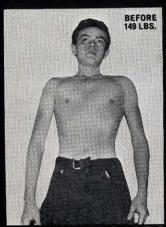
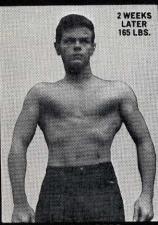


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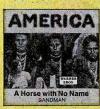




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## GANGWAY, WORLD! MADCAP MARVEL MARCHES MERRILY ON!

#### STAN LEE'S SOAPBOX

Know, something? We Bullpenners are so excited about all the new mags we're creating for you that I don't know which to talk about first. So, instead of beating the drums for CLAWS OF THE CAT, JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY, JUNGLE ACTION, GUNHAWKS, NIGHT NURSE, DOC SAVAGE, or SHANNA, THE SHE-DEVIL -I'm not even gonna mention 'em! I'll leave it to Rascally Roy to clue you in elsewhere on this page, now and in following issues. Instead, I'll just take another few secs to say 'Hi" to all the great guys and gals I met during my most recent lecture tour at the Nassau Community College, the Universities of Winnipeg and Manitoba, Nashville Tennessee's Vanderbilt U., and good of Montana State. And, in case you think that the mighty Marvel craze is just a passing fad, you'd change your mind faster than Spidey can wiggle a web if you could have shared the wondrous welcomes at those hallowed halls of learning! (See? That'll prove I really can write a couple of sentences without plugging one of our titanic titles - titles such as WYATT EARP, GOTHIC THRILLERS, SPOOF -aw, forgive me, gang. This is a heckuva way for a Dr. of Comicology to behave!)

Excelsion



ITEM! Mind if we let you in on still another facet of just what goes on behind the scenes and in the minds of that amorphous entity we call the Mighty Marvel Bullpen? We didn't think so. Anyway, for years now, we've wanted to start a comic-mag which dealt exclusively with the derring-do of a gal superstar, instead of the usual hunk of masculine muscle. So, recently, Stan and Roy sat down to discuss what kind of book they should put out - and guess what! They came up with no less than three vastly different concepts, each of which they dug so much they ended up sticking all three on this summer's hectic schedule - two which debut this month, plus another that'll wing your way next time around!

First and foremost of these new spectaculars just has to be the far-out new feature we call: THE CLAWS OF THE CAT! And if the title doesn't tell you that it's destined to be one of the most action-packed, most talked-about new mags of this or any other year, we'll burn our vintage MMMS cards! What's more, THE CAT is drawn by none other than MARIE SEVERIN - and written by former Marvel staffer LINDA FITE, to boot! (At least this time, nobody's gonna be able to write in and say we've got artists and writers who don't understand the female of the species!) Also on sale right now is LINDA CARTER, NIGHT NURSE, drawn by longtime pro WINS-LOW MORTIMER and scripted by Roy's

own lovely lady, JEANIE THOMAS. Yeah, we know - it sounds like just another romance mag, however well-written and drawn; but take it from us, friend - this one is realistic, exciting - and different! And next month sees the dramatic debut of SHANNA, THE SHE-DEVIL - starring perhaps the most beauteous and offbeat jungle heroine in the history of the graphic arts! GEORGE TUSKA is penciling that one, and it's being penned by longtime comix buff CAROL SEULING. That's right, effendi - three great new mags, all written by gals - yet aimed neither at gals nor at guys, but at true lovers of comix literature everywhere! Try 'em - you'll like 'em!

ITEM! If you've latched onto the brand new premiere issue of CHAMBER OF CHILLS, Marvel's newest and most nightmarish weird-type entry - of if you dug last month's JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY #1 - then doubtless you've noticed that we've added something a wee bit new to this kind of anthology title! For the foreseeable future (and we've got a zingy new crystal ball!), virtually each and every issue of these two mags, plus the fast-upcoming GOTHIC THRILLERS already in the works, will headline an eerie adaptation of a masterpiece by a major fantasy author! JOURNEY #1 featured a tale by the late great ROBERT E. HOWARD, creator of Conan and Kull - and the first ish of CHAMBER features a story by world-famed author HARLAN ELLISON, whose recent Again, Dangerous Visions hardcover volume is already destined to become one of the great s-f works of the 70's! Also on hand in nearfuture issues of our terror-laden triumvirate will be the likes of THEODORE STURGEON, ROBERT BLOCH (author of Psycho), and a whole horde of the greatest names in imaginative fiction! They'll be backed up by plenty of original stories as well, written by some of the finest scripters in the history of comix - and together, they're gonna knock you right out of your haunted house!

ITEM! You'll see a few new names in our credit-captions this time around. We'll let you seek 'em out for yourself - but here's a bit of background: IRV WES-LEY, a former Bullpen great in the fabulous 50's, has returned to the fold to help us out with the latest saga of one of our most unique heroes! Then there's a lad named CRAIG RUSSELL. who works with oldtimer DAN ADKINS out in the wilds of Ohio! Oh yes, and how could we forget JIM STARLIN, a talented newcomer who's also been assisting JOHN ROMITA on Spidey's recent capers! Jim, by the way, was brought to Marvel by another of its new lights, RICH BUCKLER! Face it, friends and neighbors - Stan was telling it like it is when he said that the whole Marvel gang was turned on by all the new mags and new projects we've got up our collective sleeve! In fact, the latest word around the Bullpen is that when you work for mighty Marvel, you're not just an artist - you're also a talent MIGHTY MARVEL CHECKLIST NOW ON SALE! A Generous Grab-bag of Galvanizin' Goodies!

SPIDER-MAN #114: Spidey's got a spanking-new ulcer, right? And he's caught smack-dab in the middle of a gang war between Doc Ock and Hammerhead, right? So does that clue you in about which Marvel mag is definitely one of the wildest, woolliest chillers of the month? Right!!

THOR #205: The Thunder God vs. Mephisto — in the haunted halls of the Sub-World! And the demon's allies are none other than Thor's most trusted friends — including the lady Sif! Get it!

CAPTAIN AMERICA & THE FALCON #155: So you think you know all about the beginnings of our star-spangled stalwart? Well, wait'll you read — the Secret Origin of Captain America! A shocker!

SPOOF #2: Archie Bunkum lives! Don't miss "Brawl in the Family!" Plus —"Tarz an' the Apes," and some titillating "Tales from the Creep!"

CHAMBER OF CHILLS #1: Harlan Ellison's "Delusion for a Dragon-Slayer!" And two more of the most macabre masterworks of all! 'Nuff said?

THE CLAWS OF THE CAT #1: The dream of a dedicated genius—or the nightmare of a twisted madman? Which will win in the battle for the soul of the masked huntress we call—the Cat? With the most mind-staggering final page yet!

Not to mention these Bringers of Wonder-

FANTASTIC FOUR #128 (The battle to the finish with the Mole Man!) -AVENGERS #105-HULK #157 (The Rhino returns!) - DAREDEVIL #93 -SUB-MARINER #55 - IRON MAN #52 -CONAN THE BARBARIAN #20-TOMB OF DRACULA #5 (The Count takes a time-trip!) — KULL THE CONQUEROR #5 - NIGHT NURSE #1 - WEREWOLF BY NIGHT #2 - CAPTAIN MARVEL #23 - MARVEL PREMIERE #5 (Dr. Strange lives!) - MARVEL TEAM-UP #5-MARVEL FEATURE #6 (Ant-Man and the Wasp - together again!) - CREATURES ON THE LOOSE #20 - RED WOLF #4-AMAZING ADV. # 15-SGT. FURY #104 and other winners too numerous (too





## SPIDERS WEB

You are about to destroy a friendship. I have been reading SPIDER-MAN nearly all my life. Though I can no longer remember the year, I do know that I have been reading Spidey since his debut in AMAZING ADULT FANTASY. At the time, I was in the fourth grade (like most American children my life is measured in terms of school years - September to June, the summer being a whole separate calendar—and rarely in terms of actual years), and AAF was the first Marvel Comic I

had ever bought. I am now in college, so I have indeed grown, developed, and matured with Peter Parker. There was a time when I knew and understood his problems. They were well-conceived, obviously the motivations of a teenager trying to find his way in a world which paid homage to the athlete and made a joke of the book-WORM. Peter was unusually mature for his age, partly due to his intellect, and partly due to his role as an outcast. It is always, it seems, the unwanted in our society who are the first to learn compassion, understanding, and the quiet inner strength which allows

them to stand up to the agony of being laughed at. Peter's problems at this time were, as I've said, infinitely believable. He was groping for an understanding of himself and others. This is hard and painful, but must be endured by us all. I loved Spidey then, I learned much from him. I, myself, was burdened with many of Spidey's identity problems, though I was an athlete, and not a student, I had my share of tribulations in trying to attain a sense of self (finding my place in the scheme of things, overcoming inferiority problems brought about by the feeling that I was the ugliest kid on earth-childhood things, outgrown in time.) So I

grew with Peter.

Now I've just finished SPIDEY #110, partially pleased, partially distraught. Your handling of Aunt May is to be commended. I have been hoping for a long time that someone would say the things that needed to be said

it seems right that Gwen should be the one to say them. It is also right that, though trying hard to accept and survive these things, Aunt May has overreacted and made the ultimate self-sacrifice - getting out of Peter's life, as she apparently has. This is tragic, an all-out effort must be made by Peter and Gwen to bring her back; she must be made to see that though she can no longer play nursemaid for a grown man, she is still deeply loved and needed. If Peter and Gwen love her, as I'm sure they do, this must be accomplished.

But you are faced with a greater problem. Peter and Gwen. It just isn't believable anymore. I believe you are making one mistake. You are forgetting that this is no longer the completely adolescent Peter, he is no longer totally lacking in self-confidence as he was as a schoolboy. He has grown; many of the earlier feelings of inadequacy are no longer a part of him now. He has friends, he has the upper hand with JJJ, he has Gwendy's love. Why do you insist on making us believe that he cannot believe he is capable of being loved? He is far more mature than he once was, though he hasn't quite made it all the way. He hasn't solved all his problems; which of us has?

Again Peter reminds me of myself, I too, am just beginning to find my way to the light. I have found a girl (much like Gwen-beautiful, blond, wonderful, loving, caring) and though she is not yet in love with me, if she eyer is and tells me so, I will believe her. Why can't Peter? It would be understandable if he did, but still was somewhat insecure — old habits die slowly, do they not? A rival such as Flash Thompson would scare the hell out of me too. But Peter has gone into an all-out panic - he has completely forgotten that Gwen loves him, and is sure that she is continually in Flash's arms.

Doesn't he trust her at all? Has he not the slightest shred of faith in her? I think he must, else he could not love her. No, I take that back, he might still love her, but if he thought she was the kind to lead the sort of double life that would allow her to play with his affections, while holding secret meetings with Flash, he could not possibly like her. Anxiety over Flash's intentions, yes; total panic and lack of faith in Gwen, NO!

I spoke at the onset of a destroyed friendship. Spidey and I have grown as one for many years. Now, for the first time, I find myself annoyed, aggravated, and, indeed, frustrated by the irrational, illogical, and inhuman way Peter is acting. He has grown up since his

early years; don't let him back up now.

Sincerely, and with great respect for all the work you've done through the years.

Jeff H. Berlin, 5 Sound Beach Road Bayville, N. Y. 11709

P.S. I don't expect to see this letter in print due to its length and lack of coordination. It came pouring out and that's the way I set it down. I could have straightened it all out, but that seemed wrong. There is too much emphasis on order and correct manner already, free empiries of order and correct infamilie already, refeeling is needed for once. I would, however, greatly appreciate a response if you have the time. I'd like to hear what you really think about Peter Parker.

And you will, Jeff, because no letter we've received on Spidey in quite a while has reached us the way yours has. So we sat down with Johnny Romita and let him

tell us his feelings on your comments: When Johnny took over artistic responsibility for Peter Parker several years ago, he and Stan tried to plan the direction they wanted the magazine to go in — and came to a unique conclusion: Peter is too real, after years of existence, to be manipulated by behind-the-scenes artists and writers. Johnny says, "Gerry and I have almost nothing to do with what happens in the book any more. Pete's life grows by itself, like Topsy. We just ask ourselves what he would do if the past has occurred as presented; in fact, after several instances of working out situations for Pete to get into, we had to decide that Pete, as we know him, would never really get into them."

You see, Pete is a real person to Johnny and Gerry. There is nobody sitting around saying "Let's mess up Pete and Gwendy, 'cause we haven't done that number for a while." No, if Pete fouls up, it's because he's still basically a foul-up, no matter how cool he'd like to believe he is. Sure, he's grown since his early days, but, like anybody, his self-image and his reality are not

necessarily the same.

But it's his growth and change that's really important here, since that, we feel, is what has disturbed you. Everybody's had experiences where they got together with somebody they knew earlier in their life, and found that this person had changed from the way they remembered him, because he had been living in different places, doing different things, mingling with different people — and so reacting differently to the same events. Perhaps Peter Parker and Jeff Berlin have grown up differently from the same beginnings; that's what happens to real people; that's what makes life with all its varied people interesting.

Obviously, you feel, as we do, that Pete is a real person, and as he gropes his way through life like all of us, we hope you'll keep watching. Maybe his successes and failures can still teach you a thing or two.

'Nuff said, Jeff?

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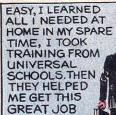








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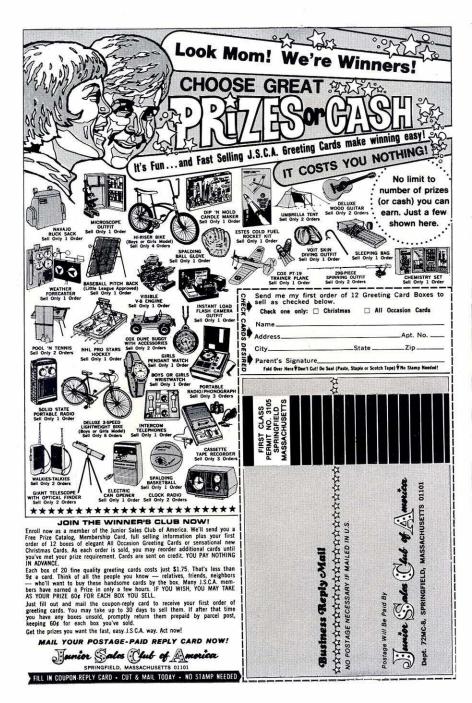
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