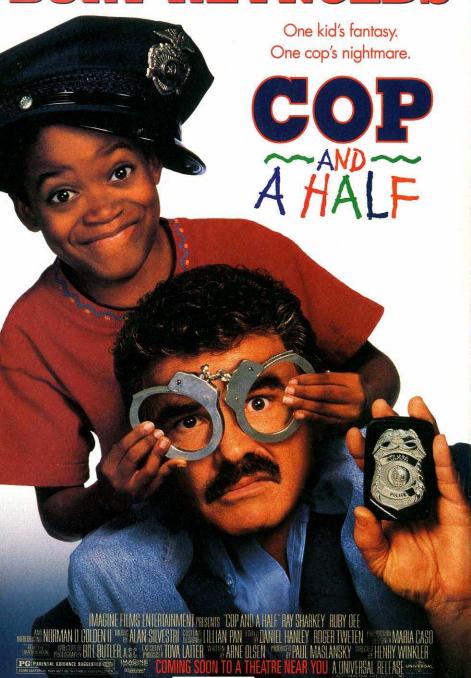
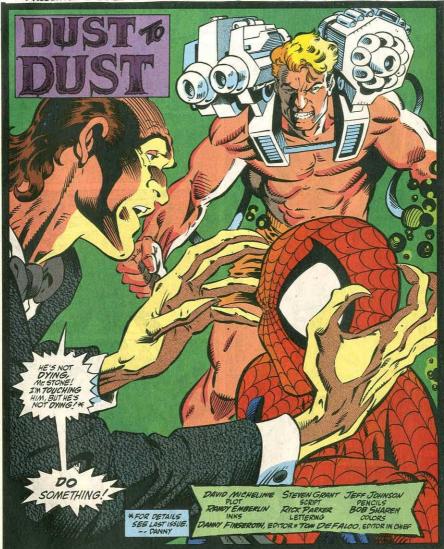


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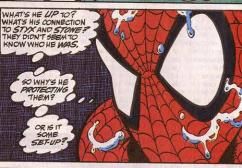
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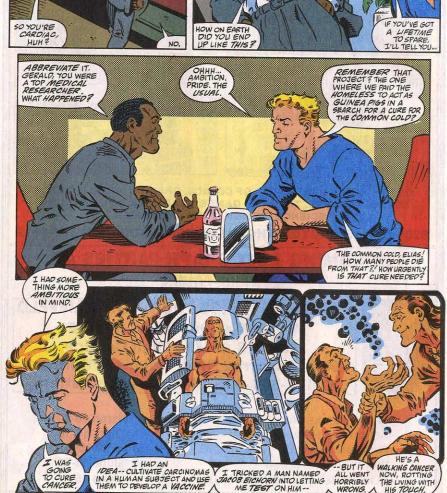
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TOM TALKS

Every time I visit a comic book shop these days, I seem to find some new magazine or book whose sole purpose is to act as an authoritative investment guide for our illustrative industry. These publications, which are springing up faster than Quicksilver on a runaway Pvm particle, assign allegedly objective monetary values to comic book back issues. In some cases, they even publish prices on comics which have yet to be printed. These publications define the comics that are hot, and those that are not.

I guess all of these investment guides serve a pur-pose because an awful lot of people seem to be buying them. However, it wasn't all that long ago when life was simpler - and a bit more enjoyable, in my humble opinion - when the readers used to define a comic's popularity all by themselves. If they liked a

certain title, they bought it. 'Nuff said!

I honestly have no problem with any of these guides, nor with those who feel compelled to use them. Whether someone buys comics for pure enjoyment or as a lucrative addition to his stock portfolio is hardly any of my business. As our peerless publisher, Stan the Man, once exclaimed in a letters page of long ago, "Heck, we don't even care if you buy them for the staples as long as you buy them!"

On the other hand, I sincerely believe that our comics are the very best this industry has ever seen. Anyone not reading them is missing out on an incredible, ever-expanding universe of pure entertainment! They have it all - drama, pathos, humor, and even the occasional, odd bit of offbeat philosophy. Many of them also go up in value according to the investment tipsheets, but that's really beside the point.

Marvel has often been accused of fueling this speculator investment mentality. OUCH! That really hurts. We started to put enhancements on our covers because we thought the special inks and foils helped to make them look really special. We started putting comics in plastic bags because we wanted to included special trading cards and posters ... and, because so many readers had complained over the years whenever we had simply stapled them into our comics.

Trust me, no true comic book professional ever sits down at the word processor, drawing board, or desk thinking about the prices his or her comics will attain on the back issue market. We're always focused on the story. Is it good, clear, and exciting enough? Will the readers like it? Will it expand the vistas of their imagination? Will they want more?

Speaking for myself, as well as my brothers and sisters in the comics industry. I have a special plea to all of you investors out there. Rip open your bags! Set your comics free! Read them!

If we've been doing our jobs properly, you'll be glad you did!

Thanks for being there,

- an Tom D.

ake the neighbors, and phone the kids, as Dave "the 16 mil-lion dollar man" Letterman used to say. It's time for another eyeopening Bullpen Page.
Our very own "Professor" James

Felder, assistant editor to Hildy Mesnik, was responsible for a few rude awakenings on a recent episode of TV's "Good Day New York" show. Professor Felder, who never talks in his sleep - but he has been known to hum old Bee Gees tunes - is a member of the New York University Pipe Band. Together with two other

ators of our WORLD CHAMPI-ONSHIP WRESTLING comic (which has been permanently pinned as of issue #12), writer Mike Lackey, and inker Don Hudson. Also on hand were PUNISHER assistant editor Tim Tuohy - who's been working on SLEEPWALKER so long, he could do it in his sleep — and Bullpenner Spencer Lamm — who would prefer it if you touch him in the morning, and then just walk away. Dishing out the award were a couple of dishes who always sleep in twin beds - the world-famous Barbi Twins!

John Romita Jr., who wishes you would wake him up before you go-go - not after - received a write-up in the January issue of Runner's World magazine. JRJR said that he uses exercise as a method of dealing with the pressures of tight deadlines. Or, as he put it, "The only thing that preserves my sanity is running." The article describes how a comic book is created from start to finish (and they actually got it right!), and details John's career at Marvel, mentioning his work on such titles as X-MEN, SPIDER-MAN, and DAREDEVIL. Also quoted in the article is running enthusiast/PUNISHER editor Don Daley, who sleeps with one eye open - and one nostril closed.

Clive Barker, whose stories are so scary they could wake the dead, dropped by the Marvel offices recently to check out the ultra-superheroic new Barkerverse. Clive met with Epic editor Marc McLaurin, who doesn't know which to smell first when he wakes up — the coffee or the roses. Coming in July are four new Cliveerific titles which promise plenty of badtime stories: HYPERKIND, ECTO-KID, HOKUM & HEX, and SAINT SINNER. Marc promises the new books will be "super heroes with a Barkerian twist!" That's enough to give even Pin-Head nightmares!

With all these new books coming out, you may not be able to sleep at night. But that's okay. Like Bon Jovi says, you can sleep when you're dead!



fellow pipers, the Prof went door to door with Star Trek's "Scotty," Jimmy Doohan (who's not a bagpiper, but he plays one on TV), waking up everyone they met. "Scotty" was in town to emcee the NY bagpiping festival, and apparently was so impressed by the Professor's playing, that he was inspired to go out and buy a kilt. The Prof was highly critical of Scotty's playing in the movie Star Trek 2, commenting, "He may know his way around the Enterprise, but he pipes like a Klingon!"

One guy who never gets up on the wrong side of the mat is wrestling great Paul E. Dangerously, who this past December was awarded Manager of the Year in a star-studded ceremony that put us all in a sleeperhold. In attendance were two of the cre-

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DANNY FINGEROTH MIKE LACKEY ASSISTANT EDITOR

Attention correspondents: All letters considered for publication must include your name and address, though we will withhold that information upon reque

Since we've asked for your suggestions for lasts another 30 years! the ideal cast of the SPIDER-MAN MOVIE. we've been swamped with replies. We can't print all of them, so here are some highlights...

Spider-Man: Keanu Reeves Mary Jane: Tawny Kitaen Aunt May: Olympia Dukakis

The Kingpin: Marlon Brando, Telly Savalas Dr. Octopus: Joe Pesci, Raul Julia

Green Goblin: John Lithgow J. Jonah Jameson: Dabney Coleman

Fred Schaeffer P.O. Box 109 Sperryville, VA 22740

Uncle Ben: Wilfred Brimley Joe Robertson: Robert Guillame Green Goblin: Robert Englund Aunt May: Anna Lee (Lila Quartermain from "General Hospital")

> Larry Porter 117 N. Navarre Ave. Youngstown, OH 44515

Dear Spider's Web.

I like the way your writers and artists work. So far the stories are great. I have just read AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #370 and it was tremendous. But I already know who is behind the invasion of the Spider-Slavers. It is not the Tinkerer or the Foreigner. So I figured out it is none other than Alistaire Smythe. I'm surprised that Spidey did not figure it out yet.

One thing I don't like is Mary Jane's smoking habit. I am surprised Peter did not take this too seriously. He is a genius and he should know

cigarettes are dangerous.

One last thing, please bring back Carnage. He is truly awesome in that he has no sense of fair play, and he has little or no conscience as all. And he goes after anybody. Since he is so deadly, he can go up against other super heroes and heroines. This would make a great storyline.

So until next time, keep up the good work and Make Mine Marvel!

> **Edward Grant** 972 Sterling Place Brooklyn, NY 11213-2518

You're going to be very pleased with our "Maximum Carnage" crossover, Edward. It all begins in the first issue of the quarterly SPIDER-MAN UNLIMITED-on sale very

Spider's Web.

I couldn't help it! After reading AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #370, I just had to write! I am especially enjoying the "Invasion of the Spider-Slayers" bi-weekly. The feature stories are good and the artwork is excellent. But what I am truly enjoying are the short segments afterward dealing with Peter's friends, family, and enemies. It really touched me when Aunt May visited Ben's grave. I felt so sorry for young May that I nearly cried. It was beautiful. Mr. DeMatteis should be commended.

Brian Wixom 1007 Georgie Court Crestwood, KY 40014

Oh, come on, Brian! Spidey will last far beyond another mere 30 years!

Dear Danny and Mike.

ASM #370 was another nice continuation of the Spider-Slayers bi-weekly saga. In this issue, I was particularly impressed with both the continuation of Mary Jane's emotional problems, as well as the bit about Spidey's parents. At first I didn't believe they were the genuine article, but now I think they are, at least in their own minds. Or they could be plants by the Red Skull who have been brainwashed into thinking themselves as the Parkers.

Also, I enjoyed the back-up feature in this issue. J.M. DeMatteis is such an excellent writer. Great job featuring his talents here so others will be inclined to check out SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN.

James Evans 6621 Sutton Road Madison, WI 53711

Like we've always said, there's no reason a true Spidey-fan should not be interested in all the Spider-Man titles. We take pride in making sure that it's the same wondrous web-spinner no matter where he appears!

Dear David, Mark, Danny, Mike, etc.,

We got quite a bit out of AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #370. You gave us new, revamped versions of the Scorpion and the Black Cat, the return of the Tinkerer, an especially chilling Spider-Slayer, more of the mystery of Peter's parents, more of Mary Jane's smoking habit (where is this going?), and a thoughtful back-up feature that gave a whole new dimension to May Parker (whom I thought we've looong since known everything about). Not bad for \$1.25...and (grumble, grumble) seven cents tax.

Anyway, you guys again produced a nice, meaty issue that nevertheless moved along at a nice clip. Keep it up!

Joseph P. Menta Jr. 7704 Delphi Place Philadelphia, PA 19153

Well, Joseph, we hope the government gives you as much out of that seven cents as we gave you for a dollar and a quarter.

Dear Danny,

Well, he's still amazing after all these years. While the core of "Invasion of the Spider-Slayers" is what I'm enjoying the least, the current storyline is great nonetheless. Issue #370 just left me asking for more.

David Michelinie is crafting a wonderful story here. Yet the Spidey vs. Spidey-Slayer scenes aren't the sequences that I'm amazed about. Rather, it's the personal life of Peter Parker. First, the poor guy's parents are back after all Keep up the good work and I hope Spidey these years. Their tale is of vast interest, but as

far as I'm concerned you should stop putting those hyperbolic blurbs on the cover. They make me think that Marvel is going to cop out and find an incredibly stupid way to say that Richard and Mary Parker are phonies. If this happens, my faith in Marvel Comics will drop to a resounding zero!

Second, the Mary Jane subplot is also very intriguing. It isn't often that a character who the audience once supported starts doing something which that audience will oppose. This is the case with MJ smoking. Peter acts as the typical nonsmoker, agitated that his wife has taken up a possibly fatal habit. As this subplot escalates, it can only get more interesting. I'd like to see how, and if, MJ quits.

As always, Mark Bagley's artwork was well done. Mark draws an excellent Spidey and his action sequences are top-notch.

Finally, perhaps the best part of the AMAZING SPIDER-MAN bi-weeklies is the back-up features. J.M. DeMatteis's looks at Spidey's personal life are just fascinating. And while I don't usually care for Aaron Lopresti, his "Aunt May" story was beautifully rendered. I look forward to the back-ups immensely. Keep up the good work, web-slingers!

> Joey Marchese P.O. Box 2197 Union, NJ 07083-2197

The best is yet to come, Joev!

NEXT: AMAZING'S premiere entry into the "Maximum Carnage" madness! After the above mentioned UNLIMITED #1, the action carries over into WEB #101, then returns to this mag for Chapter 3! Venom! Carnage! The all-new villainy of Shriek! Guest-stars and villains galore! Would you even consider missing it?!?



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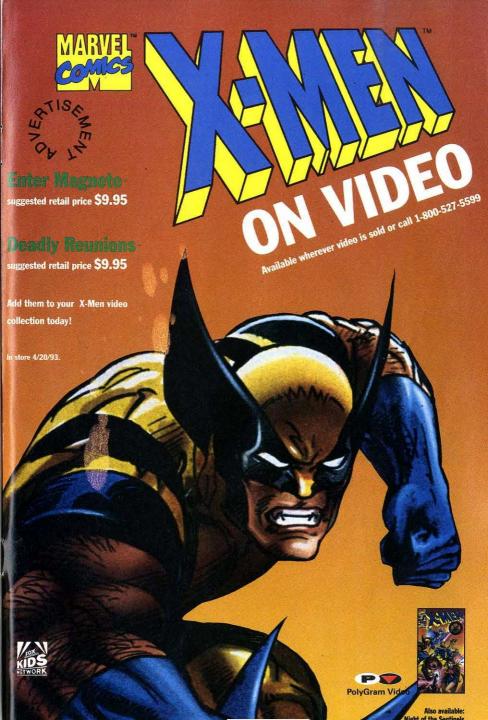
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