

# SUN SHOWBIZ



## Tomorrow in your Sun ...

Bruce Kirkland on the Clash of the Titans DVD, which hits stores this week.

Chris Hemsworth (left) and Anthony Hopkins in Thor.



## Ruffalo gets green light as latest Hulk star

SAN DIEGO, Calif. — Don't make Mark Ruffalo angry — you wouldn't like him when he's angry.

The acclaimed actor, currently on screen in the dysfunctional family drama *The Kids Are All Right*, will replace Edward Norton as the Incredible Hulk in 2012's *The Avengers*, it was officially announced Saturday.

Also confirmed at Comic-Con International was Marvel's other much-publicized secret: its team-up extravaganza will be written and directed by *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* creator Joss Whedon. Ruffalo joins a cast that includes Robert Downey Jr. (Iron Man), Samuel L. Jackson (Nick Fury), Chris Evans (Captain America), Scarlett Johansson (Black Widow), Chris Hemsworth (Thor) and the just-announced Jeremy Renner (Hawkeye).

"I'm excited," Hemsworth told journalists afterward. "A lot of people are like, 'I want to see them fight — who would win?' But I want to see them sit down at a dinner party — Iron Man, Captain America and Thor — and see what the hell they'd talk about."

*The Avengers* is scheduled to open in May 2012. Ruffalo becomes the third actor to play Bruce Banner a.k.a. the Hulk in less than a decade, following Eric Bana and Norton.

— Kevin Williamson



MARK RUFFALO

Looking very un-angry

# The Thor winner

Chris Hemsworth ready to give up until he won superhero role in Marvel flick

SAN DIEGO, Calif. — For every Christopher Reeve, there's a Brandon Routh.

Reeve, of course, became a superstar for playing the Man of Steel. And Routh, with *Superman Returns*, did not. This isn't a slight against Routh — whose performance was pitch-perfect — but a reality of the dubious fortunes faced by unknown actors who dare to don capes and costumes to battle evil on the big and small screens. If actors used to tremble in fear of being typecast (i.e.: Adam West), now they live under the threat of being rebooted (as Routh has been, with the studio indicating it will recast Superman in their next sequel).

Into this corporate comic-



book landscape storms Chris Hemsworth, a 26-year-old Australian actor who most moviegoers know only as Captain Kirk's doomed father in last summer's *Star Trek*. That will soon change. Last year Hemsworth landed the sought-after role of Thor, in Kenneth Branagh's mega-budget adaptation of Marvel Comics' Norse god of thunder. The movie, co-starring Anthony Hopkins as his father Odin and Natalie Portman as his earth-bound love inter-

est, opens next May. But by then, Hemsworth will have already filmed *The Avengers*, in which Thor will be teamed with, among others, Robert Downey Jr.'s Iron Man, Chris Evans' Captain America and Samuel L. Jackson's Nick Fury. It's a staggering change of pace for an actor who had almost given up on his Hollywood ambitions.

"There were eight months where I didn't work and I was on the phone with my parents going, 'I'm coming home. This is just not for me.' It was good, though," he told QMI at this weekend's Comic-Con.

"That period made me think, 'What am I doing? I'm relying on something I have no control over to make me happy ... I really started think-

ing I'm just going to get comfortable with this moment here and not keep looking to the future.' It was really a turning point for me. It was one of the hardest periods for me, questioning everything I wanted to do. But also very humbling. It's funny. Once you take the load off yourself and go, 'Okay, I'm cool with whatever happens' then things just started coming in."

First, he landed a role in *Cabin in the Woods*, a horror comedy produced by Joss Whedon (who has since been announced as the director of *The Avengers*). "Then I found about (the 1980s remake) *Red Dawn* and *Thor* a day apart," Hemsworth said. "So it was like from not working to having the next few years of my

life lined up."

Whatever happens with *Thor* and *The Avengers*, Hemsworth already has a die-hard fan in Portman, who doesn't shy away from praising Marvel's newest superhero.

"He's a fantastic actor," she said. "He has a very quiet confidence. He's not show-offy in anyway. But he's able to walk into a room with Ken Branagh and act his pants off and not be intimidated. He's able to shoulder the responsibility of taking on this huge character with incredible grace. His feet are firmly planted on the ground. He's just universally nice to everyone, genuinely nice. I have no doubt he'll be a massive star."

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