

EXHIBIT E

BATTLING THE KIRBY BUG

An introduction, by John Morrow

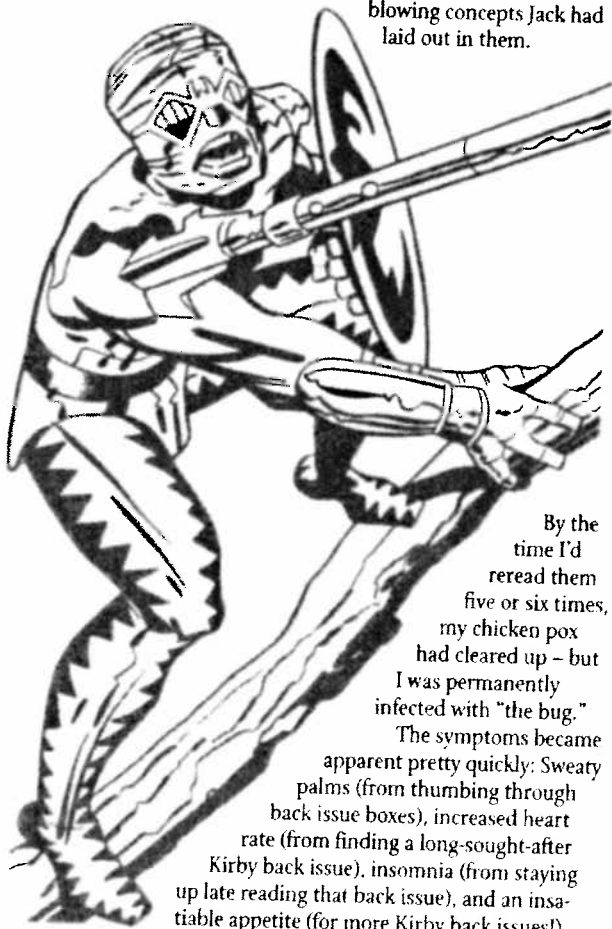
When I was twelve years old, I spent a lot of time hoping I would catch a fatal disease.

Okay, maybe not a *really* fatal disease; just one semi-fatal enough to make me terribly sick, which would naturally make people feel sorry for me, so I'd get my picture in the local newspaper, which would somehow find its way out to California to Jack Kirby's house, so Jack would read the article and find out what a big fan of his I was, and he'd feel sorry for me and travel all the way to Alabama to draw a huge mural of all his Fourth World characters on my bedroom wall.

Unfortunately, I grew to adulthood relatively germ-free, and hence, mural-free, too. It's probably just as well; I could never have moved out of that bedroom – after all, how do you take a whole wall with you? But little did I know I was already the victim of a serious, chronic disease for which there is no known cure.

I call it the *Kirby Bug*. (No, I'm not talking about the character from *New Gods* #9-10, although he made a very fitting illustration for this introduction.)

It all started a few months earlier when I'd come down with chicken pox. A couple of days into the horrible itching and scratching, my mailman delivered a huge box of Kirby back issues I'd ordered from *The Buyer's Guide For Comic Fandom*. I'd been enjoying *Kamandi* for awhile, and had heard that the Fourth World – whatever that was – was supposed to be pretty incredible, so I'd taken a gamble with my first mail-order dealer. The timing was opportune, since those books did what no Calamine lotion was able to do; they made me forget how miserable I was, by distracting me with all the mind-blowing concepts Jack had laid out in them.



By the time I'd reread them five or six times, my chicken pox had cleared up – but I was permanently infected with "the bug." The symptoms became apparent pretty quickly: Sweaty palms (from thumbing through back issue boxes), increased heart rate (from finding a long-sought-after Kirby back issue), insomnia (from staying up late reading that back issue), and an insatiable appetite (for more Kirby back issues!).

Try though I might in the years since, I haven't been able to shake "the bug." Oh sure, I went into remission for a few years in the late '80s when there were no new Kirby comics on the stands. But although my trip to the 1991 San Diego Comic Convention finally gave me a chance to meet Jack, that meeting gave me what now appears to be a permanent relapse.

I'm currently getting treatment for my ailment in the form of *The Jack Kirby Collector*. By publishing this 'zine every couple of months, I'm in the fortunate position of having other victims of "the bug" send me copies of Kirby art from their collections for publication. I also get the thrill of rubbing shoulders and doing interviews with a lot of my idols from comics, who, as it turns out, have varying degrees of "the bug" themselves. Wonderful folks like Mark Evanier, Greg Theakston, Steve Sherman, Mike Royer, Jim Steranko, Joe Sinnott, Richard Howell, Steve Gerber, Shel Dorf, Tony Isabella, Chic Stone, Dick Ayers, Steve Rude, Jerry Ordway, Barry Windsor-Smith, Mike Thibodeaux, Steve Bissette, Walt Simonson, Terry Austin, Al Williamson, Frank Miller, Will Eisner, Karl Kesel, and so many more have gone out of their way to help make this publication better with each issue.

Maybe the best thing about publishing *TJKC* is having a support group of several thousand people who all have "the bug." Just knowing there are others out there with the same affliction makes all the effort worth it – and I won't kid you; publishing *TJKC* is really hard work. But I'm not complaining; it's probably the most fun and rewarding thing I've ever done, and I have lots of help. There are plenty of people behind the scenes who deserve all our thanks, beginning with my wife Pamela. Pam now knows more about Jack Kirby than she ever wanted to (or should have to), but she still continues to volunteer to copy subscription envelopes, fill back issue orders, make trips to the Post Office, proofread, and sit for hours at the *TJKC* booth at comic conventions. She may not have "the bug" herself, but her sweetness, warmth and kindness are just as contagious.

Also, big thanks to Glen Musial, Ed Stelli, and Pat Varker: "The Guys" in Raleigh, NC who continually sacrifice their free time to stuff each new issue into envelopes. We couldn't do it without you!

I want to especially thank Mark Evanier and Greg Theakston, the two people who've gone out of their way to help *TJKC* more than anyone else. Also, special kudos to fellow "bug" sufferers Jon B. Cooke, Mike Gartland, David Hamilton, Chris Harper, Randy Hoppe, Richard Howell, Steve Robertson, Mike Thibodeaux, R.J. Vitone, and Tom Ziuko. Their expertise, support, encouragement, and Kirby art collections are largely responsible for this publication being where it is today.

Finally, let me extend a special thanks to Rosalind Kirby for her support from the very beginning, and her continued indulgence when we occasionally manage to stick our foot in our mouth. If you've wondered if all the stories about what a fabulous person she is are true, stop wondering. They are. It's an honor to know you, Roz.

This book is a compilation of the first nine issues of *TJKC*. Everything I felt was important about those issues is here; I didn't omit any of the art or articles, only some ads and in-house pages. This made room for a special portfolio section with lots of Kirby pencils we've never published (some sneakily scattered throughout the old issues, so you longtime readers would have to rediscover the old stuff!). Plus it gave me a chance to rescan much of the art from the early photocopied issues, and let me tweak the original layouts a bit.

When I started *TJKC*, I told Pam that if only ten people wanted to get it, it'd be worth doing. It's a testament to Jack's genius that it's gone way beyond that in the last three years; "the bug" continues to spread, and I can see *TJKC* continuing indefinitely with your help. If you've ever had an urge to write something about Jack, send it in! And if you have a piece of Kirby art in your collection, make a photocopy and send it.

But be warned: You'll probably catch "the bug" too – and once you get it, it's for life!

John Morrow, Editor
Raleigh, NC, 1997