

No.

34

BOOK
OF THE
MONTH

UNCANNY X-MEN

Moving to San Fran gave the X-Men a brief glimpse of celebrity, but now Simon Trask and Norman Osborn are ready to 'reign' on their parade

BY CHRIS M. ARNONE

Matt Fraction knows that the secret to keeping *Uncanny X-Men* humming is to play up the soap opera behind Marvel's Merry Mutants.

Calling his tenure on the House of Ideas' premier X-book a "dream" project, Fraction has instituted major changes: The X-Men have relocated to San Francisco, Cyclops' secret death-squad (aka X-Force) has caused dissension in the ranks, Emma's secret meetings with Norman Osborn's cabal of powerful villains have been laid bare and the events of "Messiah Complex" have become public, prompting Simon Trask and his Humanity Now coalition to create Proposition X, which could force mutants to undergo chemical contraception. Things never slow up with the X-Men, and Fraction's intricate web of side stories and elaborate ensemble plots are coming to a head like never before.

"The cast is huge, it's really an ensemble piece," notes Fraction, whose *Invincible Iron Man* won 2009's Best New Series Eisner. "It was really complicated and really complex. I had a spreadsheet and a lot of note cards. It's the most complicated thing




I've ever written."

Yet despite the public support of mutant rights by SanFran's mayor, in *Dark Avengers/Uncanny X-Men: Utopia*—this summer's biggest Marvel crossover event—mutant-human relations are tenuous again thanks to Trask, leading the X-Men to try and stop the human protesters before violence ensued. Enter Osborn, villainous new chief of policing America, who, along with a seemingly traitorous Emma Frost, puts together a new team of "Dark X-Men" consisting of Mimic, Cloak, Dagger, Wolverine's son Daken, Weapon Omega, Dark Beast and Namor to act as mutant law enforcers.

"Part of it...was thinking about it like Osborn. If I was a strategist, who would I want in the field? Part of it was thinking like Emma, if I had to deal with Osborn and watch my own back, what would I

do?" Fraction summed up his choice of team members with, "Who was going to deliver just raw-ass bang-for-buck in the crossover? When the s--- comes down and things start exploding, who's going to be fun to watch?"

With the return of penciller extraordinaire Terry Dodson to the mix, the future of the title looks bright, even if the X-Men's doesn't. So what's to come for *Uncanny X-Men*?

"The end of *Exodus* takes us somewhere we've never been before. It leaves the team—it leaves the status quo—profoundly changed," promises Fraction. "It's big. Things are very different. It puts us in completely unfamiliar territory—uncharted territory. [*Dark Reign: The List*] is a direct outcome of how *Exodus* ends. That takes us into our new place, which we're calling Nation X. And Magneto comes back." 

No. 33

WEBCOMICS OF THE MONTH

Bringing the daily newspaper comic strip mentality online with twisted humor and ironic satire for the modern-day Webophile, these three Webcomics—*Saturday Morning Breakfast Cereal*, *Chainsawsuit* and *Least I Could Do*—represent the pinnacle of punchline for geek culture. Their respective creators are regularly pushing the content boundaries of their strips to hilarious effect on the Internet. So grab your mouse and get ready to click through some archive pages for some of the most gut-wrenchingly funny content in the Webcomics world. **STEVE SUNU**



Name: Saturday Morning Breakfast Cereal

Creator: Zach Weiner

URL: <http://www.smbc-comics.com/>

SMBC is like a more inappropriate, modern-day Far Side. Jokes range from classic misinterpretation of panels to comics that creatively use online format for a punchline.

Name: Chainsawsuit

Creator: Kris Straub

URL: <http://www.chainsawsuit.com/>

Chainsawsuit answers the age-old questions like, "What would Smurfs be like with Frank Miller at the helm?" or "What happens when a nymphomaniac gets cured?"

Name: Least I Could Do

Creator: Ryan Sohmer (W) and Lar DeSouza (A)

URL: <http://www.leasticoulddo.com/>

Follow über-geek and ladies man Rayne Summers and friends through adventures chock full of geek references to G.I. Joe, Transformers, Marvel, DC and Lord of the Rings.

No.

32

SUPERHERO SUPPLEMENT

TEAM BOOKS

The ensemble cast comics to keep an eye on this fall

IMMORTAL WEAPONS MARVEL

Introduced in Ed Brubaker and Matt Fraction's acclaimed *Immortal Iron Fist* relaunch, badass doesn't even begin to describe the level of awesomeness the Immortal Weapons of K'un L'un's sister cities have instilled into Marvel's kung-fu arena.

Kicking off a five-issue miniseries in August with *Immortal Weapons #1*, writer Jason Aaron explained: "The world of the Iron Fist is about to get a lot bigger and crazier as the other Immortal Weapons finally take the spotlight. We all know that Fat Cobra and friends can kick loads of ass, but other than that, they're all still a mystery. That's about to change."

Tackled by a stable of slam-bang writers, *Immortal Weapons* kicks off with Fat Cobra, followed by the Bride of Nine Spiders then Dog Brother. Also, each ish includes a bonus story following Danny Rand, written by Duane Swierczynski (*Cable*).

GOTHAM CITY SIRENS DC COMICS

DC COMICS

Paul Dini and Guillem March continue their series highlighting Gotham's sexiest supervillains, and it looks like Poison Ivy, Catwoman and Harley Quinn are set to follow up on Selina's feud with Hush and take out the Bruce Wayne imposter who literally stole her heart.

RUNAWAYS MARVEL

Taking over the fan-favorite team with the promise of a death and a return, this conclusion to Kathryn Immonen's "Homeschooling" arc features Gert on the cover, and she doesn't even look like a zombie! Could the beloved Runaway be back for reals?!



Look for surprise guest villain General Tso!

BY STEPHEN WETTSTEIN AND THE WIZARD STAFF

OUTSIDERS DC COMICS

Rising tensions between Geo-Force and Black Lightning come to a head as Peter Tomasi's Bat-sanctioned team sets out to take down Clayface.

CYBERFORCE/HUNTER-KILLER TOP COW

Talk about ensemble casts, this explosive crossover of Top Cow's two biggest teams continues as Morningstar's partnership with Cyberdata is explained, and the rest of the massive crew head out on a destructive world tour.

DOOM PATROL DC COMICS

It's Keith Giffen writing one of DC's kookiest teams, what more do you need? Giffen teaming with J.M. DeMatteis and Kevin Maguire and sending the Metal Men to space in this title's backup feature? Done! 