



# NOZ NOTES by Rob Imes

Unfortunately my comments and reviews will be very brief this time since (as I write this) I'm still folding and stapling the newest issue of *Ditkomania* (which you will have received by the time you read these words). I am very proud of this new issue of DM (#75), which at 44 pages is the thickest issue of the zine that I've done yet. And amazingly, material keeps coming in for future issues at a rapid pace. On the above left is Martin Hirschak's art for what will likely be the cover of DM #76 (Dec. 2009) which will probably have a "1960s Marvel" theme. DM regular Ceylon Anderson (I love his writing!) has written an article about Ditko's Hulk for the issue, and Larry Blake has inked the unused Ditko Hulk pin-up that we saw before in DM #73. Larry has also contributed a hand-lettered letter of comment (like the ones that he used to do in *T-Frags* in the 1980s) and Barry Pearl has written a letter-like article on the topic of Ditko's 1960s Marvel work. I also have on hand an article by Bruce Buchanan about Ditko's 1980s Captain Universe, but I may save that for a "1980s Marvel" themed issue.

The image shown at the top right is a cover rough by *Cerebus* creator Dave Sim depicting Ditko's new hero "The !?" (who debuted in *Ditko Presents* this summer). Dave asked me for the issue number that it might be used for, so that he might be able to incorporate the number in the cover design as well.

(I also suggested to Dave that he include the UFO symbol on the cover or, if he wasn't able to do so, I could put it on the back cover instead.) I chose DM #77 (scheduled for January 2010) for the issue because I thought the numbers would make a nice symmetrical look (in case Dave wants to somehow pair it with the "!" that is superimposed over the figure) and also because I want to run the finished piece as soon as I can. I also want to be able to devote an issue to Ditko's independent philosophy comics, and that cover would make a good one for such an issue. Ditko is a true pioneer of independent and small-press comics (having contributed to them every decade since the 1960s), but that fact often gets overlooked by his mainstream triumphs. I think it's long overdue that Ditko's indie work gets some of the spotlight, and I was quite pleased that DM #75 devotes 2 whole pages to two of Ditko's 1975 independently-published comics. I'd like to see more coverage of that important and little-seen work.

Somehow I managed to finish the four-page "Cask of Amontillado" adaptation for Jim Main's upcoming *Edgar Allan Poe* mini-comic. On the right, you can see an unused version of one of the panels that I later redid, changing the direction of where the character is looking. I ended up redoing these pages quite a few times, and I'm generally very happy with the art. (But not so much my crappy lettering job. I tried to do some computer lettering for it instead, using the Comic Sans font, but disliked the impersonal look of it.) I look forward to seeing the printed comic from Jim!



I haven't had a chance to read Jason Bullock's new comic yet (believe it or not, it's in my sister's car as I write this... I took it with me in case I needed some reading material and accidentally left it in the front seat!). But I thought the quality of all the publications that we've received since TF #208 was quite good. *Comet Tales* #21 was my favorite of the recent releases, since it's the type of comic that I would buy myself if I saw it in a shop. I didn't like the 911-based superhero, though... I found that a bit too unpleasant a topic for what seems almost like a parody of a superhero (Major Revenge). I liked the Manjack backup tale much better. *Super Skunk* #1 had very nice printing quality and had a few laughs in it, and some nice art, but I wasn't emotionally attached to any of the characters while reading it (unlike, for example, how I felt while reading Jim Pack's Manjack story). *Hollywood Highways* had a bit of the same problem for me: fabulous printing (this would look at home on the shelf of any comics shop), and very stylish artwork (pro quality, in fact), but it was too modern and stylized for my old-fashioned tastes. Too much Image-style T&A emphasis for me. On the other hand, this is the kind of comic that is popular these days, so what do I know?

Well, that's all from me... Hope you all enjoyed DM #75! See you in TF #210!