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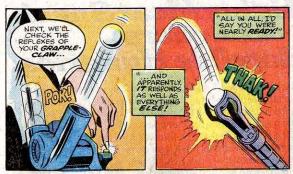


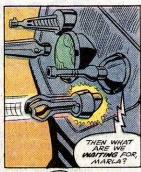


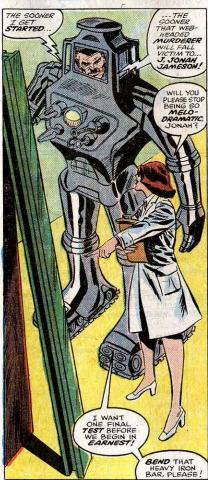


















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Dear Marvel

"All the Kingpin's Men!" in SPIDER-MAN #163 was a masterpiece! The Kingpin has always been one of my favorite super-villains, and I have been anxiously awaiting his return!

Len, you certainly didn't disappoint me on the story! The Kingpin was just as he should be! I've always liked his cane-blaster and gas tie-pin, and I'm glad to see that they were used in the story!

Glad to see that Pete at last got some furniture for his apartment, and his romantic troubles with Mary Jane were, to say the least, amusing. By the way, it was nice to see Liz Allen back again. Only one more thing would have made the issue totally perfect—an appearance by Spidey's most lovable enemy, J. Jonah Jameson! Please show him more often!

Ross Andru's artwork was great, as usual! He's my favorite Spidey artist, next to John Romita, of course!

> Gregg Stamey Jr. 21 Hampton Heights Canton, NC 28716

As you can see from the statement of ownership at the bottom of this page, we're a trifle pressed for space this month, Faithful Ones, so we'll try to keep our answers short and sweet.

Hope this issue and the next two to follow help appease your appetite for jolly Jonah, Gregg. We've got strange and wondrous plans for everybody's favorite peerless Publisher, and we hope you'll be along to watch them come to pass.

#### Dear People:

I'm happy to report that SPIDER-MAN #163 was the first issue in a long time to strike me as being an issue of the Spider-Man I know. In the past year or so Len Wein has been throwing one slug fest after another at us, with hardly a breathing spell at all. The book was losing its interest/for me. But Wein has found the remedy in the Kingpin.

When was the last time we saw four whole pages of Peter Parker? I'm not sure, but it was far too long ago. These four pages were worth the thirty cents alone.

Characterization is going very high with this issue. For the first time ever, I've finally come around to seeing where the Kingpin's coming from. Wein's one line "I've spent a lifetime transforming an unpopular blubbery child into the single strongest crime-boss the world has ever known..." tells us a lot about this man's motivations. This and the fact that Spidey can't say three words to the fellow without mentioning his weight almost makes one indecisive in who to root for.

Now to try for my no-prize. The gentlemen lying next to Spidey in the last panel is the Kingpin's son who we last saw five years ago. As long as the son is back any chance of seeing the Kingpin's lovely wife? She is one of Marvel's few strong women who don't go around hacking up people with broadswords. Peace.

> D. B. Webb D301R Austin Peay Hall University of Tenn. Martin, TN 38238

Peace right back at ya, D.B. But we're afraid we'll have to decline on that no-prize. If we gave one of those much-coveted non-entities to every True Believer who deduced the identity of that tossle-haired figure, our rusting no-vault would be plucked clean.

But just hang in there, pilgrim. With a little hard work and perseverance, you may attain the exalted rank of TTB. (That's Titanic True Believer for you neophytes.)

Len and Ross.

SPIDER-MAN #163 was a masterpiece! The return of the Kingpin was long overdue, but I see now that it was worth waiting for. Len, you are improving every issue. The plot held together well, and I see a few sub-plots developing in Peter's personal life. (The Flash-Mary Jaine thing; Harry and Liz...)

The art was again magnificent. Ross Andru is quickly becoming one of Marveldom's better young talents. To back me up, check page three, top main panel; and the final panel on page 31.

All in all, it was another great mag, but I should be used to that by now.

Brendan Powers 15415 Oakbury Drive La Mirada, CA 90638

Brendan, you just made Rip-roarin' Ross Andru's day. Heck, you've made his year. Accurate Andru has been called many things in his day, but considering he was applying his talented pencil to paper in this industry (illustrating the adventures of a certain Amazon Princess and a band of metal marvels, among countless other things) back when Lively Len Wein was still in grade school, we somehow doubt he can be called one of comicdom's "young" talents.

But from the bottom of his heart, Ross thanks you for trying.



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#### STAN LEE'S SOAPBOX

Okay, gang- this one's too exciting to keep for another minute! Every time I speak at some college or convention someone's sure to ask me, "Hey, when are you gonna write some more comic books?" or, "How about you and Kirby teamin' up again?" Well, I don't really have time to write a regular steady mag anymore, but- Jolly Jack and I have been itchin' to team up for one big, juicy, super-sensational project— and we've finally got it! Yep! The contracts are being written right now! We're planning to write and draw the world's longest and greatest comic-book storya hard cover edition, to be published by Simon & Schuster, an original novellength epic adventure of-THE SILVER SURFER! It'll be the toughest project we've ever attempted, 'cause everyone'll be waiting for it- and if it isn't as great as we hope it'll be, people'll start saying "Aww, that guy Lee is over the hill!" or, "Lee and Kirby- big deal!" So you can bet we'll do everything we can to make it the absolutely all-time most stupendous illustrated saga ever produced! It'll be on sale towards the end of '77, so start saving your shekels now- if one single copy remains unsold, we'll know that one of you goofed! And, while you're waiting, you needn't despair- there are still a few thousand copies of BRING ON THE BAD GUYS waiting for you to give 'em a home. Just go to your nearest book store, look intelligent, and yell "Make Mine Marvel"! And, if you play your cards right, you might also be able to find a combo pack of ORIGINS and SON OF ORIGINS as well. In fact, if you wanna buy 'em in a real fun place, and you happen to be near New Jersey's Livingston Mall, drop in to the new Super-hero Shop where you can get all of Marvel's toy, game, and novelty goodies. But now, before you start thinking we're tryin' to sell you something, let me give you something to worry about. King Kirby lives in California, and I hang my little pointy hat in New York. That means we're gonna have to collaborate on creating the world's greatest single comic book while we're 3,000 miles apart! And you think you've got troubles? Anyway, I'll issue a progress report here in ye olde Soapbox from time to time, so you can see how we're doing. Well, now that I've told you all about the upcoming SILVER SURFER sensation, maybe I oughtta tell Kirby. He hates to be the last to know! And now-till next month, Believer, keep your surfboard shiny and always remember: Gardez le foi! Excelsior!

ITEM! The snowy winds of winter may be blowing when you read this, but as your loval armadillo hunts and pecks his way through these newsworthy notes, it's still Indian summer. And that's the time of one of the biggest events in all of comics, namely the annual World Comic Convention at Lucca, Italy. For four frantic days, thousands of fans from all over the globe gather to attend panels, symposiums, and exhibits honoring the top creators in the comic book/comic strip field. Among those honored in the past has been our own smiling leader, STAN "The Man" LEE. This year, JACK "King" KIRBY has been chosen as one of the guests of honor, and is attending the convention with his wonderful wife, ROSALIND. We couldn't be happier. The guy who, through the countless comics he's created, has enabled the rest of us to travel to such far-flung places as the Negative Zone, Asgard, and Ego's bioverse is finally getting time off from the drawing board to do some traveling himself! It's about time, Jack. Just don't forget to come back... you're the only one (outside of THE ETERNALS) who can keep those Celestials off our backs!

ITEM! Department of Deja Vu: January is the month when MARVEL PREVIEW featuring MAN-GOD hits your newsstand. You say you have the feeling you've read that hit of news before? All right, We confess. The last time when we announced the contents of the up-coming issue of our \$1.00 size black and white sampler book, it was supposed to be MAN-GOD, the oft-postponed Roy Thomas and Tony DeZuniga awesome adaptation of Phillip Wylie's GLADIATOR. No sooner had we committed ourselves in print than a large section of the recently completed pages disappeared in transit into the myriad byways of the United States mail. When finally they emerged safely, if somewhat frayed around the edges, we'd already been forced to substitute the LEGION OF MONSTERS. Now, it's time to try again. MAN-GOD has to hold a record as one of our most promised, most postponed projects ever. Have we finally beaten the curse that seems to haunt it? Only your local newsstand knows for sure.

ITEM! While we're mentioning the bombastic creations of our bustling black and white department, let's get in an early plug for the newest title in that line, THE RAMPAGING HULK. The second sensational issue will be on sale next month and has our grim goliath pitted against the original X-Men in yet another epic-length episode by DOUG MOENCH, WALT SIMONSON, and ALFREDO ALCALA. All that, plus a blazing BLOODSTONE back-up feature. Watch for it! ITEM! On the personal front, let's welcome Shimmering SHARON ING, all around aide to our Vice President of Operations, Jolly SOLLY BRODSKY. And we can also say welcome back to 'Nuff Said NELSON YOMTOV, peerless production prince for our reprint line and sure-handed third baseman on the Bullpen softball team. Nellie just returned

tan and fit from two weeks vacation in Hawaii, an object of envy for every pale and flu-ridden armadillo on the staff. Fortunately, nice guy that he is, Nel brought back pineapples and slipped them into the cages so even our overworked bullpenners could have a taste of island life (ouch!). Meanwhile, even before receiving his pineapple, ace inker, Fearless FRANK GIACOIA was beaming happily. And it's no wonder, since he's filled with pride for his youngest daughter, MARGARET, who was just recently married. Our best and warmest to both of you, Frank! ITEM! By the time you're reading this, you probably will already have heard about THE HUMAN FLY. No, not the villain who debuted in last year's SPIDER-MAN ANNUAL. The fella we're talking about is an actual daredevil who specializes in the kind of hair-raising stunts usually reserved for the super-types cavorting through the pages of our comics, and who will probably be in for some network TV coverage about the time this reaches you. But even if by chance you're one of those rare and resolute souls who refuses to watch the tube, you're still going to be hearing about THE HUMAN FLY, because merry Marvel's about to launch a very special comic book series based on this real-life super-hero. The stories are going to be fictional, but the background we'll draw upon is the Fly's own, and it's as exciting and incredible as any fictional adventurer's life ever was. As the book takes shape, we'll be keeping you informed of all the details. This is going to be an unusual one, so stay alert for it, hear?



ITEM! And as long as we're filling you in on turure developments, lefs look way ahead to next summer and finish with a rundown of what's in store in the way of 50¢ Kingsize Annuals. In no particular order, they are: THE INCREDIBLE HULK, CAPT. AMERICA, HOWARD THE DUCK, AMAZING SPIDER MAN, MASTER OF KUNG FU, THE DEFENDERS, THOR, THE ETERNALS, FANTASTIC FOUR, INVADERS, IRON MAN, MARVEL-TWO-IN-ONE (which co-stars SPIDEY with the book's ever-lovin' blue eyed host!, AVENGERS, and CONAN THE BARBARIAN. Work's already started on some of them, and we think we've got a few pleasant surprises for you. We'll be revealing one or two of them next month. See you then.



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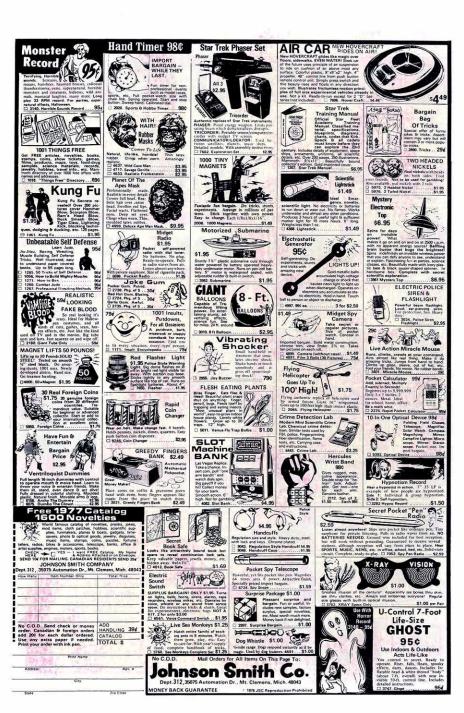
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