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MARVEL BULLPEN BULLETINS . MARVEL BULLPEN BULLETINS . MARVEL BULLPEN BULLETINS

WELCOME TO THE WONDERFUL, WAY-OUT WORLD OF MARVEL MADNESS!

We're cramped for space this ish, so we'll make it short and sweet —

ITEM! You've heard how comedians always dream of playing Hamlet? Well, Trusty TOM SUTTON, who's been one of the humorous mainstays of NOT BRAND ECHH, has always wanted to tackle pencilling a super-hero strip. And so we urge you to latch on to this month's CAPTAIN MARVEL — new artwork — new approach — new thrills — but the same ol' loveable Torn, just a'doin' his thing!

ITEM! Big news! We've some brand new mags coming up for you next month! They're in the spooky story and the romance categories — and all in the modern, meaningful Marvel manner. So save your money, bunny, and go easy on luxuries like food, clothing, and shelter. Watch these pages next ish and be ready for anything!

TTEM Didja notice the new MARVEL SUPPER-HERDES? Nothing to get exited about — all it contains is some honest-to-forbush Lee Kirby AVENGERS, featuring the HULK, THOR. IRON MAN. SUB-MAR-INER— plus Lee-Kirbys X-MEN, and sew more surprises! If it's already sold out, now you know why!

ITEM! Generous GEORGIE KLEIN finally took the plunge and got himself wedded a few weeks ago – after one of the longest engagements on record – a mere 18 years! One thing we've gotta say about of George – he'd be doky if he weren't so impetuous! ITEM! Here's one of the lafest Marvelmention record albums we've heard of – it's the new MOTHER EARTH smasheros, entitled "Living with the Animals", and the very first number is called "Marvel Group"! (Ta ta ta ta, ta ta) "twas penned by vocalist POWELL ST. JOHN, and brought to our attention by manager TRAVIS RIVERS, who personally gave us a few complimentary copies! Many thanks, gang

- it's the wildest!
ITEM! No more items! (Nyahhh!)

THE MIGHTY MARVEL CHECKLIST Marvel-ous Mags On Sale Right Now!

SILVER SURFER #7: Once again the name of FRANKENSTEIN spreads fear thruout the land — and only the SILVER SURFER can save mankind from the strangest threat of all!

FANTASTIC FOUR #89: The return of the dreaded SKRULLS! But this time, it isn't merely earth that's in dire danger — the target for an unmentionable fate is — the unsuspecting THING!

SPIDER-MAN #75: From out of nowhere, a startling sudden DEATH now strikes without warning — even as a newer, more fearful SUPER-FOE arises once more to menace our weary web-slinger!

STAN'S SOAPBOX

As you've already noticed, the price of our magniloquent mags has just risen from 12¢ to 15¢ . . . but far be it from us to make so monumental a move without cluing you in to the whys and wherefores. At a time when the prices of just about everything you can think of keep rising daily, our mighty Marvels have been holding the line at 12¢ for the past seven years! However, in our never-ending efforts to bring you nothing but the very best, we have regularly increased the payments that we make to artists, writers, printers, etc. It's finally reached the point where we MUST raise our selling price to 15¢ or sacrifice the quality of our comics - and THAT we would never do. That's it. Believer . . the whole ball of wax. But how, let's look at the bright side today you can buy your majestic Marvel mags even faster . . cause you don't have to fumble around with pennies! Just another glowing example of how we strive eternally to make your life easier.

Excelsior! Smiley

AVENGERS #66: The one you've been waiting for! THOR and IRON MAN return to the ranks! But, can even they prevail when the vengeful VISION goes wild? Plus a cataclysmic surprise ending!

X-MEN #58: The sinister SENTINELS seem on the verge of total victory over earth's mutants — then, enter the X-Men, and the mysterious man called ... HAVOK! It's a brain-blaster!

DAREDEVIL #54: From out of the perilladen past — with the one power which DD cannot fight — comes the macabre MR. FEAR! Also — the seeming death of Matt Murdock! Shock follows shock!

MIGHTY THOR #165: At last the GOD OF THUNDER loses his cool and goes berserk! If it's action you're after, don't miss this staggering showdown between THOR and HIM!

CAPTAIN AMERICA #116: Never has the RED SKULL been more powerful —or CAP more helpless! Trapped by the COSMIC CUBE — there can be no escape! Not for the faint-hearted!

INCREDIBLE HULK #118: Green Skin battles the sensational SUB-MARINER! What more need we say — except to tell you that STAN THE MAN and HAPPY HERBIE TRIMPE bought a dozen each themselves!

IRON MAN #116: The most unexpected team-up of all - Shellhead and the uncanny UNICORN - against the rampaging RED GHOST! And wait'll you learn how ol' Ghosty plans to conquer the world!

SUB-MARINER #16: We call this one "The Sea That Time Forgot!" — but you'll never forget what happens when Namor clashes with the evil TIGER SHARK — in the weirdest setting yet!

CAPTAIN MARVEL #15: Mission — Destroy the Kree Galaxyi This is the awesome command of the almighty ZO to the man called Mar-Vell — and that's just the beginning! A must!

SGT. FURY #68: Ever wonder if our stogiesmokin' sarge had a family? Well, you're gonna MEET 'em — in this ish! But, if you think that's ALL that's going to happen forget it!

CAPT. SAVAGE #15: "Within the Temple Waits ... Death!" And, as a matter of fact, the whole Indo-Chinese jungle is crawling with danger for our Raider buddies! Dig an offbeat war mag? This is it!

COLLECTORS' ITEM CLASSICS #22: Want more of the F.F. — Dr. Strange — and Iron Man? You got it! PLUS, a bombshell bonus — the very first appearance of Henry Pym . the ANT-MAN!

RAWHIDE KID ±71: The most dreaded cry of all is heard on the frontier: "Indian War!" It's Rawhide at his sluggin', sixshootin' best – against the most deadly enemy in the West!

MILLIE THE MODEL #173 and CHILL #4: Here we are again, with two of the zingiest, zaniest, zilchiest ha-ha mags in town! They're glamorous, groovy, and goofy! Try 'em!

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DR. STRANGE #181: Our magical mentor is defeated in mystic battle — not by the harowing hordes of NIGHTMARE — but by the awesome power of his own cloak and amulet! A must!

MARVEL SUPER-HEROES #21: The superhero thrill of a lifetime! The original AVEN-GERS battling SUB-MARINER and the incredible HULK—also, a Lee-Kirby X-MEN epic extraordinaire! Plus—but that would be telling!

MARVEL TALES #21: Thor - the Human Torch - and Spidey makes three! And, in case you hadn't guessed - we're throwing a sinister super-baddie or two at you, as well! Bargain days are here again!

.....

FROM MARVEL! WATCH FOR 'EM--- 'NUFF SAID!



Don Bolander, M.A., University of Chicago; B.S., Northwestern University; Director of Career Institute; authority on adult education

If you've ever been shamed by a mistake in English, maybe I can save you from years of disappointment.

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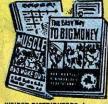
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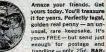
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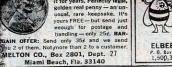
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THE SPIDER'S WEB

SEND YOUR LETTERS TO:

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

Dear Mr. Lee.

It seems that ever since issue #/39, Spider-Man has been getting weaker and weaker, not to mention much less agile. There was a time when he could knock out the Ox, who was at least as strong as the Kingpin, with one punch; and a fight against a few punk crooks would be a complete farce. If someone knocked him across the room, he would do a cartwheel or some such and gracefully manage to turn the punch into more speed and force to send him sailing through a bunch of thugs. Now, I'm not any kind of worshipper of your competitors—you know, the guys that make their heroes veritable human gods—but Spidey now seems to be no stronger than Daredevil or Capitain America and much more clumsy. In the old days, he was strong enough to make himself a super-human being, but not to strong as to be an all-powerful diety. Now, he's just a normal costumed shlump.

To make matters worse, his web was once strong enough to keep the Thing a prisoner for life. Now it seems that the web's only virtue is it's stickiness, and everyone outside of Irving Forbush can sever it — not snap it — sever it. It used to be like a thin, highly compressed steel wire, and if broken it would naturally go "snap". Now it seem to be like a soggy strand of spaghetti, and if it's broken, it goes "thivip" or some other idiotic sound. I thought it was your competitors that used the worthless sound effects! For shame. Also gone is the Spidersignal, which although corny, always seemed to blend in nicely.

Today also, Pete doesn't have a care in the world compared to his problems of yesteryear. It's a circle. You have a hero and give him a lot of problems. Everybody, (including yourself) feels sorry for him because they tend to identify with him, so you take away, his problems. You're left with a crummy competitor-type hero, and you can no longer identify with him, so you give him problems again.

Give Spider-Man problems permanently! He no longer even represents a tragic figure, which he always has been supposed to represent. Who was once comicdon's Hamilet is now, in comparison, comicdom's Old King Cole. I'd better stop Here; I'm breaking my own heart with nostalgia.

Gordon Matthews, 8 Perry Street Union City, Pa. 16438

And you'll be breaking ours with remorse and regret, Gordon,

It seems to us that, the lest time we looked, Spidey had about as many problems as ever — they had just been changed around a bit (by sending Aunt May out of town, for instance).

As for his getting weaker — if this is true, it's purely the blushin' Bullpen's fault, and it's entirely unconscious and against our own wishes. It seems to us that he's about as strong as ever, or maybe stronger — although we kind's figure he was only jawing when he (or was it Smiley?) said that his webbing could hold Ben Grimm a prisoner for life. Maybe it's just that crooks, like the public in general, are getting healthier.

What say the rest of you 'merry Marchers? Is Spidey still at the peak of his power — or does he need a refresher course from Charles Atlas and crew?

Dear Stan, John, and Jim.

According to my files, the only time Spidey fought a real, down-to-earth menace was in the first phantasmagoric issues pencilled by Steve Ditko. From then on it was a series of one fantastic villain to another. I'm not saying I do not enjoy thee—I think they are very creative. But, on the other hand, I would like to see my favorite (you mean there are others?) web-slinger fight a common, ordinary, not-too-well-organized gang or some safecracker who doesn't use some fantastic gizmo.

I realize the fact that in SPIDER-MAN #65 there was a jailbreak, but I think this was more like something out of an old gangster movie instead of a real happening (there are very few times in which the warden is kidnapped).

In issue #68 there was a student protest which seemed factual, but then the Kingpin entered and it became a fantasy again.

I have a reason for saying that SPIDER-MAN should fight a real-type criminal or become involved in a real incident without the addition of some super-powerful villain. In AMAZING FANTASY #15 (origin issue) Uncle Ben was killed by a real criminal, and that is how Spidey got involved in crime-fighting. Then why, if disaster was caused by a common hood, should Spidey fight only super-powered enemies?

Eric Nash, 100 Bleecker St. New York, N.Y. 10012

But who else would be able to stand up to him, Eric?

What we've attempted to do, in such recent issues as you mention, is to mix the worlds of fantasy and reality, with neither crowding out the all-important other.

Maybe one of these first fine days, however, we're going to have to try a story even more within the realms of probability than "The Impossible Escape!" And when we do — we'll be looking hard for a few plaudits from down Bleecker Street way, hear?



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

I think everyone that's been with SPIDER-MAN for over three years, or who reads MARVEL TALES, realizes that a certain something is missing from the web-slinger's mag. Many have tried to put their fingers on it, but few have actually deduced it. Spider-Man now has a new look — a look that steals the aura of mystery that once surrounded everyone's favorite wall-crawler. Yes, once Spidey was disliked by almost everyone (except, of course, fearless Flash Thompson). Once, Spider-Man crawled the canyons of the city by night and battled deadly felons and foes with his strange and mystifying spider-like powers. The Amazing Spider-Man was a figure of controversy, and most important, a figure to be FEARED BY ALL! This image lived quite successfully with Spidey through his first 38 issues.

Issue #39 introduced a new artist and a new era. Slowly but surely, the once-feared, once-avesome Spider-Man became just-another non-entity. When people saw Spidey swinging above them, no longer did cries of "Good Heavens, it's that awful Spider-Manl" or "Run, it's Spider-Manl" in gout from the frightened citizens. Only minimum yells of "Look, it's Spidey!" or "Hey, there goes the Spider-Manl" now sound. No longer was Spidey the every-other-issue target of the Daily Bugle. No longer did Peter Parker dwell on his problems as he did before (mainly because of the fact that Peter Parker was often completely crowded out of an issue by unnecessarily large fight panels and violent battles). Yes, Peter still had as many problems as ever. ... it just didn't seem that way any more. Some good examples of "Peter Parkerless" issues (or near Parkerless) are #% 52, 54, 55, and 56 in the second era of Spidey.

Now we get into the third and peresent era of Spider-Man: The Spidey of today, from ish #57 up. Okay, so the artwork decreased a little more. So what? Okay, I'll admit that the characters seem more shallow today, and there's more emphasis on fighting and conflict than there is on the personal lives of Pete, Gwen, Jameson, Harry, Robbie and all the others. Big deal—it's still the same, bona fide, 100% genuine SPIDER-MAN magazine, right? Right! At least that's what Stan keeps telling us. But, if we were to show a Spidophile of 1963 a SPIDER-MAN issue of today, do you think he'd believe us?

Let's compare the early SPIDER-MAN magazine to, say, issue #70. Ah, my crystal ball shows me a nicely dressed young man of high school age with well-kept hair and appearance. I see that he is meek, and he is not well liked by his schoolmates. He does not have an easy life, and his responsibilities are greater than most boys his age have. He has to watch over his aunt, maintain a high grade-point average, and often finds himself battling villains as strange, hated Spider-Man. This young man's name is Peter Parker.

I come forward in time. Now I see a young man who is, most of the time, quite popular with his crowd. He digs all the latest "in" places and really knows how to groove with the hippest grid at ESU. He has a life which is extraordinary! Every two or three weeks he drops in to see his loving aunt at her new home. That is, when he takes time out from endlessly fighting such baddies as Kingpin, Mysterio, the Vultures, Medusa, etc. Of course, fighting, them far overshadows the well-being of his aunt who has merely devoted 20 years of her rapidly decreasing life to him. He also maintains a grade-point average which allows him to get by in college. Why, this young man's name is Pêter Parker, tool

Remember those days when a fight with a baddie took up half the mag, and the other half consisted of Aunt May, Peter, Flash, Liz, Betty Brant, Jolly Jonah, and others? Unfortunately, magazines, like people, do change. Now, in following the "big panel policy", fights take up 75% and more of the space. However, we do have a new look in keeping up with the latest trends. We now have Mr. Robertson, his son Randy, and Josh, who might not have existed three years ago because of their color. Bravo, Marvel!

The point of this letter is this: Spider-Man cannot long exist without an evenly distributed portion of Peter Parker and company. And, vice-versa. Some good points that Spidey now has that he didn't have are the fact that the magazine now recognizes national problems and is more realistic in portraying blacks and other minorities. One thing that Spidey used to have that it now sorely lacks is more Peter Parker. If you can blend all of this into one magazine today, the SPIDER-MAN will really be . . . amazing!

Steve Gemes, 2737 SE 162nd Ave.

Steve Games, 2737 SE 162nd Av Portland, Ore.

Frankly, Steve, your carefully phrased, well-thought-out letter left us feeling just a wee bit limp and shopworn. Is it really true that the problem-laden life of Peter Parker has been all but crowded out of existence by the "new", third-wave Spider-Man? Are there many others out there who feel that the razzle-dazzle artwork of Johnny Romita (aided and abetted by Jim Mooney) has led to action overshadowing the often agonizing story of a young man's trials? Has Smilin' Stan, too, lost the deft touch that has made Spidey one of the most unique comics-mag characters of all time?

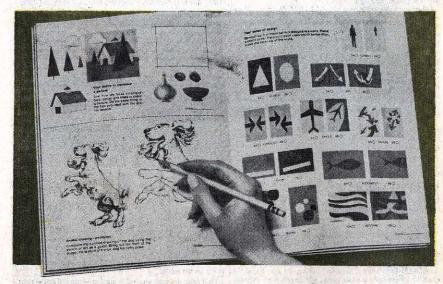
To be perfectly honest, we don't quite think so — if anything, we feel that our wondrous wall-crawler is more popular in his unpopularity today than ever before — and a legion of fens seem ready to back us up on it.

Still, now that the subject's out in the open — now that one long-time Spidey reader who cares has voiced his considered opinion — let's hear what the rest of Marveldom Assembled has to say on the matter.

We'll print the most interesting missives—pro and con—right here in the months to come! We feel that, even more than ever, SPIDER-MAN is right up there battling with the far-famed F.F. for the title of "The World's Greatest Comics Magazine!"—but if you don't agree and you hold your peace—well, don't say we didn't ask, pilgrim!







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