

NOZ notes by Rob Imes

I hope that everyone enjoyed **DITKOMANIA #79**. I think it was one of my best issues yet! **DM #80** is scheduled to be released in July. I don't know exactly what will be in it for certain yet, but I'm currently planning for it to focus on Ditko's 1980s Marvel work. I've already received letters for the lettercol from Dave Sim, Mike Tuz, Sam Kujava, and Robin Snyder. OK, enough about me & DM. Here's what I thought about recent UFO stuff...

TETRAGRAMMATON FRAGMENTS #212: I liked seeing so many of the group represented in this issue: columns by nine members (almost half the co-op)! However, it would be nice to see a TF column from every member in "at least every other issue." Article Two, section C, of the UFO Constitution states: "**Each member should contribute work, in the form of reviews, columns or original material, to at least every other issue of the UFO Newsletter *Tetragrammaton Fragments.***" If this rule was enforced, that would mean five of our members (who didn't have a column in either #211 or #212) would have been booted out of the group. Do I *want* to see that happen? No, but at the same time, it's not fair to the members who *are* participating and following the rules, and particularly not fair to the Chairman who is sending out a newsletter to people who were "too busy" to contribute to it. Surely one can find the time to write up a simple page of comments once every 4 months (at the barest minimum), and ideally once every 2 months. Sheesh, fellas, how hard can it be?! If someone is too busy to write a single page once every 4 months, then it's pretty obvious to me that they are too busy to be involved with a co-op like the UFO. If I was ever Chairman (which God forbid), I think I'd be trimming down our membership by simply enforcing the co-op's Constitution. To use a fannish comics comparison, the UFO is like The Avengers, where Marvel's greatest heroes gather for regular meetings, elect a Chairman, follow a charter, etc. -- not a "non-team" like The Defenders where anything goes. (Don't get me wrong, though -- I'm a *huge* fan of The Defenders!) Every two months, our Chairman gives out a call for submissions that is the equivalent of Captain America shouting "Avengers Assemble!" Do you think Cap would stand for it if an Avenger failed to answer the call?



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Anyway, back to the issue itself: I enjoyed it, but I was disappointed to see that Larry Johnson's debut column was apparently missing the final page. My guess is that Nic misjudged how many pages would fit in the issue and didn't notice that he had dropped one of Larry's pages by mistake until it was too late. Perhaps the missing page could be printed in this issue (#213)? Larry obviously takes a lot of time and care with his column, formatting the pages like his *Tales of Fantasy* columns, so this error was particularly unfortunate. We are extremely lucky to have Larry back in the group! **My grade for the issue: B**

TALES OF FANTASY #50: Speaking of Larry, this issue was his first official UFO memberzine since the 1990s. I usually contribute to Larry's TOF lettercol, so I'll save my comments for there. But needless to say I enjoyed this issue! **My grade: B** (because of the long text story... I would have given the previous issue, #49, an A+ !)

FANTASY THEATER #20: I had greatly enjoyed #19 last year, and I enjoyed this new issue just as much, maybe more. The cover image was striking, depicting the fight scene within in a very artful and nicely-designed manner. I love anthology comics, and J. Kevin Carrier has a great ability (not often seen nowadays) for telling complete satisfying stories in only a few pages. My favorite part of the whole comic was the touching end of the Phantos tale. I can't speak highly enough about this issue. Perhaps my only gripe was the lack of a letterspage, but I did like the pin-ups that took its place. This is the kind of comic that makes me wish I had extra copies to give away to comics-loving friends! **My grade: A**

THE PEACEMAKERS #10: I've never read an issue of The Peacemakers before, but I was able to follow what was happening and get sucked right into the story! As with Fantasy Theater above, this comic has a nice old-fashioned fun comic vibe to it -- the kind of comic that they used to make! The situation of Angel being forced to fight reminded me of Ben Grimm becoming the prisoner of a Skrull and forced to fight Torgo in the old FF comics. Angel's cellmate Starling was immediately likable (due to his cuteness, as noted in the comic itself) and my heart immediately went out to this little fictional character because of his plight. I sure hope the little guy gets through everything okay! I'd like to see him become a regular character in the book. Interesting panel layouts (but clear and easy to follow), clean artwork, variety of characters, a philosophical theme underpinning the plot -- there's a lot for this reader to like here! I hope this is but the first of many issues to come! **My grade: A**

COMIC FAN! #6: The previous issue had more articles that were of interest to me (including my own article, of course!), but on the other hand, I think this more streamlined issue (i.e., fewer pages) was still very interesting. I haven't read the whole thing yet, but I will definitely read the first half of the book because it's about classic comics stuff. I'm less interested in the reviews of new comics, which seem to be a hodge-podge of titles with not much rhyme or reason to their presentation here. Each of the reviews is short, accompanied by a cover image. And most of the comics are by people I've never heard of. And some of them don't let you know how to get a copy even if they do catch your interest. (For example, the cover image of *Guard Dawgs* #1 looked cool, but how do I get a copy?) This format works better on the internet where they can provide links to the publisher's website, etc. I think a review column in a magazine would work better if it was more personality-focused: we're reading the reviews because we respect the opinions of the reviewer. I'm thinking, for example, of the column that R. Fiore used to write in *The Comics Journal*; people would read it for Fiore's opinions on the comics he was discussing. And usually he'd talk about a few of them, not a dozen at a time. The reviews in *Comic Fan!*, by comparison, look like plugs instead of reviews. Speaking of plugs, once again, Nic's UFO Sightings column is basically a rehash of the UFO Checklist (which also appears in the issue). I complained about that before -- it's redundant. Why not use UFO Sightings to talk about the UFO, its members, its history, its goals, etc. rather than repeat what is already on the checklist? **My grade: B**

OK, that's all for my reviews this time. I do want to bring up a subject relating to UFO business. Last issue (TF #212), Nic mentioned that Brien Wayne Powell's daily webcomic had ended. If **webcomics** are considered member publications (as I believe was decided by the group last year), then his webcomic should have been in every recent UFO Checklist. The same goes for Alan Evans' *Rival Angels* and J. Kevin Carrier's *Lady Spectra & Sparky* webcomics. As long as they are being updated regularly, shouldn't they be in the Checklist?