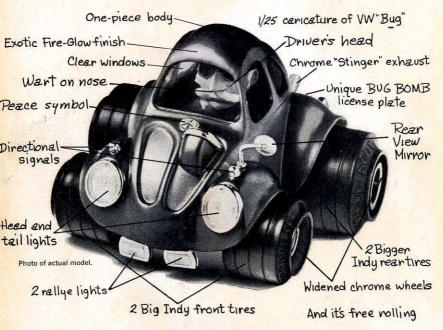


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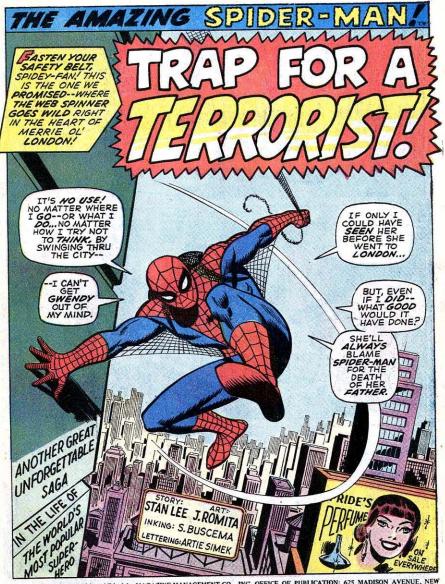
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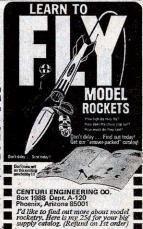
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WONDROUS WORDS OF WIT AND WISDOM WITH WHICH TO WASTE SOME TIME!

ITEM! Mystery fans! If you're too impatient to wait till we reveal the secret of Infinity's identity in THE MIGHTY THOR, you'll find a clue in FANTASTIC FOUR #108. (It's subtle, and carefully hidden but, we wanted to let you know.)

ITEM! If you've been wondering why you haven't seen too much of SAM ROSEN'S lettering in our mags lately, it's because he's been ill for a while. But, we just wanted to let his army of fans know that Sammy's on the mend again, and the whole happy Bullpen (including overworked ARTIE SIMEK) is glad to welcome him back.

ITEM! Talk about explosive events! Mighty Marvel was the toast of fandom when it presented, for the first time in comic-book form, the mind-staggering adventures of CONAN THE BARBARIAN. greatest of all sword-and-sorcery heroes. But now, another bombshell! In answer to an avalanche of requests, and because we wanna do it too, the current issue of CONAN heralds the first of a startling series of adaptations of the immortal Conan tales originally written by ROBERT E. HOWARD himself - creator of the battling Cimmerian! The thriller is "The Tower of the Elephant," earliest in setting of all Conan sagas and, if you've savored it in the original, you won't wanna miss seeing how RAS-CALLY ROY and BASHFUL BARRY put it all together. And if you haven't read the R.E.H. original, then a real mind-boggling treat awaits you within the pages of CONAN #4! We kid thee not, by Crom!

ITEM! Just a word of advice to all you stalwarts who constantly bombard us with requests for subscriptions. We wouldn't know how to process a subscription if DR. DOOM himself was after it. All those momentous matters are referred to NIFTY NANCY MURPHY, who does her thing in an office which is like at the other end of the world! So, to save yourself a lot of time, and to save us the trouble of dragging your letters over to our mirthful Miss Murphy, why not address any request for subs directly to the gal in charge. Simply send your poignant little postal request to NANCY MURPHY, 625 MADISON AVE., NYC NY 10021. Then hang loose, hero. Your goodies will scon be on the way.

ITEM! Well, it's name-dropping time here at the Bullpen again, so let's let 'em

chatty visit from talented VIC GHIDALIA of ABC-TV. He dropped by to compliment us on the quality of our famous, far-out, fantasy yarns. (And ol' Vic oughtta know whereof he speaks. He's recently co-edited "BEWARE THE BEASTS" and "THE LITTLE MON-STERS," two of the newest, scariest pocket books around!) Vic was telling us that some of the biggest late-nite talk show hosts are bidding for a number of your Bullpenners to birghten up their talkfests. So, keep watching your local channels, hear? And, speaking of sports, which we weren't, don't dare miss the new issue of PRO, the magazine of the National Football League, Why? Because the cover features nine (Count 'em! Nine!) Marvel superheroes, and there is page after page of great, full-color illustrations by BIG JOHN BUSCEMA in which he draws our own costumed cavorters in the same poses as the NFL's legendary, lethal linebackers! It's not to be missed, mister! Now let's congratulate BOB RALEIGH JR., disc jockey on WPGC Radio, Washington, D.C., for being named by BILLBOARD as one of the top 25 air personalities in the U.S. (Bob also holds a Master's Degree - but doesn't every Marvel maniac?) Ol' Robert has had real flattering things to say about our fun-filled fables, and we thank him for all the unblushing bouquets he's given us over the airwaves. Also, a tip of the Marvel beaniecap to all the Dee-Jays everywhere who've been quoting from our yarns and propagating the faith on their own swingin' shows. Hey, didja hear about our leader getting letters from two of the world's top film creators on the same day? The one from awesomely artistic ALAIN RESNAIS just broke us up as the great French director penned a zillion anecdotes about movie-making on the continent - but the other one, from the fabulous FEDERICO FELLINI, really took the cake. The world-famed maestro penned his letter in Italian, and poor Stan spent half the day racing around to get it translated. But you can bet your favorite fortune cookie, when he finally read it, it was more than worth the trouble. And now, a personal aside to both those master movie-makers: We'll always be grateful for your interest in our work, your valued friendship, and your enthusiastic awareness of the close

drop where they may. We just had a real | relationship between our comic-books chatty visit from talented VIC GHIDALIA | and the cinematic arts. Excelsior!

00000000

STAN LEE'S SOAPBOX

Question: Is there such a thing as too much success? Answer: There sure is! Example: The most recent issues of CAPTAIN AMERICA AND THE FALCON. It all started because we try to make our letters pages meaningful and intellectually stimulating. We've always attempted to avoid the usual "Your mag's groovy. Keen up the good work" or "Your mag stinks. Get lost" kind of thing. But (and here's where the too-muchsuccess bit comes in), almost every letter to Cap and the Falcon now deals with social issues, civil rights, patriotism, Viet Nam, and student unrest. We suddenly realized that nobody's saying anything about the stories themselves! So, our problem boils down to this - should we change our format to 20 pages of letters with a two-page story? Or, perhaps just change the title to TIME/WEEK? It's funny - we always wanted Cap (and all our characters) to be human, to be relevant. Even though the plots may be fantasyfilled and seemingly outrageous, we wanted you to relate to the real-life problems that crop up - problems which may even parallel your own. Well, you've been relating, all right! You've gotten so involved that all your mail seems to concern the world at large, and the conflicts and divisions that are assaulting our society. We're proud of your concern thrilled by your insight, and your enthusiasm - but we're worried about our stories! Is anybody reading them? Hasn't anyone noticed how great Gene's pencilling looks with Bill Everett's inking? Won't anyone mention that Cap's adventures are more action-packed and wondrous than ever? We wish you'd even find a mistake or two, just to let us know you're there! Come on, talk about the stories again, just for a while, huh? Otherwise they may replace us - with Walter Cronkite!

Onward!







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THE SPIDER'S WEB

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When I saw the letters column in SPIDER-MAN #91, I felt I was vindicated. "You see, Vicky?" I said. "Hobie Brown did figure out Spidey's secret. It's simply a matter of intelligence."

'Don't call me Vicky, it sounds like cough drops," she answered an annoyed way. "And prove it."

in an annoyed way. "Well," said I, choosing the most clinching argument first, "it must have been obvious that Peter was quite familiar with Spidey. He was used to having him barge in. Yet he didn't recognize the fact that Hobie was an impostor.

"So since Spider-Man had barged in on Peter before, Peter has to be Spider-Man. That's twisted logic. Seems to me far more probable that Spidey explained to Hobie that Parker was expecting Hobie, or some anonymous ringer, rather than the real Spider-

Well, Peter was wearing the same clothes when he talked to Hobie as Spidey, and later, as Parker.

Yeah? I happen to know you read through once, then checked back to see if it was the same. What you don't seem to realize is that Hobie couldn't just turn the pages to check. If he did have a feeling that something was familiar, he could never be sure whether he'd imagined the similarity. And if someone's wearing fairly normal clothes, who notices for sure? I will admit that it was careless of Peter, but not that Hobie would See-It-All-in-a Flash.

"Well," said 1, "how about when Stacy said, 'At the window! It's Spider-Man! The REAL one!" Then he'd know someone was suspected of being Spidey, and Peter's the logical suspect, so .

Yeah, Peter, or maybe the Chameleon, or possibly Mysterio, or perhaps Kraven, or even maybe the Lizard .

"What are you talking about?"

They're all people who have impersonated Spider-Man in the past. Of course, anyone with a spark of intelligence could see that this case is completely different, and that the person on trial is, of course, Peter Parker.

'Don't be sarcastic, Vicky."

'Don't call me Vicky."

"Anyway, what about the link-up with the costume? Spidey's excuse for barging in is to thank Peter for bringing his costume. Well, Hobie doesn't know whether or not that's true, but he does

know for sure that Spidey brought the costume to him, and ... "That's about as priceless as the 'barging in' line," she said. "After all, there couldn't be two people in the same huge city bringing costumes to two other people, could there? Highly suspicious. Look, all that proves is that there's a connection.

And that wasn't in question.

"Yeah, speaking of the photos . . ."
"I read that part of the letter too. Well, maybe you're right. Seems to me that when Spidey tells Hobie to mention a deal with Parker involving photos, and when Captain Stacy says, 'Then you do have a deal, it involves the photos he takes of you,' well, I'll admit that should really rouse Hobie's suspicions. Why should Spidey and Stacy cover up for each other's story? It couldn't be that the story is true, of course. Man, Jean, it's you and Fessel-meyer and J. Jonah Jameson."

'Well, now wait a second.

"You wait a second. I just had a brilliant idea. Spidey pointed

out the yellow shirt, brown jacket and olive pants that he was wearing and said that Parker would be wearing ditto, that's how Hobie would recognize him. After all, Spidey wouldn't want to take the chance that Hobie'd call Harry 'Parker,' or something dumb like that,'

"I don't know whether you realize it, but you've added fuel to my fire. After all, Hobie isn't stupid, and when he puts together all those funny little coincidences, he's got to come out with something.

"Oh, I'll agree to that. He comes out with the conclusion that there is a connection between Spider-Man and Peter Parker. Parker clicks pics. Anything further I will not agree to. It's not a matter of simply intelligence. It's a matter of knowledge. If it were Harry or Captain Stacy in possession of the same facts, the rest would be a foregone conclusion. But where would Hobie get enough facts to give him an inkling of what Spider-Man was up From the Daily Bugle? Come on, now. The news media have had so many contradictory stories about Spider-Man that only those with personal knowledge could tell what's what . . . Spider-Man remains a mysterious figure of the shadows, and Hobie simply hasn't the knowledge of his motivations necessary to figure out something like that.

What do you do with a kid like Vicky? A kid who won't listen to reason, who doesn't realize that people in comic books know that a costumed adventurer's greatest (sometimes only) secret is identity. I despair of her.

Well, excelsior for the rest of us.

P.M.M. Jean Laidig, 784 Holmdel Rd. Holmdel, N.J. 07733

And a hearty excelsior right back atcha, Jean. But we truthfully hope that you and your cough-drop-shy friend, Vicky, have remained on the best of terms since the little altercation recorded above. After all, far be it from mighty Marvel to come between friends! (Or at least, if we don't mind it in the pages of a comicmag, we wouldn't wanna do it in real life!)



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Dear Stan and etc...

It is indeed a rare story that can bring a tear to the eye (or my eye, anyway), and unfortunately even rarer that a comic (?) story does this, yet once again Stan has done it. Roy Thomas's stories can move me deeply, but never has anyone but Stan filled me with such great sorrow. I honestly cannot recall a comic-story that I cried over (although I know there have been some) as I did over the death of the beloved Captain Stacy.

I have known, as I'm sure many other fans have known, for months, that Capt. Stacy was aware of Pete's identity, but never did I draem that it would be revealed in such a manner. The final page ruined my reading of the FF which was next on my list of freshly-purchased comics. Indeed. I can only recall one previous instance that affected me this much, and that was in Tolkien.

So what does this herald for Pete and Gwen? Well, hopefully it will signal the beginning of a much deeper relationship necessitated by Capt. Stacy's death. This will hopefully mean seeing more of Gwen. Possibly our web-spinner will even finally tie the knot? And, Stan, I've never been much of one to try to direct the course of Marvel's characters (i.e. offer suggestions), but I feel that now is the time for Pete to reveal his identity to Gwen.

In closing, I offer a few questions: What ever happened to Ned and Betty? or Mary Jane? or Aunt May & Mrs. Watson? or Harry? or Norm? . . . I just realized Spidey has to go back and pick up

Doc Ock. Wow, indeed! I had forgotten that.

Spidey is not responsible for Capt. Stacy's death. Please do not hang that cloud of gloom over us. He died saving a child's life.

Don Tyler, 6736 So. Delaware Ct.
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74105

But he died, Don. And that, it seems, has made all the difference.

Dear Stan.

After reading the first few pages of SPIDER-MAN #91, it was immediately evident that this was an authentic Stan Lee script. It still strikes me as being beyond belief (and I'm sure you'll concur) that anyone could have wrested the Best Writer Award from the one for whom it was created! I had considered only myself as being equal to this task!

This is, by the way, the first time in seven years that I have written to any comic magazine, for I have always considered it a waste of time. Therefore, you should feel doubly — nay, quadruply honored that I consider this issue important enough to warrant my written concern.

In the whole of comicdom, I have never witnessed a more realistic presentation of an imaginary world than that of the Marvel Comics Group, and I commend you. It is also this,

however, which prompted me to write. In "To Smash the Spider", our hero (anti-hero) is confronted with immense complications, and consequently, an unbearable amount of pressure. Now, it is not all unusual in stories of this kind to provide the reader with a happy, albeit highly unrealistic,

ending. I fear, perhaps unnecessarily, that you feel obligated to do the same in order to maintain your reading audience; or for some other, equally understandable reasons. However, SPIDER-MAN #91 cannot result in a happy ending and remain realistic at the same time — you have thrown Peter Parker into a situation, the outcome of which can only be tragic, nay, the outcome of which can only be either tragic or catastrophic — yet never anything less.

But perhaps I am underestimating you, perhaps you are aware of the fact that to carry this story through to its logical, inevitably tragic conclusion, will not result in a decline of readership, but rather in a greater appreciation of you as a writer. In any case, it would provoke the same controversy which has earned your omillions of followers in the first place.

I beseech you, then, to heed my (albeit unwarranted) warning and conclude this Spider-Man saga realistically and tragically or suffer the loss of one reader (your best and most influential, incidentally) out of your millions. I reiterate — TAKE HEED!!
For I make no idle threats!

F.C. Freeth, 30 Lincoln St. Newton, Mass.

We didn't figure you did, lad.

Actually, it's a real blast to get a letter like yours, warning Smilin' Stan against ending his Spidey sagas on too light a note. He's a bit more used to getting the "Why-don't-you-let-poor-Peter-Parker-be-happy" type. We trust that the current morass of mishaps in our wall-crawler's life are enough for you, F.C.?

Dear Stan, Gil, and Johnny,

The cover title of SPIDER-MAN #90 ("SPIDER-MAN — THE KILLER!") is the sort of title you have been using quite often lately, and it usually doesn't hold true. This time it does. Any 2nd grader knows that when a person has been injured in the manner that Capt. Stacy was, the first rule of first-aid is: DON'T MOVE THE VICTIM. If there was a doctor in the next building, the logical thing for Spidey to have done was to go get him and rush him to the scene, not pick Stacy up and walk up the side of a wall with him. Even if he would have died anyway (of internal injuries, probably), Spider-Man's actions undoubtedly shortened the Captain's life by minutes, if not hours or days.

Although Peter Parker was only indirectly responsible for the death of his Uncle Ben, he is directly responsible for the death of George Stacy. This fact should haunt him with the strongest sense of guilt possible, for the rest of his life. If he were tried in a court of law, he would even possibly be found guilty of involuntary manslaughter, depending on the coroner's report.

Bruce Long, 726 Via Altamira #43 Hontebello, Calif. 90640

And perhaps it is this knowledge, as well as the fact that he inadvertently placed Captain Stacy's life in danger, which haunts Peter Parker even now. Though, whare it will lead — what devious paths this all-consuming guilt will take — no one, not even Stan and his overworked artistic crew, can possibly know.





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If you have ever wondered whether you had art talent, here is your chance to find out. The founders of Famous Artists School have put together what many artists and educators consider to be the most revealing test of art ability ever devised. It is offered to you free.

Designed for people uncertain of their ability

The people who take this Art Talent Test are of all ages and occupations. Most of them have little or no previous art training. By professional standards, their drawings may be awkward and amateurish. But the ones who possess the gift of art talent reveal it in many ways. Through simple little exercises, they show the inborn sense of design, the feeling for composition, the ability to observe, and the lively imagination which are such important ingredients of art talent.

The reliability of this method of screening, as well as the effectiveness of the training, has been proven again and again by the impressive record of success of our students and graduates.

They passed the test and went on to become successful artists

When Anthony Fortia took the Art Talent Test, he was a mail clerk, "stuck" in a low-pay routine job. Today, he's an artist for a printing firm, doing exciting creative work. Rathleen Gironda went from a salesgirl in a department store to a fashion illustrator in the same store. Virginia Bartter, a farmer's wife and mother of three, now sells just about everything she paints. These are just a few of the literally hundreds of "success stories" our students report to us.

So if you love to sketch or dabble in paints

—and have often wondered if you "have what it takes" to become a well-paid commercial artist or sparetime professional painter—why not scize this opportunity to find out? All you need is a 'pencil and a half-hour of your time. With your special interest, it will be one of the most intriguing and enjoyable half-hours you ever spen.

What the Talent Test covers

First, you will be shown ten pairs of simple designs and asked to pick the one in each pair that has "a feeling of rightness" about it. Then you will see twenty pairs of pictures, and check which composition in each pair is more pleasing. You'll be asked to do original sketches to demonstrate your imagination and powers of observation. And in similar ways, your feeling for mood, form, movement, and so on will be tested.

When you complete the test and mail it back, it will be graded free by a member of the School's staff. If you receive a passing grade (and we must warn you that many don't), or can offer sufficient evidence of art talent, you will then be eligible to enroll. You may choose whichever of our courses is best suited to your goals.

Courses offer personal instruction

These courses were especially designed for talented people who can't leave their families or jobs for art training away from home. The 12 famous artists who started the School over 19 years ago contributed all their lifetime secrets of art technique to what they believe to be the finest art lessons ever created. They took time out from their own busy careers and made thousands of special drawings to demonstrate each point. Then they devised a method of constructive criticism that is as personal as tutoring. Your instructor, who is himself required to be a practicing professional artist, spends up to several hours on just one of your assignments. He actually draws or paints his suggestions for improvement, and then "talks" to you by letter, dictating a long, friendly message of specific advice and encouragement.

You will receive an interesting brochure about our School and its revolutionary methods along with your free Art Talent Test. If you have ever dreamed of success in art, and wondered if it were possible, why not mail the coupon at left for both the Talent Test and the brochure right now?

Famous	Artists	Schoo
Shidle A	- 6516	

Westport, Conn. 06880

I would like to find out whether I have art talent worth developing. Please send me, without obligation, your Famous Artists Talent Test and information about your

Mr. } ← Please circle one and print name				
Address				
City				
State	Zib	100		