing missing yet - the art. I can still remember when John Romita Jr. last did the book - it was awful. The armor looked big, bulky and defied the very words "high-tech". We still have no word on the artist - so we're right to be worried - but hopefully we'll see a new era of greatness in Iron Man.

And let's face it - as much as we all wanted to see Bob Layton and David Micheline back on the book, what we have here might be even better. We may get an Iron Man that is so perfect - so ideally what the fans want - that we won't care what Bob and Dave had in mind. And we may get an Iron Man that, while good, leaves us wondering what Bob and Dave had in mind. Personally I prefer the former - despite it's faults, Heroes Reborn proved one thing - that in order for Iron Man to survive, the character and book need to grow - and maybe new blood is the best way to do that.

# IRON CLOWN      PREPOSTEROUS ARMOR

**NAME:** Anthony Edward Stark

**AGE:** 30

**RESIDENCE:** New York City

**MARITAL STATUS:** Single

**OCCUPATION:** President and CEO of Stark International

**HISTORY:** Tony Stark was a genius - almost from the day he was born. He inherited his father's business sense and most of all his sense of humor. As he grew up, Stark discovered that he had two loves in his life - technology and the circus. He began to cobble together various bits of clown paraphernalia and imagine what it might be like to be the world's best clown.

While attending clown college, Stark became friends with Victor Von Doom, Reed Richards, Hank Pym, Bruce Banner and Rebel O'Reiley. Stark and Rebel both saw potential in the technology that the group was developing - and one day hoped to profit from it. Generally, the group saw themselves as becoming the "Atomic Clowns of the Round Table". But Doom saw no such noble potential in the technology. He attempted to use the technology to conquer his homeland of Latvia. But before he could there was an accident - an accident that left him scarred for life - forever unable to smile. He soon became Doom Clown - a clown devoted to taking over the world.

Meanwhile, Stark had another tragedy to deal with - the death of his parents. Both his parents died in an unfortunate accident - the freak explosion of a pressurized laughing gas canister. Numerous workers were hurt - but 2 were killed along with Stark's parents. Tony inherited Stark Industries and made it a world renowned manufacturer of clown equipment. But young Tony was consumed by his parents' death - he soon developed a laughing gas container that would not explode under any circumstances. Afterwards Stark used his gift for technology to develop other miracles of modern clowning. Among his achievements were the amplified whoopee cushion, the wide range joy buzzer and a specially designed long range seltzer cannon. Clowning was never the same.

Stark's ultimate achievement was the RIDICULOUS armor - a suit of armor that would enable a man to bring joy and happiness to millions like never before. Rebel O'Reiley became Stark's chief tester of the Ridiculous Armor. But during a test, the power cells of the armor overloaded - knowing the end was near, Reb went out with a line that he knew Stark would enjoy - "Regular or Extra Crispy, boss?".

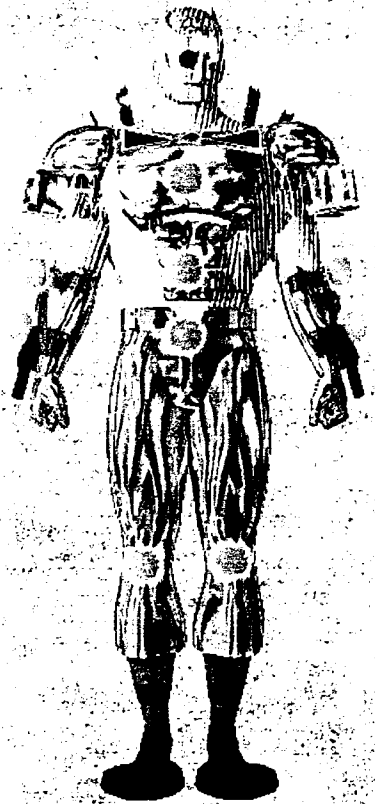
Stark became a different person after Rebel's death - he was consumed with guilt over what had happened to his friend. Stark began to buy up as many circuses as he could. He even decimated Park's Pleasure Parade - a famous circus. Although the pleasure parade went on, Stark's circuses missed something with the state Stark was in - the gags were well done - but lacked the true enjoyment that should have gone with them.

Bruce Banner - who also worked at Stark International - saw what happened to his friend and began to develop GRIN bomb (Grand Receptacle of Incredible Nitrous). It was designed to bring harmless laughs to millions at a time. But Bruce never saw how a city paralyzed by laughter could be stripped by criminals and terrorists. The terrorist group made a deal with Banner to dismantle the GRIN bomb - the group called HIYA (Highly Incapable Young Anarchists). But HIYA went back on their deal with Banner - the knocked him out - and put him in the GRIN bomb test chamber - hoping to set off the bomb at the SI Buffalo complex.

Stark went to investigate the incident - but arrived too late to save Banner. Bruce was exposed to lethally high doses of Nitrous Oxide - and whenever he'd get the urge to laugh, would turn into a blue creature and shrink to 4 inches in height - the creature that came to be known as HA. Despite his size, HA possessed great strength - and unfortunately had little tolerance for being disturbed. Stark's chopper was downed by HA - and Stark was mortally wounded. Stark went into the complex and found the successor to the Ridiculous Armor - the Preposterous Armor. The Preposterous Armor was a new suit that would supply it's user with full life-support as well as dish out laughs unlike anything Stark built before it.

Stark - in the Preposterous armor - became know as Iron Clown - and went on the defeat HA - almost at the expense of his own life. But in the battle, Stark discovered a part of himself that he thought long dead. With every shot of seltzer, with every blast from his joy buzzers, with every spray from his flowerpot water delivery system - he found he could laugh again. With the help of the Preposterous armor, Stark found out what his friends knew all along - he could be the clown again.

Now Stark is trying to atone for his time as a grim, stern person - trying to prove to the world that he can be a clown. With the help of his executive assistant, Harpy Potts, he's learning what it takes to truly be a clown. It's like he's awakened from a dream - leaving all the world to look at him and laugh with him again.



## **ARMOR SPECIFICATIONS:**

**OVERVIEW:** The Preposterous armor is the most advanced piece of technology on the planet. But Stark didn't undertake the project alone - instead, he had funding help from Mercedes Benz. Yes - this armor's an import! Still, it is designed with the sole purpose of using laughter to distract villains enough to get an edge on them. The armor is composed of several layers of hyper-exotic materials that provide complete protection from all environmental extremes. They also supply the wearer with an extraordinary amount of strength. There's never been a more impressive display of power than seeing the Iron Clown bend a steel I-Beam into a smiley-face. There are several aspects to the armor that make it especially formidable.

**HELMET:** What self-respecting clown wouldn't wear a smile? Well that's what the Iron Clown has as part of his faceplate - a great big grin! And that's not all - the glowing eyes add just the right amount of menace/playfulness. The armor also has advanced sensors built into the nose - which is made of Titanium, by the way.

The last two features of the helmet are mostly cosmetic. The most noticeable feature is the hood ornament. Mercedes insisted on that point - claiming that their name was not equated to fun - that most people saw them as stiff (what were they thinking?) The tear is for Stark a marker of the dark days that are behind him. And after all, doesn't every clown have a touch of sadness to them?

**CHESTPLATE:** The chestplate has some very promising technologies in it. Aside from housing the life-support system (which is based on nano-technology) - it also has all manner of control system for the armor - computers, power cells, bow tie. In fact, the tie is itself a remote control board. In the event that the neural control or voice command systems are off-line, Stark can activate many of the armor's systems from the tie. Personally I wanted to make it bigger - but then it'd just look silly.

Also on the chestplate and throughout the armor are what appear to be fuzzballs. The fuzzballs are in fact heat sinks - made of a semi-flexible, extraordinarily thermally conductive material. So while the fuzzballs glow - they dissipate heat effectively from the armor's most important sections.

On the back of the chestplate are two flowerpots with four flowers sticking out of them. The flowerpots themselves are power generators for the armor - while the flowers are dual purpose. On the one hand, the flower petals dissipate unwanted heat from the power cells (or they would overload and shut down). But the yellow core of the flowers are in fact powerful water canons. Imagine a villain homing in on the heat from the petals - only to be bathed in water from the interior of the flower. A classic gag with new technology.....

**GAUNTLETS:** The gauntlets contain the primary weapons systems of the Preposterous armor. In the palm - not shown in the blueprint - are two highly powered joy buzzers. They appear innocent enough - if you even see them at all. But they are capable of anything from a small jolt - to enough electricity to melt a small city. The amount of power is dependant on what other armor systems are operating - but it's still capable of great damage under low power.

The secondary weapons system consists of a water tank that is mounted on the top of the gauntlet. The black box and tube at the front of the wrist on top, are two highly concentrated seltzer cannons. The water is kept pressurized within the tanks - but even so, an extremely strong pump is needed to blast that water over any realistic distance. The fuzzballs may seem out of place - but they really make perfect sense. After all, who like warm seltzer?

**BOOT JETS:** The most innocent looking part of the boot jets are the stripey socks. Yet they serve an important purpose - distraction. Each stripe is capable of changing colors - so the color pattern can shift or strobe or cycle in such a way that the enemy is distracted and in some cases hypnotized! Just imagine the Mandarin - or the Living Laser running around clucking like a chicken - it can happen!

Although it almost doesn't look like it - the boot jets actually extend up beyond the top of the stripey socks. The housekeeping and management computers are housed there - while most of the fuel and the jets themselves are stored in the floppy feet. Since most of the heat of a jet engine is the exhaust - the fuzzballs on the knee are for other armor systems and generally don't effect the boot jet systems much.

The feet may appear to be floppy - but the material they are made of is very pliable and extremely tough and puncture resistant. Depending on the mission need, there are various other floppy feet sizes available - to house orbit capable jets, or extra fuel or whatever is needed on a mission.

**SHOULDERS:** The shoulders on the armor are designed to act as air tanks - in the event the armor goes underwater. They route air to the helmet as needed and vent to the outside whenever contaminants are not detected. But the frills on the bottom of the shoulders has a very special purpose - radar absorption. The armor scatters radar signals by adjusting the angle and rotation of the frills are the bottom of each shoulder.

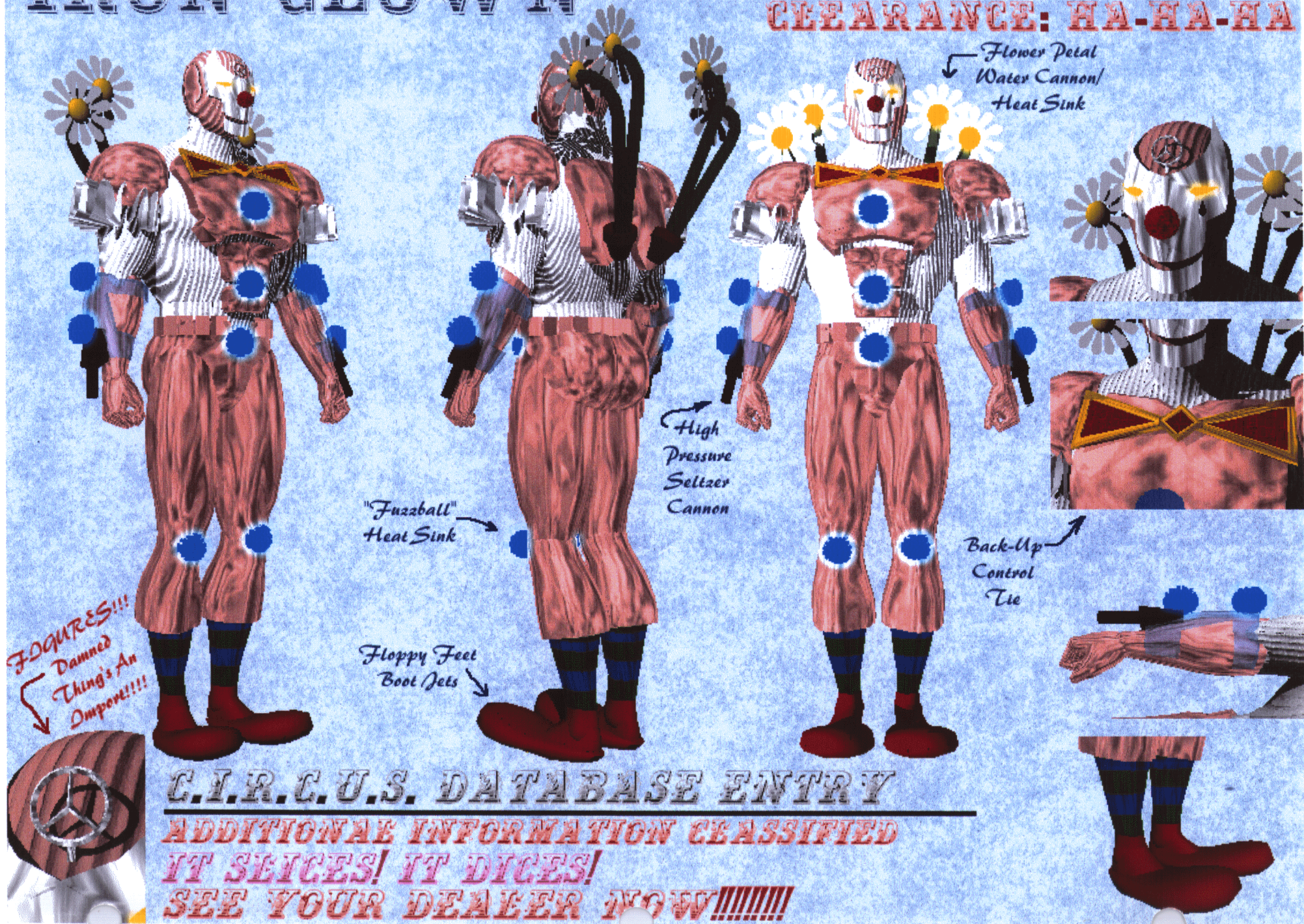
In summary, this is a suit that is designed to take anyone facing it off guard - depending on their sense of humor, it could keep them off guard for some time, too. But if it's one thing the suit can be above anything else - it's that it can be an expression - of hope of nobility - of clowning around in the fine tradition of clowns past. So while this suit tips the hat to the heroes of the our time - it also salutes those who make the heroes laugh.....

**That's it for this month! See you next month in The Armor File!**



# IRON CLOWN PREPOSTOROUS ARMOR

CLEARANCE: HA-HA-HA



C.I.R.C.U.S. DATABASE ENTRY

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CLASSIFIED

IT SLICES! IT DICES!

SEE YOUR DEALER NOW!!!!!!!