

# ADVANCED IRON

## #34



# ADVANCED IRON HEROES #34



## HUBE'S CORNER:

### MAKE WAY FOR THE CLASSIC VILLAINS...

From what Kurt Busiek has stated on America Online's bulletin boards, expect to see some revamped, classic villains! And one that was noted was **Midas!** Kurt says, "Midas has a lot of character and style – he looks kinda silly, but he's got an enjoyable personality. He's one of the villains I want to do a 'new and improve' on, to make him

one. A believable take-over scenario gets thwarted by a really dorky bad guy!! Are there not *better* baddies to bring back to existence?? Sure there are – and here's hoping to see a lot of them. Kurt, in my view, would *really* have to do a "new and improved" bit on the massive Midas.

Kurt also thinks that **Stane** was... dull?!! Wow. Stane got quite a few votes in our website "Deadliest Villains" poll. He got a lot more than Midas – mainly because Midas didn't get a single vote!! Kurt also asked, "Didn't Stane lose his

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muddled in "The Crossing"....



## SCORING "POINTS"

The new Iron Man armor for "Heroes Return" has been finalized, according to Mr. Busiek. And...the helmet has *points!!!* Kurt said he liked the armor look from the early



a more formidable foe while taking advantage of his history with Stark and his distinctive personality."

OK, but it's ... Midas!! Even *Iron Man: The Legend* ranks him as one of IM's *lamest* foes!! All I could do was chuckle during Stark's last tryst with the bloated

head – on panel??" Yeah, sure. Does that mean he can't be brought back (*A.I.* has postulated on his revival for some time)? Wasn't Midas turned into a mindless vegetable? But since Marianne Rogers was responsible for that and since her destiny was quite



*Avengers* (circa #3-5). Whoa. Well, what the heck? "Heroes Reborn" Iron Man has points on his helmet and I haven't heard anyone complain. And besides – "retro" usually is a good thing. Speaking of which – **Whiplash** (yes, **Whip**) and **Natasha Romanov** have been mentioned as returnees to the IM-verse!!



### **BILL E. EXPOSES MARVEL'S LACK-OF- TEXT WIZARDRY**

Kudos to **Bill Egan** who took the time to analyze "Heroes Reborn" Iron Man's skimpy storytelling via *words*. Just check out these stats:

<u>IRON MAN / X-O MANOWAR</u>		
Average # Panels per page	3.18	4.5
Total Number of Panels	70	99
Average # Words per page	<b>38.9</b>	<b>136.23</b>
Total Number of Words	<b>856</b>	<b>2997</b>

As Bill says: "For a 28% increase in price, we're getting a 41% increase in the number of panels (with possibly better artwork) and a whopping 250% increase in the number of words!! Any way you slice it we're getting way more bang for the buck in *X-O Manowar* than in *Iron Man*."



### **IRON MAN: THE MOVIE - STRAIGHT FROM THE SCREENPLAY AUTHOR !!**

One great thing about our website - you never know who you'll hear from. Recently, **Jeff Vintar** contacted *A.I.* Who? Well, Jeff just happens to be the fellow who is penning the IM movie screenplay!! No

kidding!! Here's what Jeff had to say:

"Couldn't help reading the 'comments' section re: the Iron Man movie. As the screenwriter, figured I'd drop you a line. The villain in the script is Advanced Idea Mechanics, and the science-fiction aspects are indeed being played-up to (hopefully) distinguish this project from the dozens of other super-hero projects

all currently lost in development hell. The new origin and story is by yours truly and none other than Stan (the Man) Lee himself. We have a first draft, and I'll be working on the second draft this summer...and hopefully Fox will be convinced to make this movie! So let them know you all want to see 'The Iron Man' on screen!"

OK, you *heard* the man! Let's get on the horn and contact Fox!!



Roger Ott discusses "Happy Hour" in *IRONING BOARD*

Dwayne Wilder comments on another metal-clad...hero? It's *THE WILDER SIDE!!*

Prometheum armor? "Yeah, so what?!" opines Allen Bujak in *IRON FILINGS*

Bill Egan "scopes" IM with a little help from the fans in *EYE ON IRON MAN*

Roger Ott's back with a stunning *BATTLE OF THE MONTH*

Chock full of facts as always is Arno Bakker in *RAMBLINGS FROM ACROSS THE POND*

Daren Domina wants...bags?! See *IRON WARES!!*

Bart Ney keeps you keen on video games in *VIRTUAL IRON*

"Aegis" debuts in Allen Bujak's *ARMOR FILE*

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## ABOUT THE COVER

Doing the cover to *A.I.* is quite an intimidating event, knowing that it's the first thing every reader is going to see when they open their cute, little manila envelope. This cover started out with the issue #300 suit, which is one of my favorites. Just as I was finished with it, I suddenly decided to make my job even more intimidating and try to do my best rendition of the new Prometheus armor. I must concur with Bill Meiggs that the new suit is damn hard to draw, but I think the effort paid off in the end. I asked our ever-humble editor to print the "alternate" cover that I had done just for the purpose of comparison. I think everyone will agree that the Prometheus armor kicks it like no other.

-- Roger Ott



# ROGER OTT'S IRONING BOARD

## DEMON IN A BOTTLE

Tony Stark has beaten the **Mandarin** a dozen times over, stopped the rampage of the destructive robot **Ultimo**, and alongside his fellow champions in the **Avengers** has bested foes that have threatened the entire universe. Yet there is one devastating enemy that can never be truly beaten by Tony Stark, and all the invincible power of Iron Man is utterly useless against it. Tony Stark's battle with **alcoholism** is a test of will that he must fight every day *without* his armor, lest it destroy his very life.

It has been more recently learned that Tony Stark's alcoholism is an inherited disease. His father, Howard Stark, was an abusive alcoholic who despised his young son for his talent of creation. This led Tony to use his budding talents to escape his father's oppressive nature.

After graduating from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology while still a teenager, Tony found his only escape in pleasure. He became a socialite, and while alcohol was a part of that life, it had yet to become a problem.

It was years after Tony had succeeded his deceased father as CEO of Stark Industries, and made that fateful trip to Southeast Asia during which Iron Man was born that Tony first began to develop an alcohol problem. The intelligence organization **SHIELD**, which Tony had helped to found, was attempting a takeover of Stark International by buying controlling interest in the company so that they could force him to produce munitions for them again, a business Stark had gotten out of several years prior. The knowledge that one of his most trusted allies was now his sworn enemy on the business front caused Tony to begin drowning his pain in alcohol.

Not long after, the criminal financier and industrialist **Justin Hammer** discovered a means to override Iron Man's armor, and using this powerful tool, caused Iron Man

to accidentally kill the ambassador of the tiny nation of Carnelia during a press conference in New York City. Wracked with guilt over this inadvertent homicide at his hands, Tony fell deeper into the chasm of alcoholic depression. Shortly after, Stark confronted Hammer and he was eventually cleared of all charges, but in the public eye, Iron Man was no longer the hero he had once been. Tony once again found his only escape in the form of a bottle of amber liquid. In a drunken stupor, Stark caused the Avenger's butler **Edwin Jarvis** to resign his position. It was this that finally made Stark understand that Iron Man wasn't his problem after all, but it was he himself that was the root cause of his troubles. Over the course of the next several days, with the unwavering support of **Bethany Cabe**, Stark fought his hardest battle--against himself--and won.

Several months later, the criminal industrialist **Obadiah Stane** set into motion a series of events that would eventually lead Stark back down the deadly path to alcoholism once more. Stane organized a group of Stark's biggest competitors, banding them together to put Stark out of business. This emotional turmoil caused Stark to begin to break down; his resolve was weakened. **Indries Moomji** was a secret operative of Stane's that entered Stark's life and manipulated him into falling

in love with her, at which point she then rejected him, causing Stark to fall back into alcoholism, far enough that **James Rhodes** was forced to replace him in the Iron Man armor because Stark had passed out from drinking after being beaten by a costumed villain, **Magma**, who was attacking Stark International. After Rhodey defeated Magma, Stark told Rhodes to keep the armor for awhile, while he 'relaxed'. During this time, many important decisions concerning Stark International's future were being neglected, and it was a simple matter for Obadiah Stane to take control of Stark's company and freeze his fortune where Stark could not access it. Tony rejected all offers for help and eventually wound up living in the streets, a homeless drunk. He was befriended by another alcoholic, a pregnant woman named Gretl Anders, and while the two were never lovers, they held a great affection for one another. She died in Tony's arms after giving birth to her baby during a blizzard that had engulfed New York. It was the child that finally made Stark realize what he was doing to himself, that life is the most precious thing there is. While recovering

from severe frostbite in the hospital, Stark decided that he was going to stop killing himself and get his life back together.

And he did. After regaining access to his fortune, Stark started a new company on the west coast. As a test of strength, Stark keeps a fully stocked bar at his residence, to remind him of the battle he must wage every single day of his life.

Some time later, Stark's body was taken over by an insane computer called **VOR/TEX**. Never having felt any of the sensations of being human, the computer set out to indulge the urges he felt within Stark's body, one of which was a craving for alcohol. When Stark regained control of his body, he realized that he was drunk. This time however, his resolve was strong enough to keep him from going back to the bottle permanently.

Tony regularly attends Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, to share with others the realization that anyone, even someone as rich and powerful as Anthony Edward Stark, can be an alcoholic.

**SIGNIFICANT ISSUES:** *IRON MAN #'S 119-128, 166-182, 308-310*

**QUOTE:** "Officer...thanks. Thanks for showing me how hard it is...for forcing me to realize that alcohol *is* my problem." --Tony Stark - *IRON MAN #178*

# IT BEGINS NOW!!!



**6**      5      4      3      2      1

NEXT MONTH: By request (hi Dave), the return of Spymaster!  
PLUS: What is the Gauntlet Protocol?

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# DWAYNE WILDER'S *WILDER* Side of **IRON MAN!!**

## Some Random Thoughts

Oh, how I love Iron Clown (and now he has a **BMW**)!! Hey, Dave, who needs to be a new reader to fall for your *New Mutants* joke? I'm so ready for Tony Stark and Iron Man to be normal, I don't care if they draw each one on every other panel. Forget dialogue and other characters. I just want to see an adult Tony Stark. (I would buy 10 copies of this mag--every month!) Team him up with **Howard the Duck**! I don't care. Just three more months!!!

Did you check out "Flashback" May?! What an incredibly great idea! The stories took place before the origins of your favorite superheroes. Of course, each story gave some insight or additional background to each origin.

The *Spiderman* and *DareDevil* stories were my favorites. Uncle Ben and Peter fishing with those great Jack Kirby monsters attacking was a great story. And the one with Peter's parents had a couple of surprises!

I'll bet Marvel is so mad they couldn't do one for *Captain America*, the *Fantastic Four*, the *Avengers* or *Iron Man* (pocket universe, remember?!). Those are some great potential stories to be told.

Maybe they can do them in the fall after they return (hey! I'll buy 10 copies!). I mean, a *Thunderbolts* "flashback"? This title is only three months old! They were desperate for titles to use obviously.

## Team Me Up!

Yes, *Marvel Team-Up* (MTU to us old geezers!) is back! This has always been my favorite *Spiderman* book. Teaming the loner with another superhero was a stroke of creative genius. The possibilities are still endless (even after 25 years!).

I agree with **Arno Bakker** concerning Marvel using the existing (unused) characters. **Kazar, Moon Knight, Shang Chi (MOKF), Luke Cage** and **Iron Fist** are all great characters. I look forward to many wonderful stories from the **House of Ideas!**

## More Random Thoughts

**Roger Ott's** idea of Iron Man meeting **Batman** is great! I can see the movie possibilities now. The IRON BAT could do a cameo in the new "Batman and Robin" movie. And they thought the Batcave was crowded before!

In the May 23rd issue of *Comic Buyer's Guide*, the Marvel movies are listed. And sorry Allen, **Nicholas Cage** is Tony Stark! The writer is Jeff Vintar and Fox

Studios is doing it. Watch for the *Fantastic Four* movie in the summer of '98 and the *Spiderman* movie the following summer.

*Iron Lantern* was the best of the Amalgam titles. But of course, I'm biased.....

Hey, Daren D! I have originals of those 7-11 **Slurpee** cups from the 70s. For a couple of summers, it was a great combo! A **Slurpee** and some comics each week (and a few extra **Slurpees** to complete my collection!). Okay, I admitted it. I am a **Slurpee** cup owner! Ah, the memories.....

And the artwork in *Advanced Iron* is wonderful! You artist types are doing great! I appreciate your work. From someone who can't draw a straight line with a ruler, I do admire your talent!

## Acquisition of Note

Finally, do you remember I said *Tales of Suspense* #53 was my oldest Iron Man book? Well, at the time, it was true! That was then, this is now! (Hey, great title for a book!)

At a recent convention in Dallas, I acquired *Tales of Suspense* #48! Yes, issue #48! The new Iron Man armor (the third one if I understand it right). The first appearance (# 39) had the

original gray, clunky armor. Issue #40 had the original yellow (golden) armor. Issue #48 had the next armor change to the classic red and gold armor. A truly milestone issue!

This is only Iron Man's 10th appearance in this title. (out of 61 until it changed to *Captain America* in 1968.) There were no crossovers for Iron Man at that time. So, if I'm doing the math right, with *Avengers* appearances, this was only Iron Man's 13th appearance anywhere!!! Even if I'm wrong, this is still an "old" appearance of our Ironclad hero!

And yes, you will see it in a future installment of *Dwayne's Capsule Comics*!!!

### Dwayne's Capsule Comics

This month I'm running a two for one sale! Yes, that's two Iron Man stories instead of one! Actually, it's a continued story in *TOS* but the "two for one" idea sounds better!

Let's look at *TOS #69* and *#70*. This Iron Man saga is a *Cold War* era story (is this getting to be a broken record?!). In the 60s, this was on everyone's mind. And since comic books (and other creative mediums) reflect the times, you're going to have "Cold War" stories.

The story was written by Stan Lee. Art by the incredible Don Heck. Inks by Vince Colletta (issue #69) and Mickey Demeo (issue #70). Letters were done by Sam Rosen. This tale appeared in September and October 1965.

The action starts with Tony Stark working on a

"sub miniature reverser." He is musing (fawning, really) over Pepper Potts as he works. So much so, he forgets to recharge his chestplate! He dies of a heart attack and the last 32 years have been a sham. (Oops! April Fool's was last month! Sorry, Dave!)

No, he once again barely makes it to the recharger and continues his life. Next, we are introduced to Bullski, a Russian Commissar, who vows to kill our beloved Iron Man. He orders his scientists to build a suit of *Titanium*. Hence, he becomes **Titanium Man**!! Yes, *TOS #69* is his first appearance. One of Iron Man's greatest foes got his start here!

His suit is massive. He plans to have Iron Man hit him with everything first. Since the suit is so big and strong, it will be able to withstand the attack. Or so goes Bullski's thinking. Then, he will strike when Iron Man is at his weakest!

Bullski issues a challenge to the West, specifically our hero, Iron Man. Everyone is talking about it from the man on the street to Senators. So, Iron Man must accept or be branded a coward, etc. (you know the drill!).

Before accepting the challenge, our hero, Tony Stark, uses his intelligence and modifies his armor hoping to withstand the larger, more powerful foe. When he (Pepper and Happy, too!) arrive at the neutral location, there is some "Soap Opera" stuff about a Russian Countess who is jilted by Tony Stark.

Then, we get to the battle! Titanium Man follows his

original plan while Iron Man tries everything he can think of to do. T-Man tricks our hero to stumble into a mine field (secretly put there by those "cheating" Russians!). Can Stan spin a yarn or what?! The story is continued to next issue but you don't have to wait a month! Just start reading the next sentence!

Issue #70 begins with Iron Man being caught in the middle of an exploding mine field. He survives but T-Man attacks with "Impulse Rays". Tony is weak from the attack but doesn't give up. His boot jet is damaged and with only one working, he is too slow to outrun T-Man. Iron Man's adversary attacks again with "Radar Rings" which wrap around Iron Man. Once downed, Iron Man is hit with T-Man's "Power Sapper."

Tony is able to make the rings around him expand by using his brain. He gets away and hits T-Man with a "chemical ray." This makes it too hot inside the suit by reacting with the titanium. Tony is hoping for some time to recharge but T-Man recovers quickly and grabs our ironclad hero.

Tony is thrown against a mountain and slowly gets up. Both combatants realize the other is surviving longer than anticipated. Each tries to devise a way to survive until the end of the first round. They do. Each retreats to their "corner."

Tony realizes he needs his new "subminiature reverser." He discovers the jilted Countess has taken it in an effort to seek revenge on Tony Stark. So, Iron Man sends Happy Hogan after it.



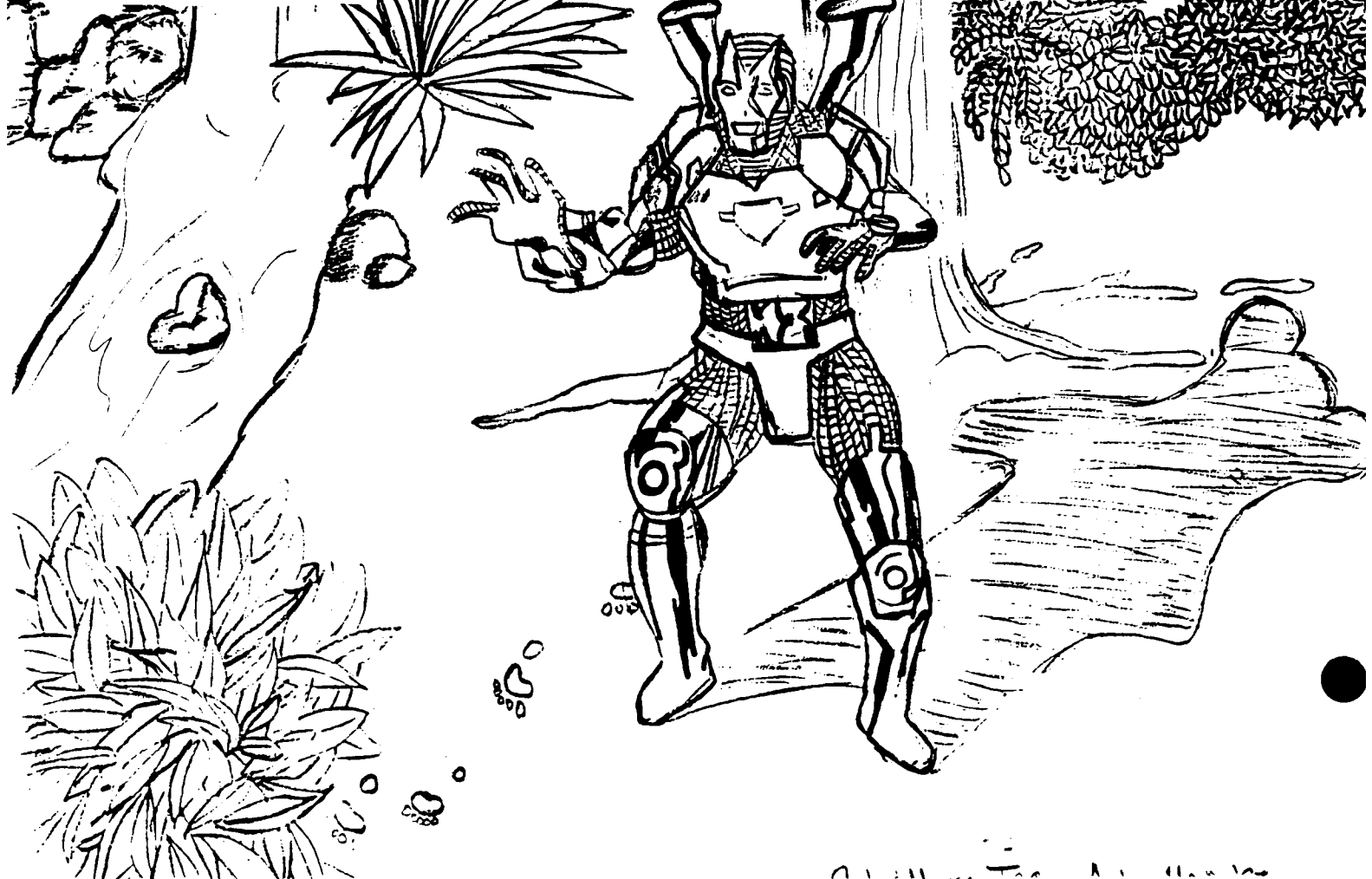
Happy finds her and gets the device. But by then, round two has begun.

In order to get it to Iron Man, Happy will have to enter the battleground. The fighters trade shots as Happy approaches. Iron Man dodges a blast but it hits Happy! He remains conscious long enough to give Tony the device. It appears Happy is dying. Pepper (watching on the monitor, of course) faints. Iron Man realizes Happy knew his secret identity when he says, "Go get him, boss!"

So, the stage is set for the climax. T-Man fighting for his ideology and his country's superiority. And Iron Man ignoring the pain and his heart to fight for his best friend and the free world! To be continued....

And since I don't have TOS #71, the ending will have to wait for a future column!

And that's our double feature (TOS #69 and #70) in a capsule!



# IRON FILINGS

BY ALLEN "SHELLHEAD" BUJAK

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.

## DEJA-VU ALL OVER AGAIN DEPARTMENT

Iron Man took a bit of a dip this month - but ironically **IRON LANTERN** took the #7 spot on the sales chart that the Heroes' Reborn Iron Man has had for the past few months. It makes you wonder why the don't actually publish regular Amalgam comics, doesn't it? As usual, all of my information is courtesy of **WIZARD** magazine.

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

## REBORN BUT UNFINISHED DEPARTMENT

Well, here we are, coming up fast on the end of "Heroes Reborn" - and we're all anxious to get back to the real Tony Stark. But there's something about "Heroes Reborn" that is different isn't there? It's different for me. I get a sense of it being an unfinished work. Sure the story is developing - but the way the story is developing I get the impression that it was to be a much larger story arc. One indicator of this is the armor - and it is perhaps the one thing about "Heroes Reborn" that drives me most crazy.

The Prometheus Armor was untested as of Issue #1. The battle in Issue #2 proved that the armor is up to snuff. Between issues #3 and #4, the armor was apparently repaired. And since then, there have been no changes to the armor. Does this seem odd to anyone else? The armor got trashed in Issue #2 - it survived, which in and of itself proves the armor's good - but the fact that it got trashed indicates an upgrade is in order - doesn't it?

It's true that the armor may have been upgraded without our seeing it - and we may yet find out about some new features. But for me that's not enough - part of the fun of reading Iron Man was seeing the design evolve into something else. In fact, upgrades to the armor's systems were never handled very well - they were always big, sweeping changes that usually corresponded to certain issue numbers (like #200 and #300). What we need to see is an actual evolution of the technology - because that's how technology works in real life. Most upgrades to cars, computers and virtually anything else are incremental - and only by going back 5 years can you see big changes.

But there's something else about the Prometheus Armor - the look of it, specifically. At first it was interesting and certainly different - when drawn well I didn't mind the look at all. I suppose it grew on me. But these days I look at it differently. If it's possible for something to grow off a person, then the Prometheus Armor has done it. The look is harsh, unfinished - like the suit needs to be given a once over to truly be complete. Even if drawn well - these days it's a very unattractive suit. It might be that I'm looking forward to the new design - but I think it's something more. The armor is very much like the importance that "Heroes Reborn" has taken on these days - both have become old, stale and irrelevant. A point was made with "Heroes Reborn" - that four veteran Marvel titles could generate new interest. But now that the point has been made and has been acted on, "Heroes Reborn" means far less. Just as the armor seems less daring - so, too does "Heroes Reborn". The risk was at the outset - a new suit, a new look - but since then, "Heroes Reborn" has taken no risks. There have been no daring changes, there have been no shocking differences with the Marvel Universe - no excitement. Even the background of Stark and Rebel - while interesting - is unimportant. We have no Rebel Riele in the Marvel Universe. Had they made the character Rhodey - we'd have something cool - there'd be a real connection and unexpected twist there. But now we've spent an issue talking about the history of a character that we've never seen and will likely never see after "Heroes Reborn" concludes.

And as for the armor - well, let's hope that Kurt Busiek has a real treat in store for us. I for one am dying to see what this new suit looks like - of course, I've heard it's got points on the faceplate..... hmmm..... maybe I'm not dying to see it after all.....

**SEE YOU NEXT MONTH WITH MORE IRON FILINGS!!**



# EYE ON IRON MAN

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

## Iron Man #8



-- Dave Huber, Wilmington, DE

The art was first rate and the script was fairly close to that. It's nice to see more of the Promethium armor's functions. I like the "read-outs" that frequent the battle scenes between the armors; they're reminiscent of the Kaminski days of IM where we were treated to even better graphic read-outs -- why can't we get them here? You can save the fancy word balloons -- give me cool computer-generated graphic read-outs!! Also, the quantity of text can still be higher. If Kurt Busiek is a big 70's Marvel fan, it bodes well we'll see improvement here. Doc Samson has awakened (wasn't too hard to figure out) and the Hulk sub-plot thickens. Look forward to a big-bang finish to "Heroes Reborn."

### OVERALL RATING for #7:



1/4

# SOLID STEEL



-- Bill Egan, Cupertino, CA

Jeph Loeb did an excellent job. This issue takes us closer to what Iron Man is about. Brute force doesn't quite cut it this time. And though, high-tech gadgets help out, it's Tony's mind that really wins the battle. He maintains his cool and thinks things out. Yet even though he has the tech figured out, he's still blown away to discover that Rebel seems to be behind the mask of the "other Iron Man". Then we have the interesting interludes with Liz Ross (when did that happen to her?!). I sincerely hope the other two interludes with Hulk and Sampson, are foreshadowing for developments within the Iron Man book. If not, they just take up much needed space from a story that already seems too clipped, too sparse.



# EYE ON X-O

## X-O MANOWAR #7 by Acclaim Comics

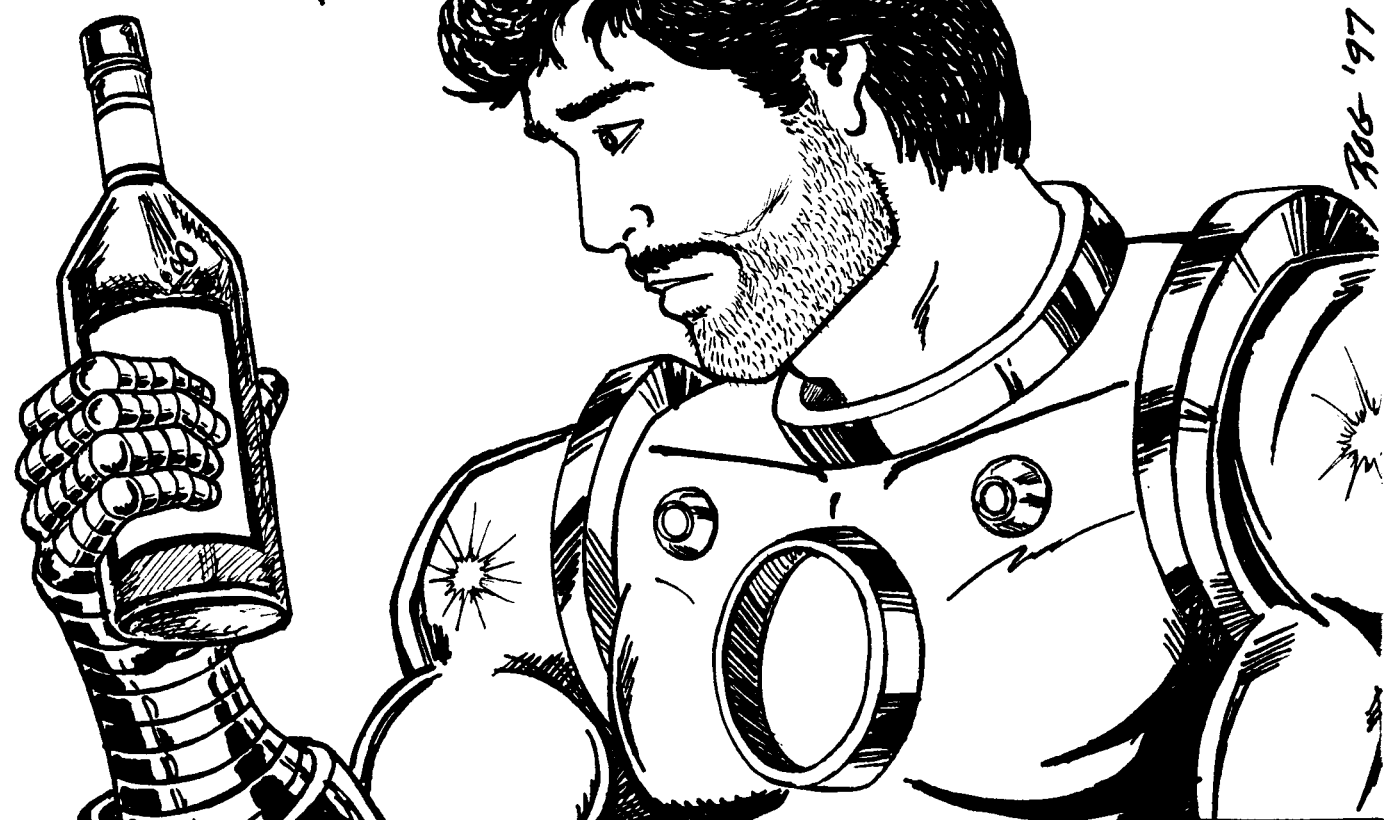
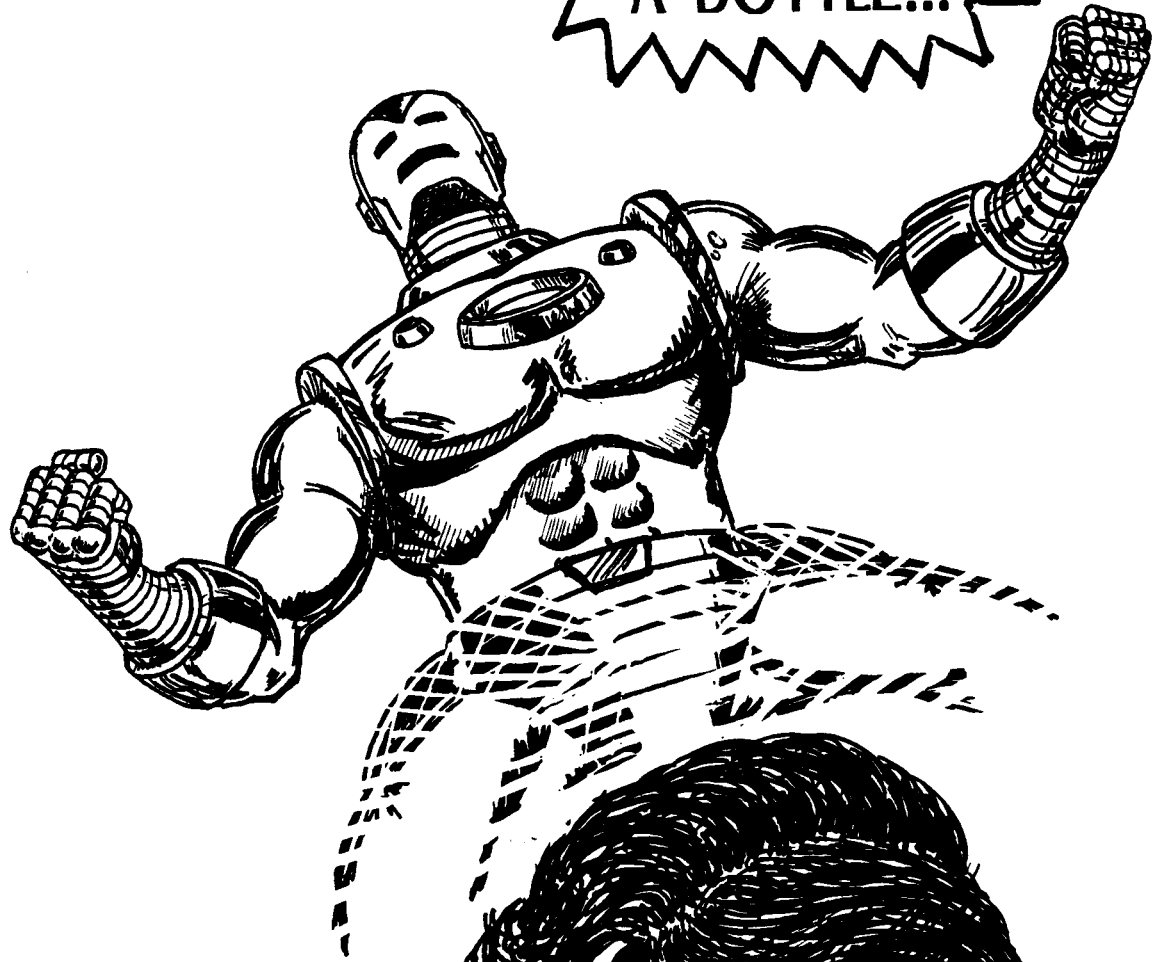
Donovan, the brilliant brain behind deciphering the X-O suit may be just one in a series of hosts for a possibly sentient, possibly immortal, definitely long-lived enigma (the X-O suit itself). Or at least that's the view painted by a mystic warrior from the past, who has hunted the X-O through time and space. When you have a high-tech hero, it's always an interesting story device, to pit them against something that they can't easily deal with: Magic. Donovan hates magic just as much as Tony Stark, but like Tony he learns to deal with it, analyze it and beat the wielder of the magic at their own game. There are some very strange sequences, such as when this magic hunter from the past tries to kill the X-O with a revolver?!

But the battle is only a foreground event, and Brian Augustyn has masterfully crafted a touching background story of war and peace and the relationship between father and son that reveals more about the man behind the armor. And then there's the women. Donovan's sister, his best friend, his lover and his "stress technician" all play interesting, frustrating and sometimes amusing roles in the development of this character's background. Finally, Brian manages to fit in an interlude that introduces a possible friendly adversary for a future story. Such depth of story, so masterfully illustrated by Scot Eaton, is pure enjoyment and it makes you want to come back for more.

X-O RATING: **ADAMANTIUM**

TONY STARK BATTLES...

THE DEMON IN  
A BOTTLE!!!



16, 2006 '97

**Arno Bakker's**

## *Ramblings From Across the Pond*

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

### **Battle for Marvel nearing its end?**

**Carl Icahn** and **Ronald Perelman**, the two rival financiers who have been pitted against each other in the long-running battle for control of the **Marvel Entertainment Group**, are still at it after all these months. But it's starting to look more and more like the bondholders led by **Icahn** are gaining the upper hand in the takeover battle.

At the time when this whole struggle for power began the **Andrews Group's** rescue plan, while dubiously motivated (the main objective was keeping **Perelman** in control), seemed like **Marvel's** best shot at rising from their ashes. Sure, the bondholders were also saying they wanted to rescue the company but they were being very vague about their plans with **Marvel** if they were to gain control. Quite a few people (me included) doubted their intentions with the company, after all a lot of them were so-called '*vulture*'-investors who bought the bonds dirt-cheap from panicking bondholders. '*Vulture*'-investors usually buy up shares and/or bonds of companies which are in deep financial troubles, snapping them up for bargain prices because other investors are bailing out. They usually aren't in it for the good of the company but rather to make a

good return on their investment (any which way they can). So having a good number of those kind of investors vying for control of **Marvel** didn't necessarily have to be a good thing.

But after the bondholders finally came up with a rescue plan of their own it turned out things didn't necessarily have to be as bad as was initially feared. Their plan wasn't that much different from that of the other camp and seemed to have been drafted with the long-term well-being of **Marvel** in mind. And unlike the **Andrews Group** plan (whose main objective seemed to be keeping **Perelman** in control) it seemed to be quite fair to most parties involved. In the following months the **Icahn-camp** (the bondholders and the shareholders) and the **Perelman-camp** (the **Andrews Group**, **Marvel's** board of directors and **Marvel's** banks) have constantly fought each other in court trying to keep the other party from taking control of the company. Now after months of legal wrangling the bondholders look most likely to emerge as victors from this ugly takeover battle. As a result of a court ruling they now are the majority shareholders in **Marvel**, controlling 79% of the company's stock. And as such they have the right to use their voting power to elect a new Board of Directors. Providing they are

successful in this (the **Perelman-camp** is doing everything in its power to prevent it from happening) it will give them total control over the company and the power to implement their own rescue plan. When this happens it will mean the end of any hope **Ron Perelman** had of hanging on to **Marvel**. If you take look at the respective rescue plans of both camps then it would seem a rise to power by the bondholders would be the best thing for **Marvel**. Their plans sound better and better with each revision while those of the other camp are starting to sound more like desperate attempts to keep in control of the company than anything else. Recently long-time **Perelman-camp** ally **Toy Biz** defected to the **Icahn-camp** but left that camp again less than a week later. They now say they are open to any approach from any of the involved parties. It would seem that **Toy Biz**, for whom the link with **Marvel** is of vital importance, doesn't dare anymore to openly side with either party, afraid as they are of gambling on the wrong horse. This is quite understandable really, if anything this takeover battle has been a totally unpredictable ride: It has proven near impossible to predict who will come out as victors. The moment one of the parties look to have scored a decisive victory the other party pulls a rabbit out

of its hat. So even though the bondholders would seem to be the clear favorites now don't be surprised if the tables are turned once again.

## Marvel Movie™ update

Since my last **Marvel** movie update quite a few developments have taken place on that front. And not being someone who wants to keep his fellow fans in the dark I decided it was time again for an update on the movie projects starring **Marvel** characters that are in development at various movie studios. Lets get into it for this month:

Production on **Blade: Vampire Hunter**, the \$30 million **New Line** action/horror pic starring **Wesley Snipes** is well underway. The film is expected to be released Spring '98. From what I've heard of this movie it sounds like a really cool pic and I for one am very much looking forward to it (being a fan of both the actor and the character). **Blade** isn't the only **Marvel** movie which **Snipes** is involved in, together with **Marvel Studios** he and his production company (**Amen Ra**) are developing a **Black Panther** movie in which **Snipes** will also star. **New Line Cinema** on their part are actively looking for a director for the **Venom** film they have in development.

**The Incredible Hulk** movie which was under development at **Universal Pictures** (who by the way are also working on a **Luke Cage**

movie to be directed by **John Singleton**) apparently has been fast-tracked for release in 1998. **Joe Johnston** (**Jumanji**) will direct, **Gale Ann Hurd** (**Strange Days**) will produce. **Fox** is also aiming for '98 releases of two of the 5 **Marvel** movie projects they currently have in development. The studio hopes to have both the **Silver Surfer** (Summer '98, through its **Fox Family Films** label) and the **X-Men** (Christmas '98) in multiplexes near you next year (so 1998 might very well turn out to be a very busy year for us **Marvel** movie fans. Now that's certainly a first!☺). **Silver Surfer** will be directed by **Geoffrey Wright** (**Romper Stomper**) and produced by German production company **Constantin Films**. **Bryan Singer** (**The Usual Suspects**) is now firmly attached as director to the **X-Men** movie which will be produced by **Richard Donner** (**Lethal Weapon**), he has recently hired **Ed Solomon** (the screenwriter of the upcoming **Men in Black**) to work with him on the movie.

All three of these above mentioned movies will have a very big budget but chances are this will seem as small change when compared to the **Fantastic Four** movie.

According to sources near the project the movie is budgeted at *well over* a 100 million dollars (some rumors even suggest an incredible \$165 million!). The script by screenwriter **Michael France** (**Goldeneye**) and **Chris Columbus** (**Mrs. Doubtfire**) is said to be extremely faithful to the comic. Recently **Pete Segal** (**Tommy Boy**) was

signed as director, replacing **Chris Columbus** who vacated the position instead opting to only produce (together with **Constantin Films**) through his production company **1492 Productions**.

So as things are looking now 1998 will see the release of quite a few **Marvel** movies. A grand total of 4 movies are expected to hit theaters (there's even chance of a fifth since the **Fantastic Four** movie has apparently gone into active production recently), this will mean that **Marvel's** film library will be more than doubled (from a paltry 3 to a more respectable 7 movies). Up until now **Marvel** has had the most terrible track-record imaginable when it came to movies. The few movies that have seen the light of day were all badly made *very* low-budget fare (especially the totally dreadful **Captain America** movie starring **Matt Salinger** comes to mind) but now it finally looks like the good times are really upon us with big-budget films coming from big studios made by big-name creators. I think I speak for nearly all of us when I say the following words: "It's about bleedin' time!"☺

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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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# IRON WAIVES

June 3, 1997

by Daren R. Domina

There's not too much happening in the way of Iron Man toys or collectibles, not because there's nothing scheduled for release but because nothing is out on time. For example: (i) the Iron Man bandaroo is way overdue; (ii) the *Crown Pro, Inc.* Marvel SuperHero magnets & tags (details in AI #31) are at least a couple of weeks late; and (iii) Marvel is coming out with a SuperHero v. SuperVillain battle dice game, the first installment of which is the basic game featuring the X-Men and their foes. The basic game is about a month late. The second installment, which will undoubtedly also be late, will feature the Avengers (including Iron Man). The kicker is that you need the basic game to be able to use the Avengers game.

One item which has just come out (in the last few days ) is the *Monumental OverPower* expansion set which includes a basic starter deck and booster packs. I bought a starter deck in the one store that had them (but which had no booster packs). The starter decks are randomly assorted. Unfortunately, the starter deck had no Iron Man cards. It had seven Mission cards for Secret Wars I but none of them depicted Iron Man. The instructions, however, did show a picture of a teamwork card with Iron Man (in post "Crossing" armor) and SpiderWoman. There are over 280 cards in the Monumental set (including new location cards and team cards such as Alpha Flight, Marauders, Reavers, New Warriors, etc.). I don't think that there are any Avengers team cards. Starter decks will cost about \$6.50 to \$6.95 and booster packs will cost about \$2.25 to \$2.75. An expensive venture if you're only looking for Iron Man cards.

Before I forget, again: The *Dow Ziploc* Marvel SuperHeroes sandwich bags from last year were never released in my area. If you have any extra boxes that you'd be willing to part with, I'd appreciate it. I would be happy to pay double or triple what they cost to purchase them. Also, if anyone has any single bags with Iron Man, I'd like to purchase them as well. (They *must* have been sold somewhere).

I can't formally disclose the information yet (although I'm sure it's no secret because it's been posted and/or reported), but, as it turns out, I happen to be somewhat acquainted with the artist who will probably be penciling Iron Man after Heroes Reborn. If it pans out, I think the large majority of fans will enjoy his work. Of course, although it's not technically official because no contracts have been signed, it certainly seems highly likely, based on what's been reported and his interest in doing it, that *Kurt Busiek* will be writing Iron Man. I hope that *Advanced Iron* (and *Iron Fan*) can become a resource and sounding board for this or any other creative team doing the post-Heroes Reborn IM. And, if you didn't know: based on what Kurt has said in *Wizard*, Tony will retain his memories of the Heroes Reborn world.

A nice item coming out in a couple of months is an “iris print” of *Gene Colan’s* artwork for the cover of Iron Man #1, before it was “touched up” to become the cover. It will sell for about \$150 and will be limited to 300 copies, each signed by *Colan*.

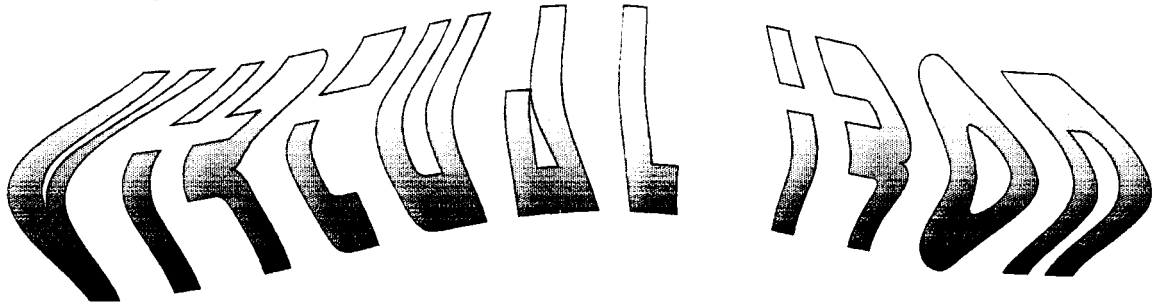
**Iron Man Toy Report:** The toy and collectibles secondary market has been showing renewed interest in older Marvel related products like Marvel convention items, Marvel Mania, FOOM, Merry Marvel Marching Society and 1960s toys. Even some of the comic publications are carrying classified advertisements by people looking for these items. In my opinion, there is a cyclic market pattern to the appearance of these toys.

For example, the *Kenner* Easy Show projector from 1967 features Captain America, Iron Man, Hulk, Submariner, Thor and King Kong (?). The projector is battery operated and runs a self-repeating spool of film (although as I learned, if the spool is not wound perfectly, it’s very difficult to work). The projector is fairly expensive at approximately \$150 to \$250 each. I recall only one such toy coming on the market in 1996 and yet three have already been sold this year (two to me). Other interesting items are the Marvel cardboard mini pennants from 1966. Captain America, Iron Man, Thor, Daredevil and SpiderMan were featured on these small (7” by 3”) white cardboard pennants which are held in a clear plastic pennant shaped sleeve which generally has a black back. Each mini pennant was sold individually and has a full figure color illustration of the hero plus the hero’s logo. I believe all of the artwork was done by *Jack Kirby* (I know that *Kirby* definitely did the Iron Man illustration). Loose pennants were offered at an auction in fall, 1996. I (and apparently a lot of other people, including dealers) weren’t very familiar with the pennants at that time. I purchased a loose Iron Man mini pennant for \$100 at that auction (the other loose ones sold for between \$30 and \$65). Yet, after that auction, at least three packaged Captain America mini pennants have turned up (I recently purchased one for \$65. The header cards features a larger head and shoulders shot of Captain America and smaller head shots of Iron Man and the others). The mini pennants shouldn’t be confused with the slightly larger felt pennants, also from 1966, featuring the same heroes, except Submariner for DareDevil. The felt pennants are another 1960s item which were impossible to find and yet now a few have suddenly hit the market. I purchased a packaged set for \$65 and a loose Iron Man one for \$20. Now sets have appeared, as high as \$150 to \$200. The Lesson: be patient, know your prices and shop around.

A word of warning: watch out for a dealer called *Gigantor, Inc.* While it may be a reputable dealer with great owners, the toys they sell are 90% of the time highly overpriced. For example: (i) I recently purchased (but haven’t received yet) the 1960s Marx SpiderMan friction car, which has a picture of Iron Man on the side (the item is one of the rarer Marvel toys); I’ve seen it for \$500, and purchased one for \$325 (both in about C8 condition); Gigantor was selling it last year for \$750! and (ii) the beginning FOOM kit, which includes two FOOM issues, a poster and some other stuff in a special mailer usually sells for between \$75 to \$150. Gigantor is offering the kit this month for \$350! Beware.

See ya. DRD, 342 Madison Avenue, Suite 1660, NY, NY 10173; 212-889-2674.





## **GREETINGS**

Once again we embark on a journey through the digital realm. This column looks at video gaming Iron Man style and from there I kind of make it up as I go along. This month was supposed to be the second Stark Design Journal but it had to be shelved. Too much overtime to finish the project, but rest assured it will appear in an upcoming issue of *Advanced Iron*. Now let's move on to what's been going on:

## **MARVEL SUPERHEROES POSTPONED AGAIN**

It seems we will have to wait a little longer for the **Marvel Superheroes** fighting game to come home. It has taken so long I practically forgot about it myself. My local game stores tell me that it should be released for Sony, Sega and PC the first week of August. I wouldn't hold my breath if I were you. I heard a rumor that it has been difficult to code the game for the Sony Playstation and that could be a reason for the hold up. Still if this is a good translation of the arcade game it will be a worthy addition to any Iron Fan's library. It has

got to be better than **War of the Gems** and **Heavy Metal**.

## **3D GAMES FINDING A HOME**

One of the most fascinating things to me about the current video gaming generation we are in is how game creators have adjusted to making 3D games. Now that **Tomb Raider** and **Mario 64** have become classics it seems natural that a free floating camera would be the best way to view the action but it wasn't so clear at the beginning of the race.

16 bit games refined 2D sidescrolling action. However none of the machines could really push enough polygons to create what the Saturn and Playstation now can. Before these two consoles there was something called the Atari Jaguar. I am not ashamed to admit that I own one of these beasts. Anyway this machine boasted that it had 64 bit processing and programmers did attempt to create immersive 3D games for it. Now let's not get too wrapped up in the hardware this time and just look at the creativity in the games. That was quick; there was none! Games like **Hoverstrike** and **CyberMorph** just failed to create a believable world in which to run around in and

failed to entertain. The best 3D world on this platform was that in **Aliens vs.**

**Predator**. This was a fairly good **Doom** clone, but a clone none the less.

At this point we needed something new and fresh for the next generation of games and there was no precedent for it. Then gaming synchronicity happened. Two completely independent studios came up with two outstanding games that had almost the exact same play format. Those games were **Mario 64** and **Tomb Raider**. Both sold like hotcakes and their owners loved them. These games have paved the way for a bunch of clones about to hit us and let me tell ya, this ain't a bad thing. The free floating camera gives these games a much more cinematic feel and keeps the player and audience members attention.

Now how does this relate to Iron Man. Well, Sierra is about to release the latest of their **Kings Quest** series in this format, proving that it suits more than just action adventure games. Our Iron Man game will have plenty of action and adventure but we fans want depth and it looks like we can get it here. The King's Quest character will have a range of movements like those in the other games

mentioned but will also be able to use weapons. This is what we need for Iron Man.

To further prove my point another Super Hero from another company will be giving this format a go in his own game soon. Who is this masked man? Why Al Simons -- of course known to comic book readers everywhere as **Spawn**.

## **STARK SHADOWS**

I must admit that "Heroes Reborn" has my attention again. This month's *Iron Man* was really good. The back story with Rebel is intriguing and allowing him to redeem himself before he dies is classic. I always said that they needed to get more into how the heroes and Doom knew each other in school, and when they do this the books have depth. Even the *Avengers* has been decent now that Stark is over there. I love when he is a member of the core group of Avengers as their benefactor. Iron Man deserves power in whatever universe he is in. It seems like he is finally getting it in the pocket universe.

## **YOUR BIG SHOT**

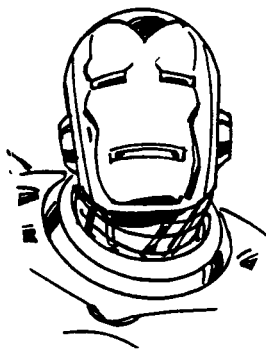
Virtual Iron is an open forum. I'd love to hear from anyone who has an interest in Iron Man and/or video games. Any of your relevant points may be voiced here! So if you want to be part of Iron Man's universe, don't be shy.

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:**

Time marches on and so does "VI!" We look at more inspirational games and the gaming business. Also, we'll peek in at "Virtual World:" a special kind of arcade where you can roast your friends in **Battletech**-like combat. This place has an elaborate backstory and decent atmosphere. Be here next month for the run down.



**COMICAL EXPRESSIONS!**

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# THE ARMOR FILE

ALLEN "SHELLHEAD" DUJAK

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.

## *A HERO ALL HIS OWN*

There's not much new this month in terms of technology as it relates to Iron Man - so I'm going to take this time to bring up a discussion I had this week that you all might find interesting. The other day while Bart Ney and I were corresponding via the miracle known as e-mail, we got to talking about how dull the computer games industry is - at least as it pertains to Bart's Virtual Iron column. After having spent a sizeable amount of time playing game demos and many recent releases, I can attest to the terrific games that are on the market currently. But as Bart and I discussed, there's little of relation to Iron Man currently on the market. Some of the latest games excel at many things - multiplayer features, video quality, sound, music, graphics, acting quality (voice or otherwise) - but it is generally expected that an Iron Man simulation would be state-of-the-art in all of these areas. Companies like Origin Systems and LucasArts consistently push the envelope technically - and such companies would do the same for an Iron Man simulation. But there's a larger point to make here. Beyond the technical aspects of a computer game, there are other aspects of the Iron Man simulation that would make it unique. The game would span several genres of the computer game market. There would be a micro-management sim of Stark Enterprises (a la Sim City 2000), there would be a combat system for battles in Armor (a la Terra Nova), and there would be a full-blown movie-like story (a la Wing Commander 3 & 4) and lastly, there would have to be tons of atmosphere (a la Interstate 76 and Full Throttle).

It's the atmosphere that would make the game special - the ability of the game to totally immerse the player in the game world - the music, graphics style and gameplay would all have to keep with the complete game atmosphere. It's tough to describe - but just play Full Throttle or Interstate 76 and you'll see what I mean.

But the atmosphere of an Iron Man game while difficult to pin down, is what I think makes Iron Man so special a character. Many characters and heroes have their own style - their own tone that sets them apart. Batman is a detective - and detective stories are the character's element. Superman is a superhero - stories of grand, extraordinary feats are what make Superman fun to read. Captain America is a symbol - stories of fighting the good fight - of standing for principle - are what truly fit Cap. Iron Man is different though - and I think more complex.

Iron Man is a hero that combines the best elements of many heroes - there's no one word that can describe him. Iron Man is more than a just a detective, more than just a kick-but hero, more than a symbol - Iron Man is a hero that goes beyond an attitude and a costume. And unlike most heroes, whose secret identity is secondary to their role as hero - Tony Stark is more capable in some fights than Iron Man. Indeed, it's Stark's ability to think is way out of battles that makes him uniquely suited to be Iron Man.

This complexity of character, to me, seems more real - more like each one of us. People are summed up as one word descriptions all the time - "She's so vibrant" - "He's so cool" - but beneath all of those are other facets that people miss. Most heroes in comics, movies and television are reduced to those one sided descriptions. Take Batman - the 1989 movie dealt with why Batman is who he is - we saw the distinction between Bruce Wayne and Batman. In Batman Forever, Robin was introduced - but instead of dealing with why he's compelled to wear a costume and fight crime, he's relegated to simply being a rebellious teen.

If Iron Man is ever to achieve such popularity as Batman or Superman, he may be reduced to the single dimension that Batman now has. But if an Iron Man movie or computer game is made that truly explores the complexity of the characters, Iron Man would, overnight, become larger than Batman or Superman. A movie would change the standard of "hero" movies - and have broader appeal. A game would capture the hearts and minds of players in several genres. In all, no matter what medium - if done properly, Iron Man can prove that to be truly unique is not only a good trait - but that uniqueness defines greatness.

## *A WORD ABOUT AEGIS*

This month the character takes center stage over the armor - the armor's nice, but the woman inside is really interesting.

# AEGIS

# MODEL 1 MARK 1

**NAME:** Jessica Athena Malcom

**AGE:** 27

**RESIDENCE:** Southern California

**MARITAL STATUS:** Single

**OCCUPATION:** Vice President Of Operations - Stark Enterprises

**FORCE WORKS POSITION:** Research Specialist

**HISTORY:** Jessica Athena Malcom was born in South Bend Indiana. Her father, Raymond Malcom built Malcom Chemical all of his life - and he had high expectations for his daughter. He insisted that her middle name be Athena - the Greek Goddess of war, love and industry. He felt that Jessica should strive to embody those traits - the courage to fight for what she believed in, the capability to love unconditionally and the ability to build and forge for herself a future.

Jessica learned the lesson well - she always took her middle name seriously. When she completed high school, her father demanded that she pursue a degree in chemical engineering - as he had. Jessica refused - she could simply not develop an understanding for the subject like her father had - she instead wanted to get a business degree. Jessica's mother understood this - and although there was much friction, Jessica and her father kept their relationship civil for Jessica's mother's sake.

Just before graduating college, Jessica's mother died in a car accident. Jessica very nearly self-destructed. She almost failed her finals and had even contemplated dropping out school. Jessica was grudgingly taken to the library by a friend of hers - Annette Maxwell. Annette was preparing a final paper and her subject was Tony Stark. Jessica was uninterested as Annette began looking up articles on Stark - until she found out that Stark's parents had died two years earlier - and that Stark had built up Stark Enterprises himself. Jessica was intrigued by Stark and managed to finish school by using him as a role model.

After graduation however, she found that without her mother to act as a buffer, she and her father were more volatile than ever. Her saw her near failure as weakness - while she saw it as a learning experience. She volunteered to help with the family business, but he would not hear of it - he demanded she go elsewhere for a job. Raymond believed that she could not go elsewhere and get a job. Jessica's interests went from aviation to Indycar racing - her father felt such diverse interests were wasted on a business major.

Despite her father's attitude, the two did get closer over the next three years. Jessica had managed to find a position with a top engineering firm and was doing very well. Raymond never asked her to work for him, but respected that she rose to the occasion and was on her own.

During a trip to the annual Oshkosh air show in Wisconsin, Jessica witnessed an extraordinary entrance made by none other than Tony Stark. Stark had just developed a new plane that offered a cheap, easily maintained VTOL (Vertical Take Off And Landing) system. The plane could be built and flown by hobbyists - and had created quite a stir among the crowd. Jessica was immediately taken with Stark's confidence when dealing with critics of his design. Suddenly there was a crash from above - one of the planes in the airshow overhead had developed a problem. As the crowd gazed skyward, Jessica was frustrated at not being able to help those pilots. Seconds later, Iron Man roared into the sky - gleaming red and gold in the bright blue sky. Jessica was entranced - the heroism and power that Iron Man symbolized were extraordinary. Iron Man saved the pilots and as he landed, Jessica tried to get closer - to meet him. She was unsuccessful.

But Jessica Malcom, like her father, was not one to give up. She left messages for Stark that there was a threat to his new plane. She then went to the airport - and waited outside the hangar in which the Stark plane was kept.. She waited and before long, Iron Man roared onto the scene. Before she could explain her presence, Iron Man grabbed her and took off. A second later the spot where she was standing exploded. Looking toward the ground, she saw men in yellow outfits holding what looked like ray guns. She recognized them as AIM. Iron Man dispatched the AIM troops - all the while holding onto Jessica. Finally her offered to take her home. She asked if she could meet Tony Stark instead. A brief scan later and Iron Man agreed.

Jessica Malcom and Tony Stark hit it off right from the start. The first night they met, they stayed up all night in Stark's hotel room - talking. Stark was surprised at the experience - it was the first time he was up all night with a woman talking. Jessica was no less surprised. She had expected Stark to be pushy, arrogant and stuffy. Instead she found a kindred spirit who understood what drove her.



As the airshow wrapped up, Stark offered her a job at Stark Enterprises. He had researched her resume and felt that she was the right person to take over as S.E.'s V.P. Of Operations. She was 26 at the time and initially thought that she was too young. Stark responded by mentioning his age - and also that he didn't need a drone - he was looking for a person that shared his outlook - his vision. And in all of his travels, she was the only one he'd met that did. Jessica accepted Stark's offer. Jessica's father was unhappy with her decision to work for Stark - a competitor of his - but ultimately blamed himself for not hiring Jessica when he had the chance. Jessica and Stark began dating and have managed to maintain an effective working relationship at the same time.

But in their first year of dating, Jessica noticed that Stark disappeared - sometimes for days - with explanation. Jessica resented not knowing Stark's secret - but at the same time kept one of her own. Jessica longed to be the hero. She envied Iron Man and wanted to have a similar suit. But she didn't dare tell Stark - she was sure he would worry to no end. However, she also felt that Stark wanted to marry her - and while his secret remained unrevealed she felt that couldn't happen.

On the night of their one year anniversary, Stark had gone out of his way to make the evening special. All the best arrangements were made - everything was perfect. After dinner, Stark mentioned that he had to ask Jessica something. Jessica panicked - she assumed it was a proposal. She immediately told Stark about the lack of trust he had for her and broke off their relationship. Stark (who had intended to tell her that he was Iron Man) left the restaurant and went to S.E. Jessica took a cab and followed - chiding herself for accusing Tony of not trusting her when she hadn't trusted him with her heroic dreams. Upon arriving at S.E., Jessica immediately went to Stark's office - and found that Stark wasn't there. She queried HOMER, and HOMER responds that Stark was never there. She confronts HOMER and demands that he tell her where Stark is. HOMER responds by opening a secret panel which leads to an elevator. Jessica rides the elevator down and enters what HOMER tells her is the armory. She's amazed - the technology in that room is beyond much of what S.E.'s own labs use. Looking around she still does not see Stark - but comes across a suit of armor made for a woman - made for her. She then notices on the monitors that Iron Man is fighting the Fixer. But there's something different about Iron Man, he's reckless, he's off balance - he's fighting like a man who no longer cares. And then she realizes the truth - Tony Stark is Iron Man. She wants to help - and HOMER suggests she use the armor. After a moment's consideration, she agrees - as long as HOMER helps her control the armor. As she dons the suit, she realizes that Stark picked up on her secret - just as she was noticing his. As she flew through the air, she began to consider a name - then she realized the ideal name for the armor - Aegis (in mythology the Aegis is the breastplate of Athena). Just as she arrives on the scene - Iron Man is on his knees - at the mercy of the Fixer. Stark utters one word - Jessica. Jessica immediately engages the Fixer and thanks mostly to HOMER manages to buy Iron Man the time he needed to recover. As the police move in, Stark and Jessica return to S.E. - both deciding that they're two of a kind after all.

**PERSONAL PROFILE:** Jessica Malcom is a hero as Aegis - but strives to be no less heroic as herself. She's tough when it comes to business - she doesn't settle for anything. When Stark is around, she's the dutiful second-in-command. But in situations where she calls the shots - she is confident and commanding while maintaining some compassion. Oddly enough, Jessica is tentative with the Aegis armor. She's not entirely used to the sensations - but also hasn't been a heroine that long. She's afraid to make a mistake with the enormous power at her command.

Jessica admires Stark's technical prowess - and is every bit his equal in business terms. She shares a similar outlook to Stark - and although unfamiliar with the specifics of technology, she does have a keen sense of where technology is likely to develop. Jessica also shares with Stark a love of adventure. Both of them enjoy challenges in all aspects of life - and each relishes being able to share that challenge with the other.

Jessica Malcom and Tony Stark are also both very direct. If they mean something, they will say it - even if someone takes it personally or is offended by it. Jessica is better with people than Stark, however. Stark is more comfortable with technology - and Jessica with people. As such, both tend to complement each other nicely.

**TEAM DYNAMIC:** Jessica Malcom is, of course, the only female team member of Force Works but is not regarded as anything other than a little sister to the rest of the team. She's the newest armor wearer - and as such is generally blown away by wielding such power. She's determined to not let that power corrupt her - and for that reason doesn't want to really cut loose.

When it comes to research, the team takes a back seat to her - including Stark. She analyzes a situation accurately - and when she does research on any topic, she'd be dead right. Generally she'll defer to the rest in combat - but she will not run and hide when faced with an overpowering foe.

### **ARMOR OVERVIEW:**

The Aegis armor is generally a lower power version of the Iron Man armor (roughly 80% of the Iron Man model 30). But that suits Jessica fine - she'd rather have a fast suit than a heavy suit. The only real difference is in the design's overt femininity. At Jessica's request the suit is alluring - and therefore can serve to distract an enemy. Also - because of her long blonde hair, the helmet appears larger than it needs to be - the extra room at the back is for her hair. Of all the Force Works armors, Aegis' suit the one most likely to change. She hasn't made any requests for configuration changes - mostly due to the fact that she's not used to the suit yet. Somehow I have a feeling that she'll make changes soon enough.....

**NEXT MONTH - FIREPOWER!!**

# AEGIS MODEL I MARK I

## BASIC LOADOUT

