

HEBERG BORELLANDS

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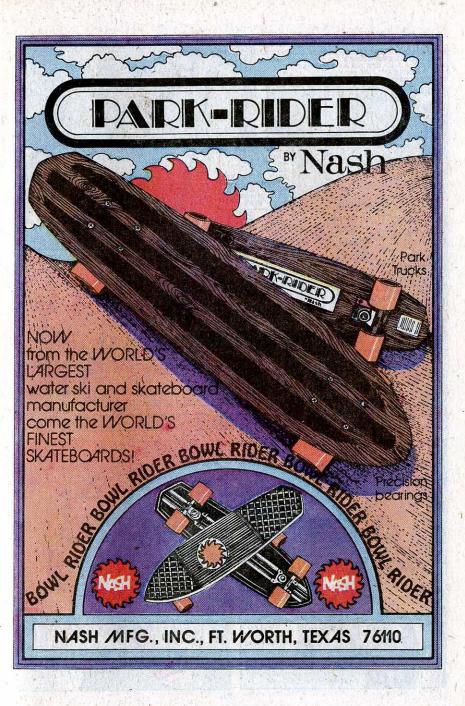
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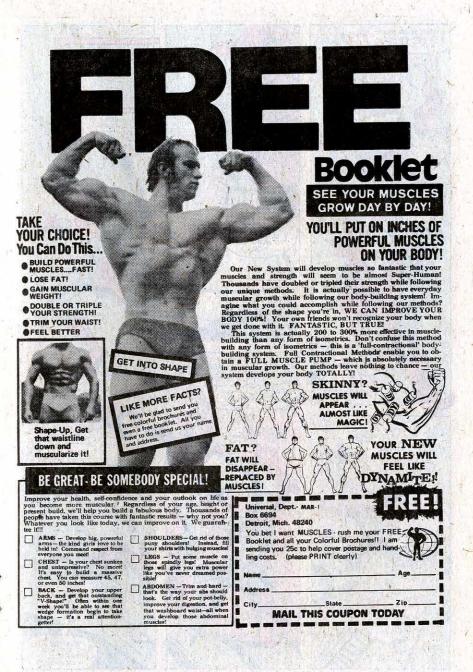
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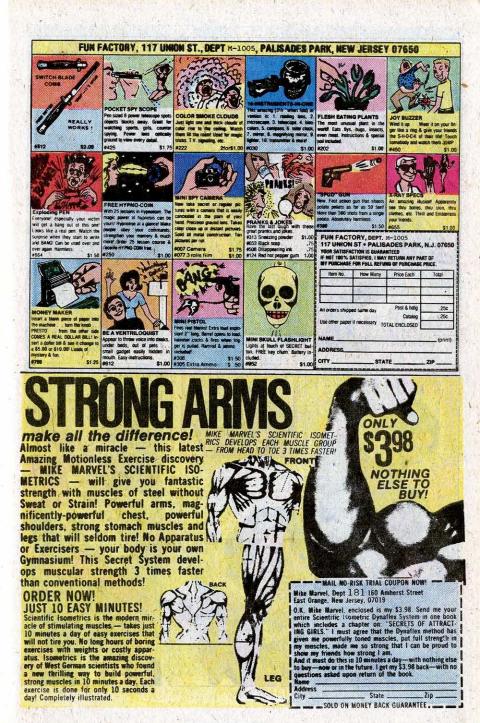
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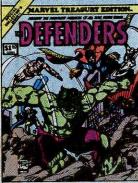
STAN'S SOAPBOX

Well, there I was a few weeks ago, lecturing at Virginia Polytech U. or Va Tech as the cognoscenti call it. Nicest gang of guys and gals on that campus you'd ever wanna see. After the heavy stuff ended, we stood around jawin' for a while, and that's when it happened! A young prof walked up and asked me why I've changed the ol' Soapbox. I didn't know what he meant. "I never changed my column," I told "I've always used it to keep in him. touch with my bosses—the mighty minions of Marveldom." "Untrue" said. he! "The Soapbox used to be a place where you really levelled with us, where we'd discuss the philosophy of comics, movies, or whatever grabbed us. It was a place to get together, let our hair down, and get to know each other better. But now, it's like a tv commercial- you're always selling something!" He shook his head and sighed. "I miss the old-time Soapboxes. But I guess they'll never come back." Wow! After he left, I really plopped down and thought about what he'd said. And, y'know something? He was dead right! I realized I was huckstering our books, tv shows, and assorted products and paraphernalia right here in my column. But, where is it written that a fella can't see the light? I promised myself that, from now on, the Soepbox'll be a place where we can yak about anything that comes to mind, with emphasis on comics! I'll leave the hard-sell to the ad pages, where it belongs. So, let me now abjectly apologize to one and all for any excess of exuberance that may have made me pitch too many wares. Starting next ish, we're just gonna swap stories, gossip, and points of view- and you won't even need your wallet! (Even if it means less breed for us, at least we'll starve with class!)

Excelsior!

Stan

ITEM! If there are some puffed-out chests and beaming faces around the Bullpen of late, it's due to recent news from the comics fans of Great Britain about the results of their first annual, nationally-organized awards poll for the best material of 1976. To our pardonable pleasure and pride, a number of mighty Marvel efforts were singled out for top honors, HOWARD THE DUCK won as Favo rite New Comic, Favorite Humor Comic, and netted honors for STEVE GERBER and JOHN BUSCEMA as writer and artist of the Favorite Single Comic Book Story, CONAN THE BARBARIAN fared almost equally well. He was voted Favorite Comic Book Character, and SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN was declared Favorite Dramatic Comics Magazine. CHRIS CLAREMONT was voted Favorite British Comics Writer (for CAPT. BRITAIN, we assume), and one of his books, X-MEN, s named Best Dramatic Comic. We'd like to thank all our friends in Great Britain for these honors and assure them that, despite slightly swelled heads, we'll strive to produce even better work in the future. Let's also tip our hats to Richard Burton and Michael Conroy, the two stalwarts who labored long and hard organizing and running the awards (which are called Eagle Awards, by the way, after a famous British weekly comic). Well done, fellas. We're looking forward to seeing how the awards for '77 come out.



ITEM! February may be a short month, but we've managed to cram a fair number of extra goodies into it just to help ease you through that mid-winter gloom. For starters, there's the SPIDER-MAN POCKET BOOK #2 which features issues 7 through 13 of the amazing one's adventures, all in full color, complete and unabridged. With the price of back issues these days, these Pocket Book paperbacks have to be one of the biggest bargains around and a nifty way to have your own bound library of Marvel's greatest hits. They're at your favorite bookstore now. Grab 'em before these become Collector's Items tool Also on tap this month is our latest MARVEL TREASURY EDITION, spotlighting everybody's favorite non-team, the dynamic DEFENDERS in three of their classic action sagas, including their very first, and displaying the art and writing talents of such luminaries as ROY THOMAS, ROSS ANDRU, BILL EVERETT, SAL BUSCEMA, LEN WEIN, STEVE ENGLEHART, KLAUS JANSON, and DAVID ANTHONY KRAFT. Seek it out, you won't be sorry. Last, but not necessarily least, we have CRAZY Magazine's "Annual Idiot Issue," which won't make spring come any faster but may keep you too busy chuckling to notice the wait.

ITEM! Let's have a hearty "welcome aboard," for Dazzling DICKIE McKENZIE, recently arrived from the hills of Kentucky to seek fame, fortune, and spelling errors in service of our editorial department. Glad to have you with us, Ms. McKenzie. We kan alwaaz use hellp with our prufreeding.

ITEM! You may have heard that New York has gone sort of Dracula-happy. There are currently two hit stage plays about the incredible Count thriving simultaneously. What you may not know is that one of them, "The Passion of Dracula," is the work of Marvel contributor, BOB HALL. Bob's probably familiar to you as penciler of THE CHAM-PIONS, SUPER-VILLAIN TEAM-UP, and several other epics including an up-coming MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE which teams Bashful Ben Grimm with Hercules, but for the play, Mr. Hall not only shares co-credit for the set ons, he co-wrate the production, and, in addition, did the art for the ads. Talk about your Renaissance men! Everyone that's seen the play tells us it makes for a really fun evening of theater, so if you're in the area, you might want to check it out. Tell 'em Doc Doom sent you.

ITEM! We couldn't mention Dracula without laying a few words on you about a certain color comic called TOMB OF DRACULA. Just when we think writer/editor MARV WOLFMAN and artist GENE (The Dean) COLAN have worked every possible variation on the subject of vampires and their kith and kin, those guys pull another surprise out of their bag of tricks. Lately, aided and abetted by ace embellisher TOM PALMER, they've come up with one of the wildest concepts yet: The Lord of the Vampires has lost his vampiric powers! He's suddenly human and vulnerable, but all his many enemies are still as hard on his heels with stakes in hand as ever. We don't know how Marv, Gene, and Tom are going to wrap this whole thing up, but we sure don't intend to miss an issue until we find out! As a team, these three guys have been putting the Count through his paces since 1973; it seems like they're only getting better. If you believe you've seen everything in a weird book, catch their latest act. , , and be surprised.



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