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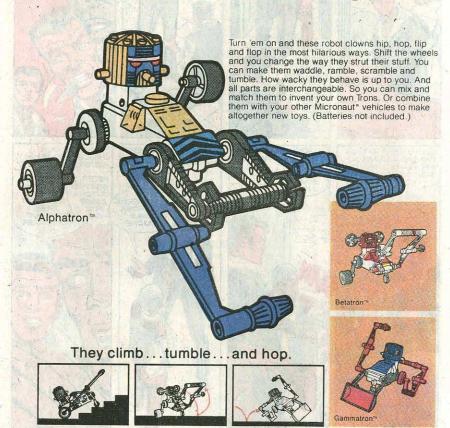






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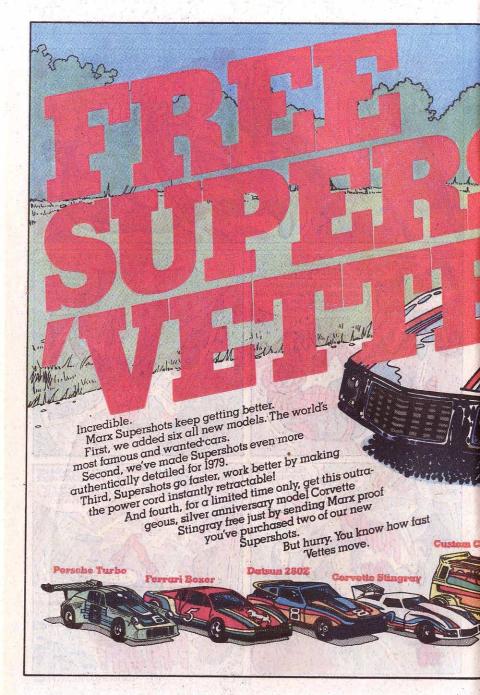


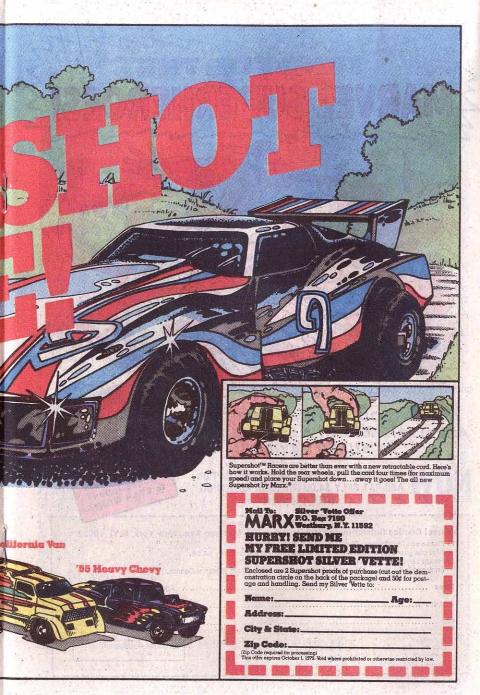












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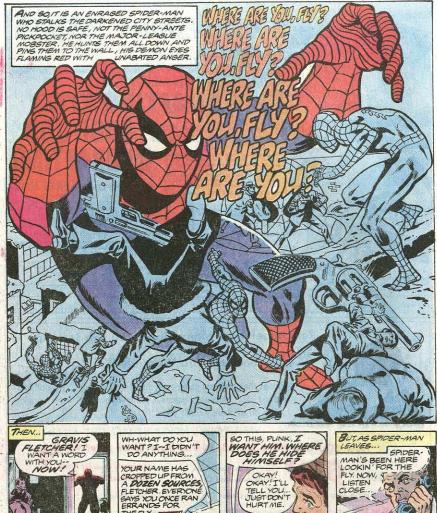
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LLPEN BULLETI

STAN'S SOAPBOX

So there I was a few weeks ago, gabbin' with a gaggle of undergrads during a light-hearted lecture at the College of St. Thomas in Minnesota. We were yakking it up with the usual perceptively probing questions from the audience and the usual obliquely obfuscatory answers from yours truly. Everything was smoothly easing along until I suddenly announced that the mixed-up Marvel menagerie was planning a new and totally unique type of magazine to unleash upon a defenseless humanity before year's end. Then, from the frenetically frantic, excited reaction on the part of the merry Minnesotians, I figured I'd better start dropping a few heavy hints to the vast hordes of Marveldom Assembled, as well. So, here's all I dare tell you at the moment. We're daringly designing a magazine to be radically different from any we've ever done- aimed at a predominently adultaudience, but dazzling enough to entrance the sharper younger reader, too. It's so new and experimental that we haven't even zeroed in on the exact title yet. As for me, I'm personally so elated and excited about the project that I'll be taking over the reins as editor myself, with the most talented staff in publishing to aid, advise, and keep me out of trouble. We'll shoot more info your way as we keep zooming along, but for the present let's just call it "Project X"- and don't say we didn't warn you! Or, in the imperishable words of Irving Forbush, "Nous verrons ce que nous verrons!" Excelsior!

ITEM! Last Spring, at a Creation Convention held here in New York, during a question-andanswer session with brand-new Editor-in-Chief Jim Shooter, someone asked whether Marvel would be raising the cover price on its comics soon. The question was not entirely unexpected, since another comics company had announced its intention to increase prices weeks before, and Jim had checked carefully with Marvel's top brass on the answer he gave: Marvel Comics will hold the line throughout 1978 and into 1979 if possible. As you undoubtedly noticed, last month, the second month of 1979. Marvel raised its cover price for comics from 35¢ to 40¢. We didn't like doing it— we wish we could have held out longer, but it was just not possible. Like everyone else, we're victims of the cur-

rent economic crunch, but keeping our word and stemming the tide of inflation as long as we could was very important to us. We could have upped prices along with the other guys, and banked a few more sheckels last year maybe, but a promise is a promise. Anyway, we love weaving our fantastic fantasies as much as you enjoy sharing them. Since it's going to cost you a bit more to share them now, we'll just buckle down and try harder than ever to make our stories even more exciting and involving. Just thought you'd like to know.

ITEM! And now, when you least expect it, it's crossover time again! In issue #234 of CAPTAIN AMERICA, for instance, Daredevil swashbuckles in for what could be a very hot time. Meanwhile, POWER MAN/IRON FIST quest stars the X-Men for a showdown with the Living Monolith in a mind-boggler entitled (believe it or not) "Pharaohs On Broadway!" As if that weren't enough, DOCTOR STRANGE #35 features a guest-appearance by the Avengers as the Master Mage tackles the mystery of the Black Knight's statue! They're all on sale now!

ITEM! We're very pleased to report that a certain extremely talented, versatile and creative writer has wandered Marvel's way of late, and it looks like he's here to stay. Welcome aboard, then, to "Macabre" MICHAEL FLEISHER, renowned for his superb work on the Spectre and Jonah Hex for the competition, and also for his recentlypublished tome, The Great Superman Book. Michael's first assignment at Marvel should



come as no surprise - it's the GHOST RIDER, naturally. You can see why we're so high on Michael's style in issue #36 of GR as the Spirit of Vengeance wreaks havoc in Denver, Colorado! It's on sale now!

ITEM! Not to be outdone, the crack creative crew of the uncanny X-MEN has come up with another triumph in issue #122, on sale (you guessed it) now! Chris Claremont, John Byrne and Terry Austin have combined to create a classic entitled "Cry For The Children!" which delves deep into the past of the beautiful mutant/goddess, Storm. It's an issue of insight and intrigue. . . a landmark! And wait'll you see the graffiti on the walls in the tenement scene!

ITEM! While the Bullpen is busy creating new works of wonder, those wonderful folks over at Simon & Schuster are reprinting some of our past pinnacles of artistic achievement! SPIDER-MAN Pocket Book #3, for instance, features stories from The Amazina Spider-Man issues #14-20 in glorious color for only \$2.25! It's 153 pages of Lee Ditko excitement and better book stores everywhere already have them!

ITEM! We get many letters from folks who are puzzled by, of all things, the credits on our magnificent magazines. We'd like to take this opportunity to clear up, for once and for all, which folks do what and why - but pay attention! We're only going to do this once! Plotters: Anybody so credited helped figure out the story, and usually typed up a short synopsis of the happenings therein. Pencilers, Layouts, Breakdowns: They're the heroes who draw the story in pencil using the plotter's story synopsis as a guide. Writers: These guys write the dialogue, captions, titles, , and the credits. Some of them have a penchant for calling themselves authors and other high falutin' names! They're usually the ones who do the plots too, so we don't bother crediting the plot unless someone other than the writer did it. Letterers: They do the hand lettering in the balloons from the writer's script. Inkers, Finishers, Embellishers: Artists so credited go over the penciled drawings with black India ink, making them darker and smudge-proof for better printing, as well as enhancing the style. Colorists: These stalwarts are given photostatic copies of the inked pages which they color with special dyes. They're used as color guides by the engraver. Editors: We. . . er, that is, "they" are the most important of all, being in charge of the whole operation. Editors assign all the other jobs and check everyone's work for mistakes. in general pulling everything together. And, as everyone knows, editors are the salt of the Earth. Got the facts straight now? Whew!



IRON MAN "BRAINS OUR BRAWN!









RESERVED

















THE SPIDER'S WEB

c/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP 575 Madison Avenue New York, New York 10022 MARY WOLFMAN EDITOR MARK GRUENWALD ASSISTANT EDITOR

Dear Marv, John, and Jim,

Can we consider issue #189 a milestone issue? I think so. We seem to have gained greater insight into nearly every major character featured. Aunt May going quietly away to a nursing home is definitely new. Has she finally decided that Peter can fend for himself? If so, maybe she has resigned herself to dying. Mary, are you preparing us for the event which has been inevitable for 15 years? And Jonah—by now we know that Jonah is vulnerable through his son John, and what he does concerning his son is not surprising. However, this time we gain additional insight into Jonah through the thoughts of Joe Robertson on pg. 16. Betty Brant leaves us virtually no doubt as to where she stands toward Peter, and Peter, as usual, never fails to leave a doubt as to where he stands.

Ned Leeds, where are you all this time? Ned gets my vote for mystery villain, in an effort to pull off the biggest coup since the Jackal. How and why? I don't know. Call it gut feelings.

Spider-Man continues to be one of the best comics around due to the consistent contributions of its supporting cast. This issue has been one of the best in this regard. As far as the art is concerned, John Byrne is always a treat. The cover, inked by McLeod, was very good. However, the interior art looked more like Mooney than Byrne. Jim did his usual good job, but as usual he tends to overshadow the penciller. Byrne looks best when inked by McLeod or Austin. I would assume that the switching around is due primarily to availability and nearness of the dead line.

All in all, a good issue in terms of content. Ten years ago this fall I bought my first issue of Spider Man (which was incidentally my first Marvel), and for that I'd like to say thanks for a Marvelous decade of fun!

> Dave Posey 1012 Rosewood DeSoto, TX 75115

And, thanks right back atcha, Dave. Marv says he has a few surprises up his sleeve, and a few red herrings as well, but we're not gonna spoil things by revealing things at this point. The only thing we will say is—wait'll you see what's comin' down in issue #200.

Dear Mary,

I've got to hand it to you! Issue #188 was one of the best written single part stories that I've ever read. The characteriza tion of Jigsaw was brilliant. For once, we are presented with an antagonist who is not a raving looney, a 'mad' scientist, or a two bit crook. In issue #162, Jigsaw was introduced as a man concerned only with revenge. After his drubbing at Spidey's, Punisher's and Nightcrawler's hands, Jigsaw has become a weak, paranoid villain— a man with pent-up rage but is too weak to

unleash it. All in all, it was a refreshing perspective on what otherwise would have been a rather mundane story.

Dave Cockrum's and Terry Austin's cover was great— a real throwback to the old days, as was Keith Pollard's artwork. The action panels (especially pages 16-17) depicted Spider-Man as a lithe acrobat, just as Steve Ditko did in the formative days. Anyway, keep up the good work!!

Stan Wolfe 457 Tillbury Ave., Ottawa, Ont. Canada, K2A OY6

Stan (where have we heard that name before—?), have we got a major baddie set uo in the next few months. . .as far as a multi-part story is concerned—this one is so big it begins in the AMAZING SPIDER-MAN annual and concludes in the PETER PARKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN annual! Howzabout that?

Hey Marv,

SPIDER MAN #189 was, in my opinion, one of the best mags you guys have produced in a while! It was good to see Spidey acquited in #186. I'm sure that if he had not been, the encounter with the S.W.A.T. Cop would have proved quite interesting. (I'm sure, however, that Spidey would have gotten away with webs intact). I'm glad to see the Man-Wolf brought back, it's good to see an old foe of Spidey's back on the seene. Of course, Electro was from a bit farther back. I'm looking forward to the return of Ned Leeds, but even more for the solution Pete comes up with for the ever growing saga of Betty, Ned, and Pete.

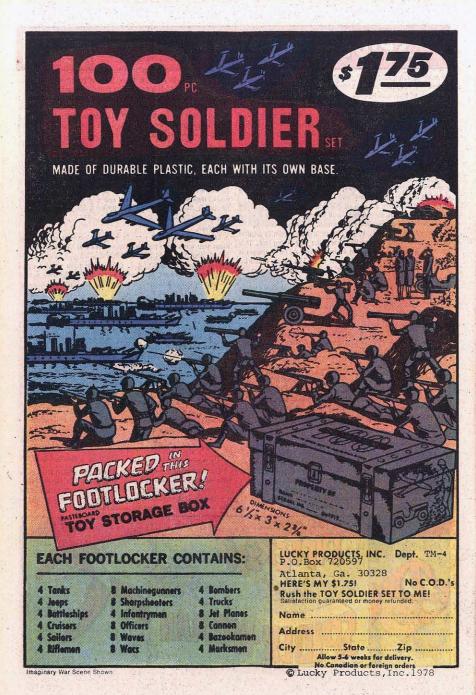
In closing, I would like to say that even though I did not spot, in ish. #185, the first names of the past and present writers of SPIDER-MAN on the graduation list, I did spot on page one of this ish., #189, something very interesting. The first thing that caught my eye, was the little red-haired kid who was shouting, "Hey, Stanley, Stevie—look! It's Spider-Man!" To me, it is obvious that the kid is screaming at, or about, Stan Lee and Steve Ditko, Spidey's creators. Perhaps, for being so observant, and, of course, astute, I should be awarded with the coveted NO-PRIZE.

Keep up the good work.

Bill Jourdain 12600 Rolling Rd. Dr Miami, FL 33156

Thanks for the comments, Bill, but to you and all the others who spotted our Stanley-Stevie line, sorry, but no No-Prize. Our coveted not-award isn't awarded for finding errors, but for meritorious duty to Marvel—like finding a real major error—and correcting it for your beleaguered Bullpen.







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