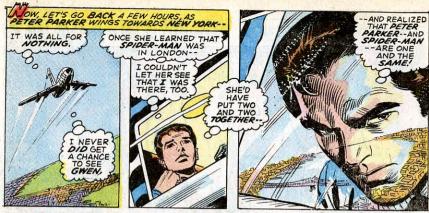


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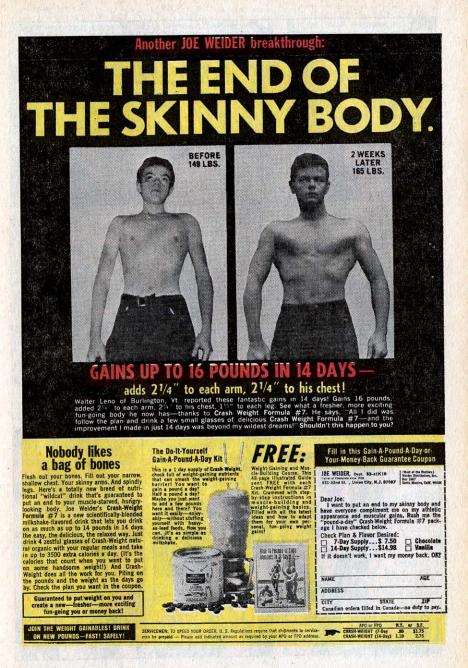
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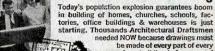
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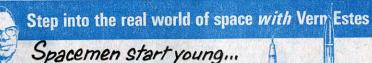








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ITEM! Here's the announcement you've been waiting for. For those of you who've wondered when we'd break with tradition and enter the next phase of comic-book presentation - namely, publications for the more adult reader, in illustrated panel form - you need wonder no longer. We're proud to announce that, by the time you read these momentous words, our first R-rated pubfication will already be on sale! It's called SAVAGE TALES, and sells for 50¢ - with 64 pages of the most mind-boggling stories and artwork you've ever seen between two covers! You'll find CONAN THE BARBARIAN, the unbelievably savage KA:ZAR, the most beautiful AMAZONS of all time, and other tales that your eyes and your mind will never forget! Scripted by STAN THE MAN, RASCALLY ROY, and MERRY GERRY CONWAY - with the kind of artwork you've always dreamed of, by BIG JOHN BUSCEMA, BASHFUL BARRY SMITH. GENIAL GENE COLAN, ol' RING-A-DING ROMITA, and GRACIOUS GRAY MOR-ROW - all in breath-taking black-andwhite halftones, with each illustration in the mag worthy of framing and displaying all by itself - and you better believe it! So, if you're old enough to drive, zoom - do not walk - to your newsstand, 'cause we promise you this the word is already out - and SAVAGE TALES #1 is destined to become the biggest and fastest best-seller since Hugh Hefner discovered girls! And, for those of you who've been muttering that mighty Marvel is content to rest on its laurels - read SAVAGE TALES, repentant one - and bite your tongue! ITEM! Hey, how about HAPPY HERBIE TRIMPE? Talk about having your own fan club - wow! Ol' Green-Skin's stepfather actually had a documentary movie filmed about himself, entitled "Herb Trimpe, We Love You!", or "We Love Herb Trimpe", or something like that. (Actually, we're so doggone jealousthat we can't even remember the name!) Anyway, a bunch of N.Y.U. film-makers marched over to the Bullpen the otherday and actually shot part of their documentary in the hallowed halls of Marvel while all the guys and gals tried to pretend they were going on with their work! If production plans bear fruit, you may actually see the movie-making masterpiece on N.E.T. (National Educational Television) one of these days. We'll keep you posted, if we have time - 'cause we're kinda busy preventing Herbie from going Hollywood!

ITEM! Speaking of show biz, STAN THE MAN was featured in a nationally televised CBS-TV interview the other day, but we can't tell you much about it. The interview was presented in the morning, just at the time that all of us were on the way to work! However, if it's any consolation to anybody, our milkman saw it, and said it was pretty

STAN LEE'S SOAPBOX

We received a letter recently which was unsigned, but I thought the point raised by our anonymous writer might be of interest to Marveldom Assembled. Briefly, we were taken to task because many of our stories seem to deal with real issues, such as pollution, civil rights, campus unrest, etc. Our unnamed correspondent writes that "Marvel is trying to brainwash the public," and that "your kind of people are pulling the wool over your readers' eyes." The part that hurt the most was when he said, "You're probably doing it because you think it's the 'in' thing to do- and to make a fast buck."

Okay - rebuttal time! During the early years of Marvel's growth, our more aware readers used to ask why we didn't editorialize more, and I'd answer that we didn't feel it was within our purview. However, as time went by, and we realized that our readership was far more mature, far wiser than anyone had suspected, we began to touch upon real issues, real problems that confront this woebegone world of ours. Now, here's the hairy part. The more relevant our stories became, the more flak we took from every spectrum of opinion. The radicals claim we're too archaic! The conservatives claim we're too liberal! The doves call us hawks, and the hard-hats call us peaceniks! The Pollyannas say we're harbingers of doom, while the dropouts and cop-outs tell us we're living in a fools' paradise! No matter what we write or draw, half of you disagree - and, just between us, that's the way it oughtta be! We don't characterize ourselves with any particular labels. We represent virtually every shade of opinion, and like most of you, we're just trying to make some sense out of the nutty news items and ridiculous reports that assail our senses every minute. If we can make you think - if we can anger you, arouse you, stimulate and provoke you, then we've served our purpose. In fact, how's this for a new Marvel motto: "Entertainment - with a kick in it"?

Onward!

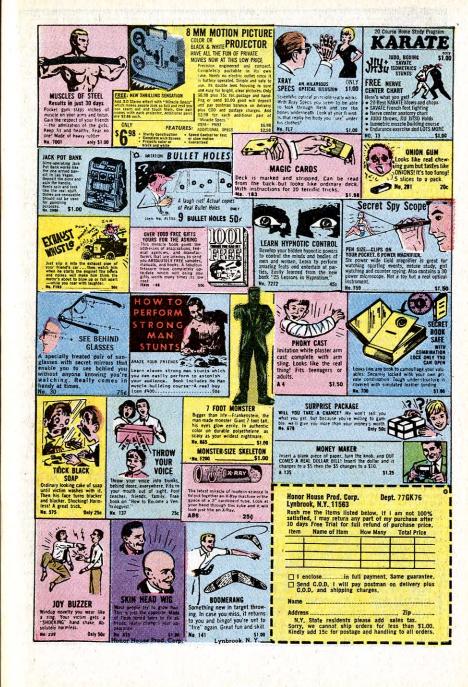


ITEM! New! New! New! CONAN THE BARBARIAN, in answer to popular demand (Pete Popular demanded it), is now on sale monthly! New! New! New! Watch for another sensational title from The House of 'Ideas - KING KULL, by the Rascally one and none other than an old favorite whom we've finally corralled once again - RAPTUROUS ROSS

ANDRU. If you like CONAN, you'll swing with KING (KULL, that is!). New! New! New! New! Another of comicdom's greats has joined the Bullpen! Say hello to GARD. NER (FEARLESS) FOX, who's already hard at work at a brand new series starring one of the 'AVENGERS' most sensational smash-hit characters — the rough-and-ready RED WOLF himself! — There's lots more, 'cause we're really rollin' now — but we'll save some for our next few issues. After all, how much wonderment can you take?

ITEM! People have been asking who writes the agonizingly alliterative head-lines for these priceless pages each month. We always thought it was Our Leader, but he just hinted to us that he's had a bit of help—from some fella named Spiro. (We can't reveal-his last name because he wouldn't want his boss to know he's been moonlighting!) Just goes to show you ... everybody's into Marvel!







THE SPIDER'S WEB

SEND YOUR LETTERS TO:

THE MARVEL COMICS GROUP SECOND FLOOR 625 MADISON AV., NEW YORK ,N. Y. 10022

Dear Stan,

There is one mag that has never been better, that one being SPIDER-MAN. And ish #92 was no exception.

Backed by the fantastic pencils of Gil Kane, your story took shape in masterful form. The dialogue, for once, was neither corny nor choppy, but flowed smoothly throughout; that, however, is only a minor point.

Your presented a new angle in "When Iceman Attacks", a view of J. Jonah Jameson different from any I've seen in my four years — plus as a Spidophile. Now he is the human I always thought he was, hiding (very well, mind you) the warmth and true goodness that drives him beneath the coarse, and often overbearing, exterior. But, when it shines through, J.J.J. is as much or more of a man than most of us, laying his entire publishing empire on the line against something he believes is wrong. He has many faults, which have been for too long the only focus we had of him; keep it fair from now on, Stan, and show us more of that other side.

Iceman. Alone the word means little or, at most, would conjure up a mental image of a frost-glazed snowman, clad in tagged tophat and sporting a most fashionable broom. To an avid follower of the X-MEN, though, it brings back the memory of the greatest comic ever published. I am one such person. Gil Kane's Iceman was excellent, even better, comparatively, than the Spider-Man he does, maybe even better than Adams'. The addition of this character to an already good issue made it almost unbearable — ecstatically speaking.

If you ever do bring back the X-MEN, not just the reprints

If you ever do bring back the X-MEN, not just the reprints you're dishing out now, I would heartily recommend Mr. Kane for the job of their artist.

And keep up the great work!

John Ostapkovich, 3520 Chimeny Swift Drive Huntingdon Valley, Pa. 19006

We may have more of a surprise than that in store for you, John. Keep your eyes peeled, and you shall see a wonder of wonders — Leeman in his own strip!! Considering we received such a positive reaction, about ish #92, we have no fears about going ahead with what promises to be one of the most unusual superhero strips of all time!

And as for J.J.J. — his mother thanks you, his father thanks you, his sister thanks you, and he thanks you. And, oh yeah — so do wel!

Dear Stan,

The complaint I have about: "When Iceman Attacks!" is not the usual type of "comic book mistake" (but, why didn't Iceman ask Spider-Man about Gwen's kidnapping?)

Your characterization of Sam Bullit, "Law 'n Order" candidate (and Buck Ralston, in DAREDEVIL #71), is showing your liberal swing, which may or may not be merely in retaliation, a reaction to the themselves "middle-of-the-roaders".

Nevertheless, you have lowered yourself to nearly equaling the smear-tactics employed by those such as Agnew and Senator Ralph Smith (R-III.). Your association of Bullit with the syndicate or mafia only rings a bell, reminding us of the "Right's" attempts (successes?) to link all young people with revolutionaries, S.D.S. ers, Weathermen, and the like (Nixon calling college students burns). It seems you also tried to generalize conservatives into

In the idyllic media comics are, it was necessary for him to be crushed, but it was heartening to see Jameson take an unpopular stand, based on evidence, not emotions. It's too bad not all newspapers make up their own minds.

I realize this may have been more of a political sounding-board is that you our mark as someone take a stand against what is popular or in power. As on purpose!

long as people do this, I think it's worth sticking around in America.

Tom Hurd, 2052 Downey Rd. Homewood, III. 60430

And we think, Tom, that it always was and always will be worth sticking around in America. Y'see, Americans have always enjoyed an environment where someone, if they want to, CAN take a stand against the popular. Those who did take stands were not themselves particularly popular, but the fact remains that, in the long run, there is less repression in this country than just about any other. (Now who's sounding like a political sounding board???)

As far as Sam Bullit and other uncompromising characters we've dealt with go, we'll have to reiterate what we've been saying for a long time — we deal with characters on an individual basis, not as representatives of specific groups or movements. There is good and bad on both sides of every issue, and if characters were representative of certain political or social movements, it would appear that we were simply taking a one-sided stand. And since we like to give every guy a chance, we can only hope that you'll judge us and our creations as unique entities, not as generalities or the turn of a cheek to the other side. (Whew!)

Howdy

First, I must confess that I haven't been able to follow Spidey as faithfully as I would wish to. But, those mags that I've been able to latch on to send humorous shivers through my bod.

As much as I dig the wall-crawler, I still miss the old days of John Romita. Don't get me wrong — still think Spidey's personality, coupled with Pete's ever-mounting maturity, have made Spider-Man the paragon of neurotic manhood I've grown to love and many times identify with.

One thing though: I've heard many people express an eagerness for Pete to be sent over here. Don't! You'll only be spoiling it for us over here. The last thing we want to read about is Spidey swinging through triple-canopy.

Be that as it may, keep up the work, group! SP/4 John H. Madden, 499-58-8441 71st AHC, APO SF 96374

Don't worry, John, it wouldn't occur to us to turn of 'Spidey into Monkey-Man — Spidey may be a swinger, but we don't think palms are his style, either! Considering the plans we've got in store for our old wall-crawler, wé don't think you (or he) will ever have to worry about donning a uniform (a green one, that is) again!

Dear Stan,

What is happening to Marvel Comics?

After reading SPIDER-MAN #92 (also DAREDEVIL #71) I asked myself this question.

The art-work was good, except for Iceman, but the story was bad, very bad. I don't mean the plot, but the way it was written. There seems to be a lot more talk and not enough action. Many Marvel stories seem to be leaning towards more fights with words, thoughts, and ideas, than with fists.

Can Marvel be changing, now that they're #1? I hope not.

Joseph Mecca, 504 Oak St.

Old Forge, Pa. 18518

On the spot! Why are we always being put on that uncomfortable little spot, Joe?? We gather from your last remark that you think we're copping out. To tell the truth, we've always tried to change with the times, and it seems that the world we live in today is characterized by more rhetoric and fewer fists. We never thought of that as being a let-down, 'cause it's a lot harder for us to sit down and write scripts twice as long as they used to be. We're disappointed that you didn't dig our loeman tale, but all we ask is that you understand we aimed to please. We may have missed our mark as fair as you're concerned, but at least we didn't do it on purpose!

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(Fearless Front-Facer) — An honorary title bestowed for devotion to Marvel above and beyond the call of duty. Gentlemen,

Old time Marvel maniacs such as myself (do FF #9 and SPIDEY #3 qualify me as an old-timer?) are surely aware by now that 1970 has been rather a notable year for you people. Jack Kirby departed from the FF (after, I suspect, setting a new endurance record for comic magazine illustrators), Roy Thomas was acknowledged by fandom to be the excellent writer he is, the FF hit issue number 100, and the long-awaried DR. DOOM, KA-ZAR, and strips came into existance. As a pair of additional surprises, the Black Widow went solo and (of paramount importance,) Conan the Cimmerian came to comicdom.

But over and above all these achievements (some of which are considerable), looms one greater accomplishment — something I have been hoping for fervently for some two years or so. You have re-vitalized Spider-Man completely.

Though you started the new year off miserably where Spidey is concerned, you have nonetheless managed, in the last five issues, to make this magazine as excellent as it ever was. Starting with issue #88 and running thru to #92, quality of art and story have risen dramatically above the levels of the past two years. Returned once more are all the crazy little subplots that dovetail neatly together at the story's climax, thereby creating a maximum of suspense. Think of all the subjects presented recently: the arrival of an East Asian military figure, the macabre sight of Doc Ock's arms running amok in New York, Doc's escape from jail, the demolition of a 747 jet liner, the death of Captain Stacy, the Captain deducing Spidey's secret identity, the rise and fall of Sam Bullitt - an amazing list! And yet each idea flowed smoothly along into the next, the stories were never cramped, talky, or dull. We've had thrills, tragedy, wisecracks, and really interesting developments in Pete's social life. I don't know whether or not you realize it, Stan, but you haven't turned out stuff like this in a long, long time. Keep it up.

And then there's the art. Gil Kane is a heaven-send! Not since the long-gone days of Ditko have such wonderfully fluid, ingenious action scenes been portrayed in Spider-Man. One thing, though: Romita's inking cramps Kane's style. Gil needs an inker who will add fine-line detail to his work. Tom Palmer would be great for Spidey's inker, if you could manage it.

I hope you consider the suggestion of switching inkers, because I'm a long-time fan of Gil Kane, and am fully aware that his work can look much better than it does now (not that it isn't an improvement over everything previously seen in Spider-Man).

Concerning story-line a word of caution: you have now managed operfectly recreate the old Betty Brant-Spider-Man dillemma, this time substituting Gwen for Betty. Gwen hates Spidey, loves Pete; Pete therefore is afraid that Gwen will learn his secret identity — something which she must eventually do. Where does all that leave you? In a mess, because you can't do this time what you did last time; you can't drop Gwen from the story-line as you did to Betty, because Gwen has become (over some sixty issues) firm established as the female lead in this strip. So when you make your move on this secret identity business, it must be a carefully

considered move. Of course, your alternative is to Vacillate; your can take the Daredevil route and just avoid the question of resolving Peter and Gwen's differences and of marriage. But then, if you do that, I suspect that you will have a mighty aroused army of readers on your hands.

If you want my opinion of the whole thing, it is simply this: if Pete really wanted to clear the sordid business up, he would tell Gwen everything, explain that he did not purposely kill her father. Knowing him as she does, can she possibly not believe him?

At any rate, good luck with the whole thing and please keep up your startlingly re-vitalized efforts on the magazine as a whole. Tom Steinke, 87 Udalia Ct. West Islip, N.Y.

Seeing that we're in your good graces, Tom, you won't mind a bit if we beg off with vagueness, both about the Spidey-Gwen situation and the art line-up for future issues. Y'see, we just don't-KNOW yet! Our heads are so cramped working on one month's schedule at a time, we rarely, have the opportunity to sit down and plan the shape of things to come. But listen, faithful one, we won't let you down — who COULD with a little help from their friends??

Dear Bullpen,

This letter does not concern Spidey, but I wrote to this comic because it's my favorite. Today when I came in from doing my chores, on the CBS news, they were talking about the comic book industry. At first they had a competitor company, but I figured if they were good enough to be mentioned so would Marvel. My hopes were really up there because I had never seen Stan on TV, and I had never heard him. Sure enough, they started talking about Marvel and before you know it; they were interviewing Stan.

I kinde think his voice sounds kinde like Cliff Robertson's. Anyway, Stan told about how all of you tried, (you succeeded) to make your,comics realistic. He mentioned that all of the heroes had problems. I'll quote "Our one hero, Spider-Man, has more problems than you can shake a stick at." He went on to say that many grown-ups bought your comics and that more than 2000 college proffsors are on your subcription list. He mentioned the FF and Sqt. Fury. Then they showed a picture of Spidey. That was the best 5-minute thing on TV that I really enjoyed. All in all, it was a terrific interview.

So, until Stan shaves off his beard, (heaven forbid), make mine Marvel!!!!! Jeff Lapka, Rt. #3 Brainerd

We're kinda sorry you let the word get out about Smiley being a TV star, Jeff. If he lets, it go to his, head — well, who knows?? We may wind up without an editor!! (Anything's possible — we just heard Stan ran out and ordered two dozen shires!!)



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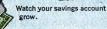
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