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G-FAN #148
SUMMER 2025
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Front cover: Rudy Gardea comes through once more with a stunning portrait of the King of the Monsters. **Back cover:** Ready to leap off the back cover is Allen Mentzer's lithe and colorful King Seesar. Many thanks to you both!

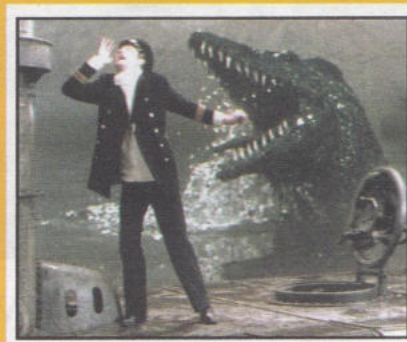
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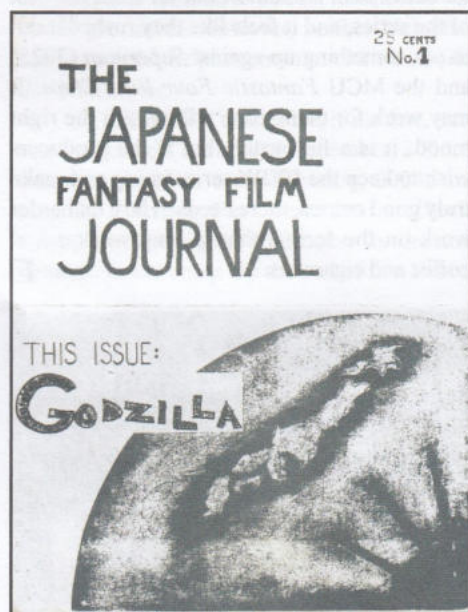
KAIJU FANZINES OF THE SHOWA ERA

Western kaiju-oriented fan publications 1968 - 1989

by Bradford Grant Boyle

Organized North American "Godzilla fandom" was born in January 1968, when Greg Shoemaker of Toledo, Ohio, published the first issue of his fanzine the Japanese Fantasy Film Journal. Commonly referred to by its palindromic acronym "JFFJ," it was not only the first kaiju fanzine but also recognized as the pinnacle of the genre throughout its existence. This article covers that groundbreaking fanzine, its influential counterpart Japanese Giants, and every fanzine published during the Showa era. Kaiju fanzines exploded in the late 1970s, featuring a dizzying array of names chosen from a limited number of words.

JAPANESE FANTASY FILM JOURNAL 1968-1983



Publishing a fanzine in January, 1968, was difficult. Momentous moments in mankind's history were in the future, such as the moon landing and the American release of *Destroy All Monsters*. Print technology was primitive compared to today.

The first issue of Japanese Fantasy Film Journal was printed by spirit duplication, or "ditto printing." This method was messy

and only allowed for a small number of copies to be printed. JFFJ #1 had a print run of twenty-five copies.

Printing was difficult, but so was collecting information and material about what was then an obscure subject: Japanese monster movies. "Kaiju" was a word not yet in use outside Asia. Prozines like *Famous Monsters of Film-land* and *Castle of Frankenstein* gave cursory attention to Asian monster films, often with a derogatory attitude. Cable TV, home VCRs, and the Internet were still science fiction. A third barrier was cost. Fanzine editors scraped and saved to finance their dreams.

Shoemaker had no contributors for the first issue. The publication was entirely self-produced, including the cover. The feature article was on *Godzilla King of the Monsters!* and included a filmbook. "Filmbook" is not a common term now. Often the primary feature in an issue, or spread out between two, a filmbook was a written description of the film, including dialogue and plot. Filmbooks were popular because fans that missed seeing a film due to limited access could read about it. They were usually accompanied by fan art.



JFFJ #2 was released more than a year following the premiere issue, in April 1969.

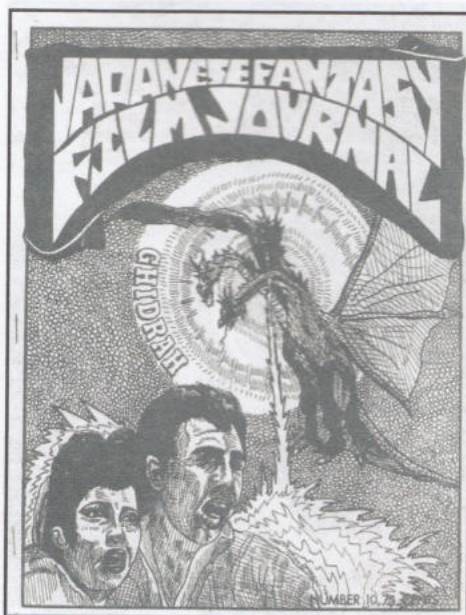
Again self-produced except for two letters to the editor commenting on issue #1, the 'zine was a combination of ditto, mimeograph, and offset printing. Mimeograph printing was easier and more durable than ditto, and some ditto-printed pages in the issue are difficult to read. An eclectic mix of features and printing media, the focus is *Prince of Space*, but it is labeled "Special Boris Karloff Memorial Issue." Shoemaker often strayed from Japanese films in early issues, covering items from the broader horror, science fiction, and monster genres.



Issue #3 was published the same year as was #2. Two-time Emmy Award-winning visual effects artist and director Ernest Farino drew the cover, "Ernie" back then. (Note: *An interview with Ernest Farino, who designed the opening titles for Godzilla 1985 [among many others] was featured in issue #76 of G-FAN. The issue is still available at www.g-fan.com, just sayin'.* - J.D.) Printed by mimeograph, two pages are offset with movie stills from *Throne of Blood* and *The Green Slime*. Part one of the *Frankenstein Conquers the World* filmbook is the focus of the issue. The approximate publication date can be ascertained by Shoemaker's "Discography" column lamenting the death of ex-Rolling Stone Brian Jones.



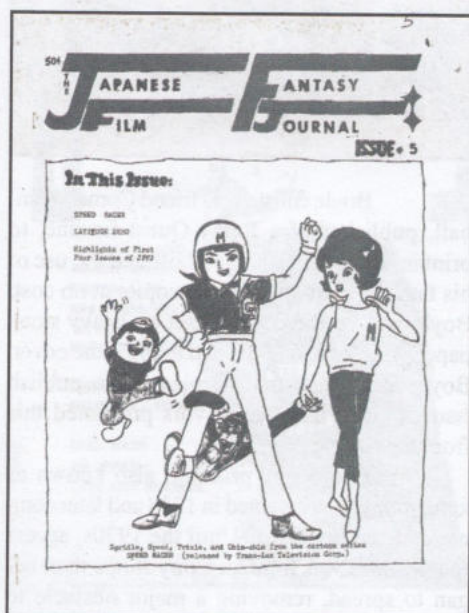
JFFJ #4 contains part two of the *Frankenstein Conquers the World* filmbook and interview. The consensus among collectors is that pages six and ten are missing from every issue. Shoemaker explains: "Issue four was all out of whack. The printer backed up the wrong pages for the entire issue... page numbering was nonsensical."



In the fall of 1973, JFFJ #10 was released, and Shoemaker celebrated the publication's five-year anniversary. Bob Scism provided financial aid. Upfront costs for publishing a fanzine can be substantial. Features include part one of the *Ghidrah* filmbook and a discussion of *Matango*, still known then as *Attack of the Mushroom People*.



Shoemaker continually strove for a more professional-looking publication, and by issue #12 had greatly reduced fan art in favor of movie stills. There was some resistance. In an interview he mentioned "... a slight backlash" {to} ...the slicker look... and the... reduction of fan art." Some readers lamented "...the loss of the 'fanzine' quality" in the face of its replacement by a more professional tone and style.

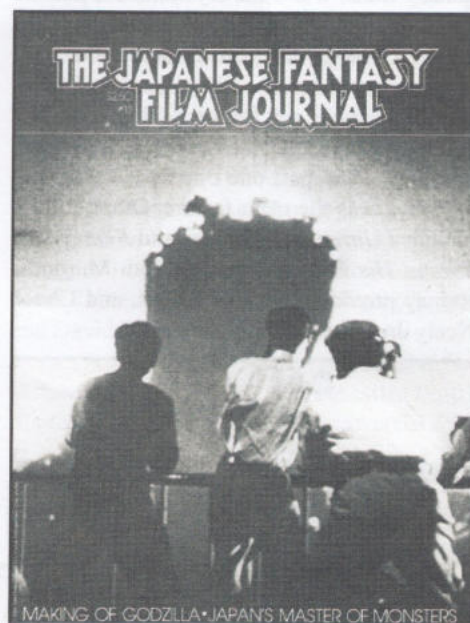


Editor Shoemaker made it clear that the fanzine was intended to cover all Japanese fantasy films, not just kaiju entries. This broader scope is evident in issue #5, which features *Speed Racer* (an animé) on the cover.

Continuing a trend seen in the first five issues, JFFJs #6 to 9 show continued improvement. Increasingly, the reported current information was being sourced directly from Japan. Submissions from Japanese contributors, such as Horacio Higuchi, began to appear in the 'zine, bringing fresh news and authentic, undiluted insight to the publication.

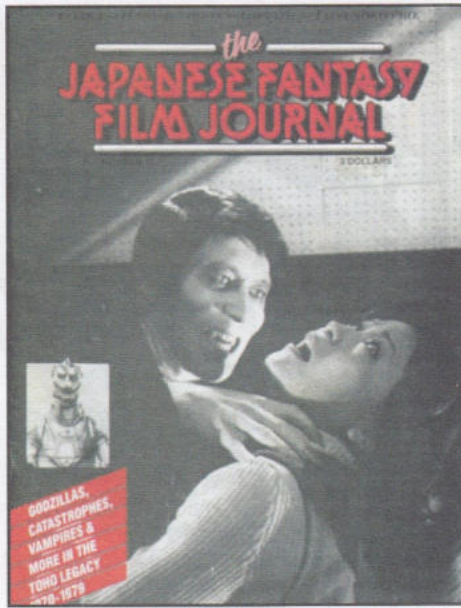
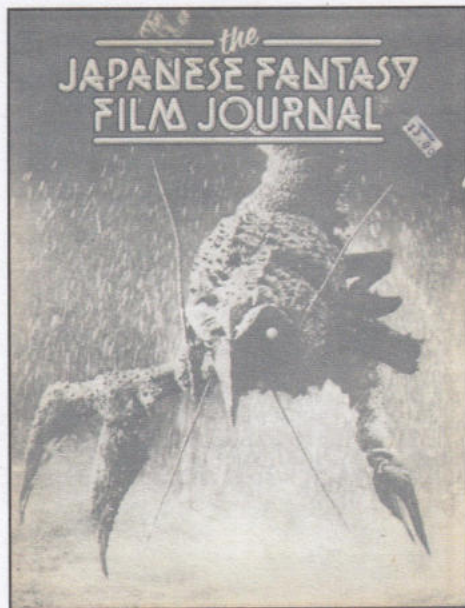


May of 1975 saw the publication of JFFJ #11 by Shoemaker. In this issue, Tony and Duncan Malanowski completed the *Ghidrah* filmbook. Shoemaker contributed the article "The Superhero: Japan's Interpretation." Stan Timmons created an early kaiju cartoon titled "Creature Features." The issue was dedicated to Forrest J Ackerman. (Note: *This was my first issue of JFFJ, which led to much correspondence with Greg. As I wrote in his obituary in G-FAN #125, he was the only person in my world at the time with whom to discuss Japanese monster movies. - J.D.*)



In issues #13 and 14, Shoemaker continued to pursue a prozine look and attitude, despite the backlash. Issue #13 lacked a letter-to-the-editor feature, usually standard in a fanzine. The feature article is "The Making of Godzilla" by then Japanese Giants editor Ed Godziszewski. His regard for JFFJ is evident, as the comprehensive article could have appeared in his own fanzine.

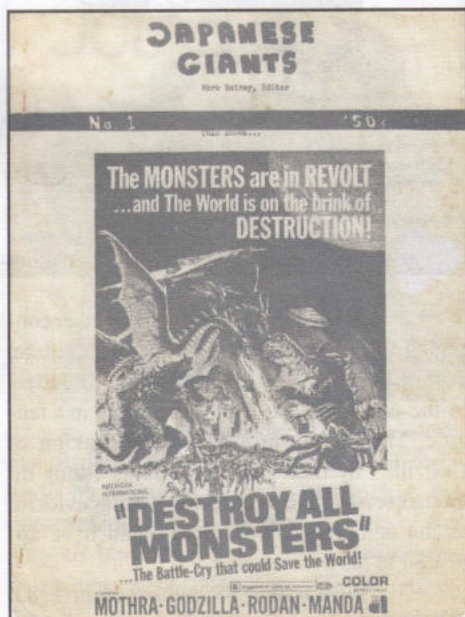
With issue #15, published in 1983, Shoemaker announced that the Japanese Fantasy Film Journal would cease publication.



The covers of JFFJ #14 and 15, after which publication of the fanzine ceased.

JAPANESE GIANTS 1974-2004

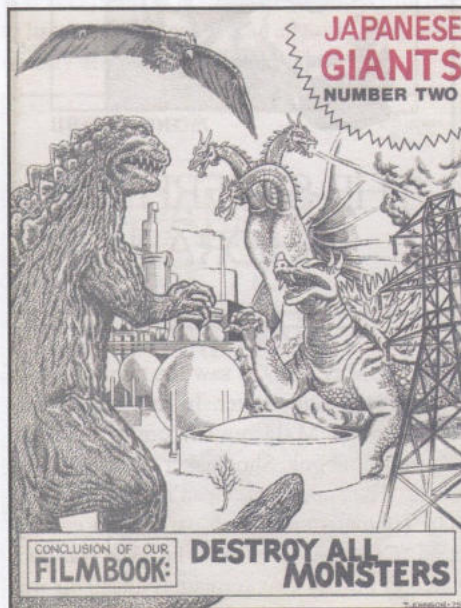
Not until after issue #11 of JFFJ did a second kaiju fanzine appear. In 1974, Mark Rainey of Martinsville, Virginia, announced in the local paper, *The Martinsville Bulletin*, his plans for his own magazine called "Japanese Giants." JFFJ covered all aspects of Japanese fantasy films, while Rainey wanted a fanzine "devoted to daikaiju." He published issue #1 of *Japanese Giants* that year. Printed offset with eighteen pages, it marked the beginning of a thirty-year, ten issue run for the JG franchise. The cover was taken from the *Destroy All Monsters* pressbook, and part one of an accompanying filmbook was the main feature. Other articles included *Ultraman* by Rainey and *Johnny Sokko and His Flying Robot* by Tom Murdock. Rainey provided much of the art, and Chuck Neely drew the Godzilla back cover.



Rainey began to organize a second issue, but never finished. In an interview he

attributed his troubles to finances; issue #1 had been a money-loser. A fellow fan, "Brad Boyle offered to take over its publication." Rainey was glad to see his brainchild continue, but on someone else's dime.

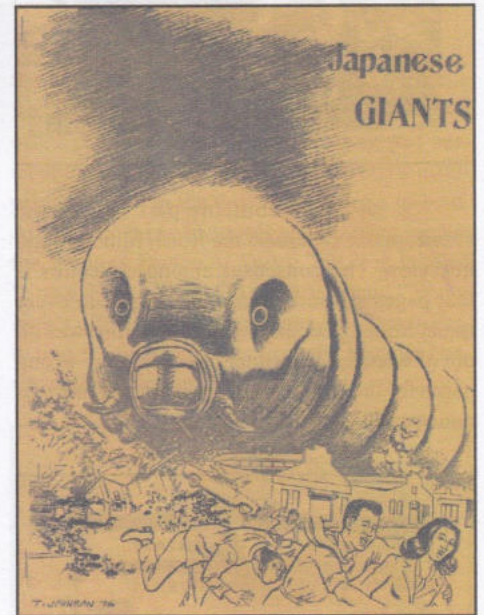
Residing in Salt Lake City, Utah, Brad Boyle (Disclaimer: He is I) published the first issue of the OfMSF (Organization for More Science Fiction) Newsletter in April 1975. The OfMSF Newsletter evolved into *Monstrosities*. Issue #10 featured a Japanese monster index and an interview with Bay Area Creature Feature host Bob Wilkins. In correspondence, Rainey informed Boyle of his decision to cease publishing *Japanese Giants*. Boyle asked for permission to take over the fanzine. Rainey agreed, and Boyle turned his attention to JG.



In April, 1976, Boyle published *Japanese Giants* #2. Boyle used his high school printing class to produce an all-offset issue with a two-color glossy cover. The cover art by Tim Johnson became a kaiju fandom icon. Articles

included Mark Rainey finishing the *Destroy All Monsters* filmbook, *The Day of Daiei* by Tony Picariello, and others. The issue failed to sell as expected until Forrest J. Ackerman mentioned it in *Famous Monsters of Filmland* #134.

Japanese Giants #3 contains part one of a *Mothra* filmbook by Tony Picariello, with an accompanying cover by Bill Gudmundson, who also contributed a Monster Size Chart. The highlight of the issue was "Godzilla! Coincidence or Allegory" by Peter H. Brothers, a scholarly feature that predated much of the knowledge now taken as assumed about the seminal film.

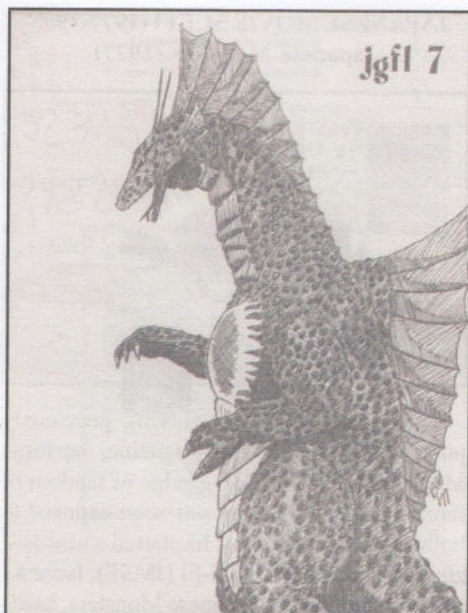


Boyle enlisted his friend Cornell Kimball, publisher of a *Jonny Quest* fanzine, to print issue #4 of JG. Kimball offered the use of his father's high-speed photocopier at no cost. Boyle printed the cover offset on heavy stock paper. Tim Johnson returned to draw the cover. Boyle mentioned that he planned to publish issue #5, but other endeavors prevented this from happening.

Photocopy printing, also known as xerography, was invented in 1938 and later commercialized by Xerox. Until the 1970s, access to machines was limited. Copy shops then began to spread, removing a major obstacle to publishing fanzines. This development, along with the growing exposure of *Godzilla*, set off an explosion of kaiju fanzines.

Japanese Giants Fan Letter

Boyle also published the *Japanese Giants Fan Letter* (JGFL). He needed a more frequent publication to keep up with rapidly changing movie news, as well as an outlet for the many contributions he received. Additionally, he felt the need for a more informal fanzine, since *Japanese Giants* was evolving (as fanzines often do) into a more professional but perhaps less fun publication.



David Milner co-edited the first few issues. Milner was a familiar name in Godzilla fandom, having written for *Godzillamania* and other publications. The JGFL ran for ten issues, with the final issue being oversized because Boyle printed all the contributions he had on file.



In 1978, Boyle turned Japanese Giants over to Ed Godziszewski. Godziszewski was already a fixture in kaiju fandom, having contributed to JG and other fanzines. In an interview with Toho Kingdom, Godziszewski explains: "By this time, Mark had passed the magazine on to Brad Boyle, and in writing to Brad, I found out that he was thinking to give up publishing after Issue #4 came out. ...it was at the same time I was working on a piece about *Latitude Zero* (1969), so everything sort of fell into place. I always did JG on an irregular basis, and there was never an idea of making a profit from it. For me, if I broke even, that was all I needed..."

Godziszewski enlisted the help of Mark Rainey and Bill Gudmundson and quickly released issue #5. With a cover by Andre Dubois, the issue centered on Godzilla and contained features on *Terror of MechaGodzilla*, *Latitude Zero*, and *The War in Space*.

In 1980, Japanese Giants #6 was published. This issue focused on Rodan and featured a cover by Bill Gudmundson. The filmbook was written by Peter Brothers and Mike Paul, while Ed Godziszewski and Brothers provided the commentary. Bill Gudmundson also contributed a written commentary on Toho's *Vampire Doll*.



Japanese Giants returned in 1985 after a five-year hiatus. The JG triumvirate of Godziszewski, Rainey, and Gudmundson was joined by Andrew Dubois and Mike Paul. The feature article was a retrospective on *Atragon* by Godziszewski. This issue would be Japanese Giants' last in the Showa era, but Godziszewski continued to publish JG for three more issues, building it into the premier fanzine of the genre until the ascension of G-FAN.

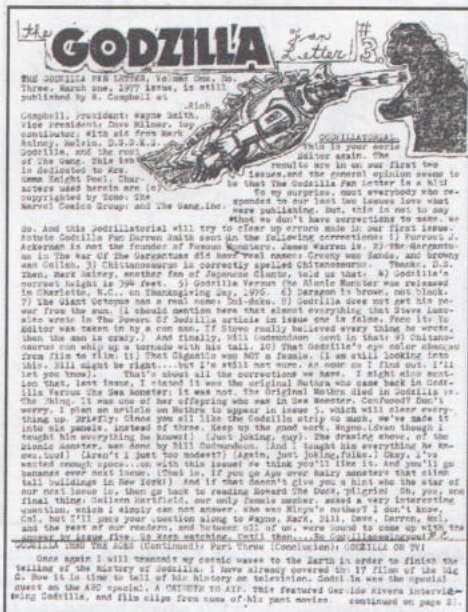
JAPANESE FANTASY FILM SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Godziszewski, along with Gudmundson, Alex Ward, and Michael Paul, started the Japanese Fantasy Film Society (JFFS) in 1979. Based in Chicago, the benefits of membership included a newsletter subscription, a membership card, a button, and a Godzilla still. The yearly membership cost was \$10. Sixteen issues of the newsletter were printed, and the publication lasted until 1984.



THE GODZILLA FAN LETTER/GODZILLAMANIA

1976-1978



Richard Campbell's Godzilla Fan Club was mentioned by Forry Ackerman in *Famous Monsters of Film* on the same page as Boyle's Japanese Giants. The fan club included a subscription to the *Godzilla Fan Letter*. Campbell explained that in January of 1977 he had placed an ad in *Famous Monsters* asking for \$1 and an S.A.S.E. for his fan letter. FM left out the \$1 part, so Richard replied with the S.A.S.E.s that there was a cost. Of about 2000 original inquiries, most "...people decided they didn't like Godzilla if they had to pay a buck! So I only got about 100 responses."

Campbell published five issues of *The Godzilla Fan Letter*, ending publication in the spring of 1977. Notable contributors included Mark Rainey, Bill Gudmundson, Wayne Smith, and David Milner.

In 1978, Campbell relaunched the newsletter as a full-fledged fanzine called *Godzillamania*. Issue #6 featured a controversial cover based on the rumored film "Godzilla vs. the Devil." The incident highlights the difficulty of securing reliable information about upcoming films back then. A rumored *Godzilla vs. Gamera* film was also frequently mentioned in various fanzines. Luckily, with easily accessible information today, such rumors do not run rampant anymore!

Campbell received many negative comments about the controversial cover, some of which appeared in the letters to the editor. He later said, "I do regret my blasphemy... I had to do fifty 'Hail Mothra's' for that one."



Above: Godzillamania #6 featured a cover image that offended many readers. **Right:** The cover of Godzillamania #7, which turned out to be the final issue.

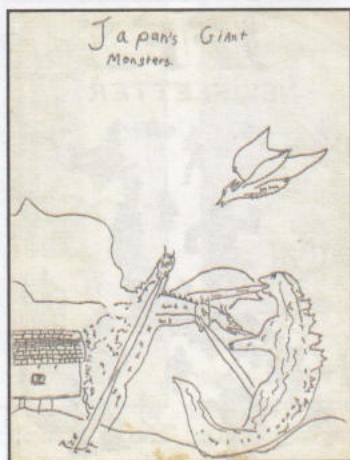


In issue #7, Campbell announced the death of the Godzilla Fan Club but planned to continue the fanzine. With a new digest-sized format and contributions from many of fandom's best-known writers and artists, Godzillamania seemed poised to become a top fanzine. The issue contained a large letters section, a column by David Milner called "Milner's Mind," the conclusion of Richard's fiction "Godzilla vs. Nuklo," a cartoon strip by Kevin Grays titled "The Return of Hedorah," and part three of Damon Foster's study of Japanese Super Heroes.

As things turned out Godzillamania #7 was the death of the fanzine as well. Campbell had issue #8 completed and ready to print when "other aspects of life got in the way," preventing its publication.

JAPAN'S GIANT MONSTERS (1977)

Don Macgillvary, Jr.'s fanzine, Japan's Giant Monsters, was released sometime during the year 1977. An amateur effort, Macgillvary did have some contact with fandom, as illustrated by the fact that the issue contains an ad for Japanese Giants. All of the 'zine's material is assumed to be by Macgillvary except for a *Monster Zero* mini-filmbook by Dan Murray. Despite the mention of a planned issue #2, JGM apparently wound up as a one-shot publication.



GIANT JAPANESE MONSTERS (1977)

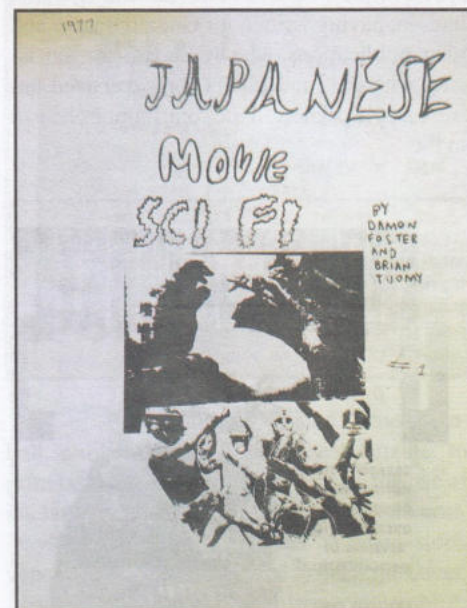


Giant Japanese Monsters was also published in 1977, the year of a veritable kaiju fanzine explosion. Editor Dan Murray was familiar with fandom, having written part two of the *Mothra* filmbook in Japanese Giants #4. With a cover drawn by Bob Colwell, the primary features in Giant Japanese Monsters are a Gamera filmography and a short written narrative of the first Godzilla film, both by editor Murray. A second issue was prepared but never published, the material finding its way into Barry Kauffman's fanzine, *Monsters of Japan* #2.

JAPANESE MOVIE SCI-FI (1977-1985) Japanese Monsters (1977)



Hayward, CA. Having previously published a handwritten magazine, Japanese Monsters, before his knowledge of fandom or fanzines, Damon Foster was soon exposed to both. With Brian Tuomy, he started a new fanzine: Japanese Movie Sci-Fi (JMSF). Issue #1 starts like an issue of Japanese Monsters, hand-drawn. The reader is in for a shock on page five and beyond: typewritten pages.



JMSF issue #1 contains a wide variety of subjects, but what stands out is the amount of tokusatsu coverage. It features *Kikaider*, *Ultraman*, *Inframan*, *Space Giants*, and *Jonny Sokka*. While Ultraman occasionally appeared in other fanzines, editor Foster is already leaning toward a more inclusive range of subjects from Japanese fantasy films.

Foster's JMSF #2, his first fully typed issue, shows improvement. With his newfound connection to fandom, contributions from other fans appear in the zine. The issue's art includes work not only by Foster, but also by Jeff Gutsky, Brian Ridgeway, Bill Gudmundson, and Kevin Grays.

Issue #3 (1979) and 1980's issue #4 continued on the same upward path in quality. Layouts improved but retained the quirks that could be called "Fosterism." Foster would retain the rebel attitude throughout his publishing career and beyond. An illustration of JMSF's

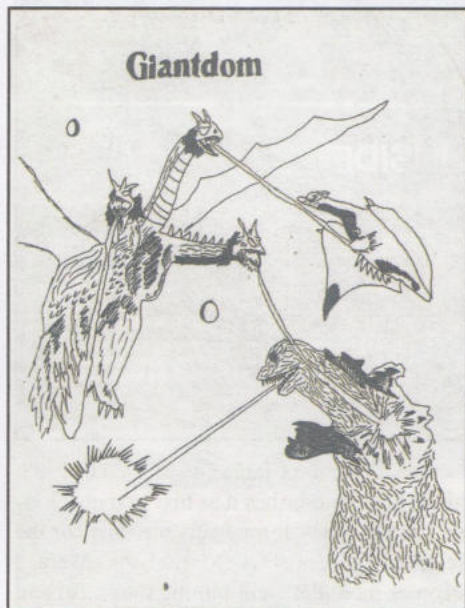


The covers of Japanese Movie Sci-Fi #2 and #5 by the inestimable Damon Foster.

increased reach is a letter to editor Foster from San Francisco horror host John Stanley in issue #4.

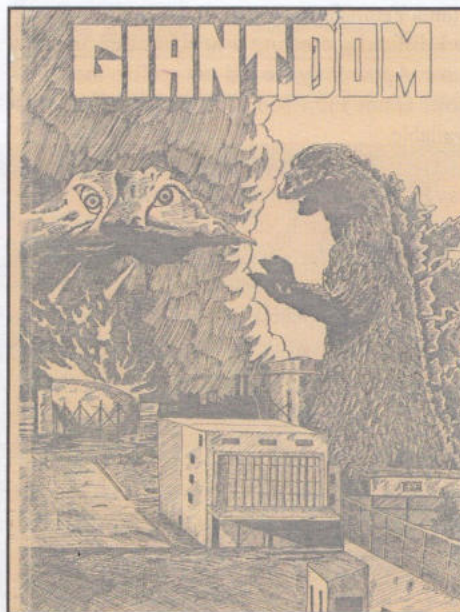
Five years pass before issue #5 is published. Foster announces on the cover that this is the final issue. From the premiere issue with its handwritten pages, it evolved into a well-produced, well-researched fanzine. Foster would soon go on to create the long-running fanzine Oriental Cinema.

GIANTDOM (1977-78)



October, 1977. Joe DiGiorgio of Troy, New York, published issue #1 of Giantdom. With a cover eerily reminiscent of Japan's Giant Monsters, it serves as a reminder that stills from movies were limited in quantity. Illustrated and written by DiGiorgio, the issue also contains part one of a *Godzilla vs. the Smog Monster* filmbook by Barry Kaufman who, a

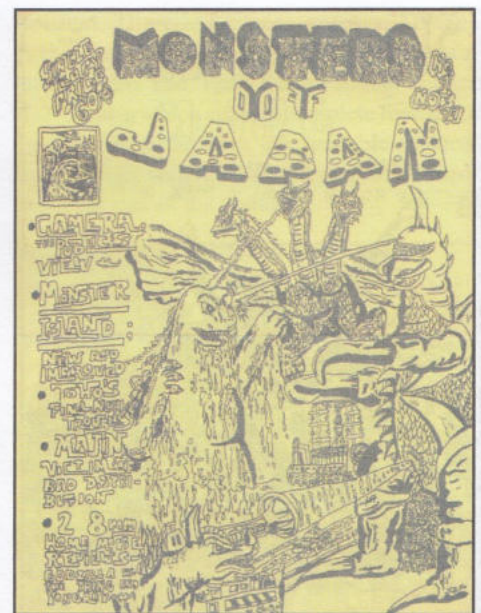
month later, would publish his own fanzine: Monsters of Japan.



Issue #2 of Giantdom was a huge step up in professionalism. With a cover by the omnipresent Bill Gudmundson, the issue included the continuation of the filmbook from issue #1, but interestingly, it is called "Godzilla vs. Hedorah." (That title is a translation for the Japanese title *Godzilla tai Hedorah*, and would not be used in the United States for twenty years.) Despite editor DiGiorgio's mention that the next issue would focus on Daiei's *War of the Monsters* (*Gamera vs. Barugon*), issue #2 was Giantdom's last.

MONSTERS OF JAPAN (1977-1978)

In November of 1977, Barry Kaufman published Monsters of Japan, forcing Mike Martin to change the name of his yet-to-be-



Barry Kaufman's Monsters of Japan #1.

published fanzine. MOJ is instantly recognizable by Kaufman's preference for yellow paper. MOJ #1 is a solo effort, but others would contribute to the following issue.

Monsters of Japan #2 continued with a Kaufmanesque yellow cover. Page numbering is inconsistent due to the incorporation of Dan Murray's unpublished Giant Japanese Monsters issue #2. An early discussion of the different Godzilla suits was penned by Kaufman.



Monsters of Japan #3 contained an innovative art portfolio of *Destroy All Monsters* with works by Godzisewski, Gudmundson, Loffink, Tysver, and Kaufman. Despite improvements, MOJ folded after issue #3.

GIANTS FROM JAPAN (1979-1980)

In 1976, Mike Martin began his fanzine before ever seeing another one, naming it



The covers of *Giants From Japan* #1 and #2, published by Mike Martin.

Japanese Giants. Finding that name taken, he went with *Monsters From Japan*. Discovering Kauffman's *Monsters of Japan*, he again changed the name. Settling on *Giants From Japan*, Martin finally published it in 1979.

Giants From Japan #2 was published in 1980. As the largest Showa Era fanzine (at 68 pages), the issue covered an array of subjects, including *Yog, Monster from Space* (a.k.a. *Space Amoeba*). Editor Martin was responsible for most of the content, but contributors included Gudmundson, Grays, and DeGiorgio.

NIPPONESE FANTASY FILMS (1980)



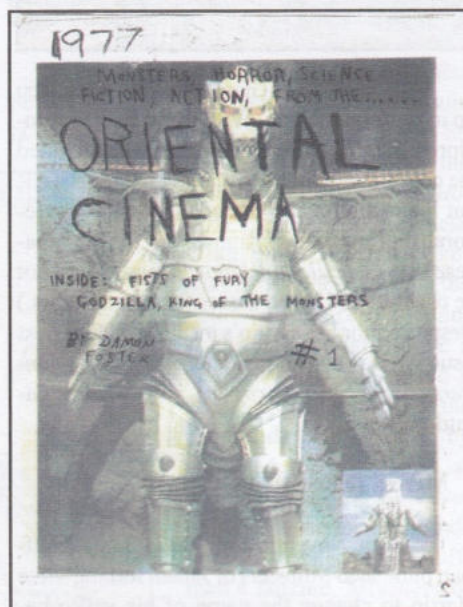
The last fanzine title created in the Showa era was a one-shot effort by the young



Nick Cross of Castro Valley, California. Cross published a uniquely named fanzine: *Nipponese Fantasy Films*. As with Mike Martin and *Giants From Japan*, one assumes editor Cross had difficulty creating a new, unused fanzine name. Apparently, he did not realize that "Famous Giant Film Monsters from Japan" was available.

Also uniquely sized, *Nipponese Fantasy Films* was printed on legal-sized (8.5 x 14 inch) paper. Editor Nick Cross was influenced by Damon Foster's efforts. Articles include a discussion of "man-in-a-suit" versus stop-motion animation special effects, as well as short articles on *Yog Monster from Space* (*Space Amoeba*), *Godzilla's Revenge* (*All Monsters Attack*), *Ultraman*, and more. Cross mentioned plans for a second issue, but no evidence has surfaced that one was ever printed.

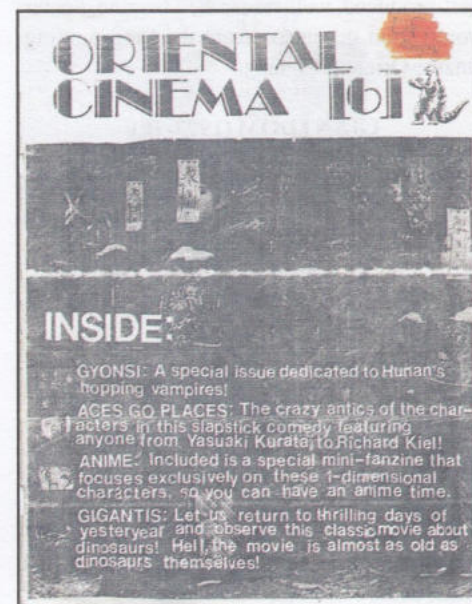
ORIENTAL CINEMA (1977-2007)



Sometime during 1977, Damon Foster began publishing his second fanzine, *Oriental Cinema*. (Actually his third, if Japanese *Monsters* is included.) Like Japanese Movie Sci-Fi, the early issues featured handwritten pages, but a typewriter soon manifested itself. The fanzine was entirely produced by Foster, and its subject matter remained consistent throughout its rise to international popularity: kaiju, tokusatsu, anime, and martial arts. The premiere issue featured articles on *Godzilla*, *Ultraman*, *Bruce Lee*, and *Speed Racer*. Issues #2 and 3 maintained a similar level of professionalism.

Issue #4 of *Oriental Cinema* notably featured a review of Bullmark toys, covering figures like *Godzilla*, *Gigan*, and "Mecha-Godzilla." This was significant, as it marked the first article in a fanzine to focus on kaiju-related non-movie memorabilia, highlighting the growing collector interest in toys. The issue also included a timely review of *Godzilla on Monster Island* (the U.S. title for *Godzilla vs. Gigan*), which helps date the fanzine. (Publication dates were often missing from early issues.)

Published in 1983, five years after the prior issue, OC #5's cover summarizes mainstays of the publication's concentration: *Godzilla* and *Bruce Lee*.



Oriental Cinema #6 arrived in 1988. Editor Foster describes it as his "comeback issue" and the new format sets the tone for the Heisei era success of OC. Martial arts coverage becomes more detailed, joining tokusatsu and kaiju as areas of focus. A mini-zine "Anime Explorers" was included.

January 7, 1989, marks the end of the historical period in Japanese history used to date kaiju films: the Showa Era. *Oriental Cinema* #6 was the last kaiju fanzine printed during this era. Publication of *Oriental Cinema* continued well into the Heisei Era, increasingly incorporating martial arts into its subject matter. OC

became an internationally distributed publication, sold on every continent "except in Antarctica," as Damon Foster is fond of saying.

Kaiju fanzines again exploded in the Heisei Era, including Xenorama, Kaiju Review, Owari, and of course G-FAN. Two Showa veterans were still extant during the new era: Ori-

ental Cinema and Japanese Giants.

All the fanzines mentioned in this article have been collected and preserved by the Japanese Film Fanzine Junkpile (JFFJ) Project, which is dedicated to archiving the fanzines that sparked American Godzilla fandom, and pays homage to the pioneering Japanese Fantasy Film

Journal. Digitized copies are available on archive.org: Use keywords "JFFJ" and "Showa" to find them. The "Early Kaiju Fandom Volume 1-3" books, which contain complete reprints of many of these fanzines, are available on Amazon, with six volumes planned; no profit is made from the sale of the books. **E**

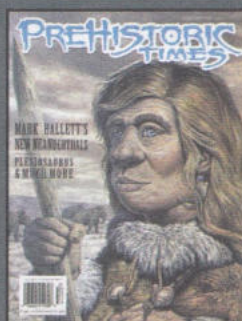
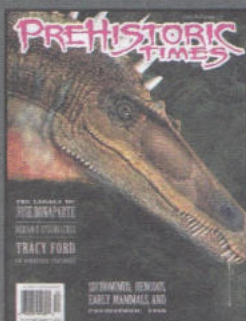
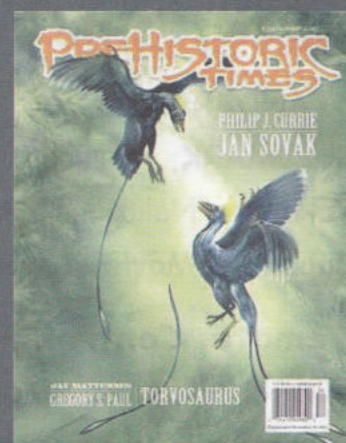


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