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Special Thanks Dept.: Special thanks this issue goes out to Jack Monninger for the beautiful page by Steve Fabian, to John L. for the illo he has inked by Neal Adams, and to C.C. Back for his article and accompanying art which we are very grateful.

This issue is respectfully dedicated to perhaps the fan of all time, not to mention THE WORLD’S GREATEST INKER, Joe Sinnott. Thanks for the years of enjoyment you’ve given us! (not excluding our centerfold!)

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(Cover by John Byrne and Duffy Voehland)
Revelation time, folks! First off, as you've already noticed, I'm back at the editorial helm once again. Well... not really. Actually, I'm sitting in for everybody's favorite fan, Roger Slifer. Slifer was supposed to be here telling how glad he was to be back home again in Indiana on the banks of the Wabash far away. However, at the last minute... quite literally... he decided that no one would ever believe that! Sooner, it's back to Brooklyn for our man Slifer! Hang in there, Roger!

(We must interject at this point in time that the two-week reappearance of Duffy Vohland in Hoosierland for the annual CPL/GANG Board Meeting probably had something to do with Mr. Slifer's disappearance. Why else would the large one keep swinging his pocket watch back-and-forth in front of Roger's face?)

Oh, yes! Before we forget... some of you may be surprised that you are holding CPL #8 in your hands & not issue 7. Well, the truth of the matter is that issue 7 was a sell-out a good week before we even had a review appear anywhere! In fact, your ever-lovin' staff was fortunate even to snatch up a few personal copies! Of course, if the demand is great, we might be tempted to reprint number 7... but don't hold your breath, of course, if you all want to see is Craig Russell's barbaric interpretation of Conan from our best-selling issue, pick up the latest issue of Savage Tales.

Oh, so? Oh, yes! It seems that no sooner had the first few copies of CPL #7 bean mailed out, that Bob got a call from another old fanzine editor in New York, asking if he could reprint Craig's Conan in his zine. To make a long story short, Bob said yes. So now you can see Craig's art in a slightly larger format at all your better newstands. Gosh, we even got a little plug! (Thanks, Roy)!

This electrifying eighth issue of CPL heralds the return of some new faces and some old friends. (In fact there are so many non-Gangsters in this crowd that your very obedient Gang & affectionate robot, Rog-2000 was almost caught with it's pages down!) So, it's a hearty hello to C.C. Beck, dashing Dan Maitz, two great jobs... Sinnott and Staton and our own favorite fan-femme, Patty Greetings also to two old pal buddies, Frank Maynard and Mike Uslan. Welcome back to Neal Adams and Dennis Fujitake. And finally here's a big tip of the Stetson hat to Jack Hannah and 'Captain Nefco' himself, Dan Adkins.

Speaking of Dan, 'Suanu' Bob recently returned from another safari to East Liverpool, where he abscended with one of Dan's Drawing Boards, three pages of art, and a couple packs of Dan's Necessos. (Necessos are sugar wafers that Adkins eats by the truckload! Right on, man!)

Well, that about wraps up this issue. Next go-around will feature an in-depth interview with Murphy Anderson, a six-page strip starring Rog-2000 and the whole darn Gang--as lovingly drawn by our own John Byrne and Duffy Vohland, and some surprise features you wouldn't believe!

Oh, some regular readers may have noticed the absence from our inside covers of the usual Charlton lines. It's not that we're losing our love for Charlton heroes... far from it! It's just that... well, to paraphrase our favorite radio station... something BIG is coming to CPL in August! Watch for it!

And this just in: Confidential sources in the Big Apple reveal that you'll soon be seeing a lot of John Byrne & Duffy Vohland on the stands! Congratulations, guys! We wish you both a heap of success!

Before we finish up, we'd like to ask those who wish to contribute art or articles to CPL to please make xerox copies of your work before you send it to us and unless you can do as good as Byrne, Maitz or other CPL artists, don't bother sending it.)

Okay, that's it! Settle back and enjoy another issue of America's favorite little fanzine! Heavy Hammers... Bob and Sterno.
COMIC BOOK CRISIS: A READER SHORTAGE?

Before getting into this article, I would like to emphasize that this is purely a personal observation and opinion. Perhaps the solution I offer is no solution at all. But it's an idea, and it seems that what the comic book industry needs are some new ideas. If you think what I propose is wrong, that's fine, as long as it starts you thinking and may lead to some conclusions of your own. I write it not in my capacity as comic book instructor but in my affiliation with National.

I don't know how many of you have been following the yearly sales figures that have been appearing in the recent comics, but there are some important and worth looking at, especially when compared to those of years past. Comics have taken an embarrassing nose-dive in sales. Some books that not too many years ago were selling 300,000 to 700,000 are down in the 140,000-210,000 range. This, to me, is incredible. Added to that is the paper shortage, and we find the economic situation of comics unstable. It seems we have all seen personal favorites and pets of fandom fold. There's a problem alright. Now, is there relief in sight for us?

Well, one means of relief may be what appears to be a re-interest in comic book properties by the TV people. We all remember how comic books took off when Batman appeared on the tube in the mid-sixties, and rumors have it that by next year we'll be seeing either in live action or animated, Wonder Woman, Tarzan, The Shadow, Spider-Man, Star-Friends, Batman and Superman re-runs, Shazam, and the Legion of Super-Heroes. Maybe this will be the trigger that everyone has been waiting for. But, maybe not.

I understand that approximations list fandom's scattered membership at some 20,000. That's a lot, not a hell of a lot, but a lot. Since most of the people involved in fandom base their existence around comic books, I think it is our job as much as the companies' jobs, to at least attempt to do something to rectify the situation. Next question: what can we do?

I don't know.

But I do have an idea. One bad habit of comic collectors is that we have this compulsion to buy everything in sight so we can say we have complete sets. I think we must all go through withdrawal. One problem I see is that there are so many more titles on the stand today than there were a few years back, readers are picking fewer for economic reasons. The end result is that circulations overall have fallen drastically. Someone might be able to come up with a mathematical equation here, but being no mathematician, I continue. It seems that the comics industry is like HYDRA, --cancelling a book and two more take its place. Also, the general quality falls as the massive quantity increases. Which brings us to my proposal.

I propose that we, as a united fandom, stop buying out of habit. So what if we've been collecting the Avengers or Mr. Miracle since they began? If the art and/or storyline has deteriorated to a great extent, STOP BUYING IT! Let the books go under, or force the companies to make a change. If you are a Harvey completist and they bring out their tenth Richie Rich title of reprints, called "Richie Rich On The Run" or "Richie Rich's Black Magic", DON'T BUY IT!!

(Continued on next page)
what is the result? First, many of these reprint books or books that have fallen into hack-work will disappear or improve. 20,000 people ceasing to buy a comic will have some effect, since that can be as much as 1/5 or 1/6 of the book's circulation. Secondly, it will leave fans with quite a bit of money. This is where the sacrifice comes in.

If each fan collects a series of his favorite titles, many of which are probably within cancellation jeopardy already, and uses the money he has saved from buying the junk he had been "hooked on" to instead buy a second or perhaps even a third copy of each of those favorites, he will be perpetuating his favorite comics and perhaps increasing their frequencies, he will further be helping their sales by contributing to the death of many garbage titles in competition for the limited market currently, he will be voicing a demand for quality in art and story on a steady basis, and he will be helping establish fandom as one of the important voices in determining trends and moves to be made.

Sure, this plan has holes in it & may be worthless. I know fandom is next to impossible to unite on anything that different people like different titles. But I also remember not too many years ago when we assailed a letter-writing campaign next only to the one that made NBC continue Star Trek for another year, when we pulled off getting Hawkman his own book, and later the same for Captain America and the Spectre. Maybe we can just take on the responsibility of each trying to push comic books and hook a friend or three on them. (I can just see Stan lurking around school playgrounds in a trench coat saying, "Pass it, Hey kids. Oldies ever get off on Swamp Thing? Here's one for free. If you want anymore I can get 'em for you for 25¢ a piece." At least no fan has to worry about being arrested for possession and sale of KILL to a minor.) I think its time fandom somehow organized a committee into taking suggestions and began a massive campaign to unite collectors through the primary organs of this network—the most widely read fanzines.

I would like to hear what you have to offer. Maybe somebody else would, too.
As all of you regulars out there realize, CPLA did not have a One Last Desperate Chance gracing its interior. The first guy who sees gets a shoot in his stomach! Bob Layton says he couldn't decipher my handwriting. So this time it's being typed. Raaahhh!

(Note to Bob: As we agreed I'll put Lee Ann on the first bus to Indianapolis just as soon as I see this in print. She's having a really good time in the front broom closet. Oh, and you'll be happy to know that's not the little finger of her left hand I sent you. It was my sister's.)

Onward...

The older and more diverse a collector becomes, the greater the sheer volume of material interests him. The occasional comic at 0 becomes everything on the stands at 15. Curiosity towards Doc Savage et al leads to eventually completing the collection. A chance Perry Rhodan story turns into a bi-weekly necessity. Or (now to determine) maybe he's doing all of the above.

Whatever the case, a good many small stores fall out of your pocket book, the collector's pocketbook to that lady behind the cash register. A good part of this, 20-25% of every item, goes to the cash register. The establishment is currently being graced by your presence. Now I have nothing against drugstores, snuff booths and the like, but with the general state of the economy the retailer must somehow be eliminated. This is effectively done by getting to your area's distributor.

(What follows might not be of much use to those of you under 12 or too far from your area's distributor for regular trips. If this is true, TOO BAD. There are other articles in this issue that might interest you.)

So in general, decide if you spend enough money and are close enough to warrant regularly visiting a distributor. If it's feasible, take a trip to get permission. Once that's over, find out the times when he won't mind your coming. Keep coming regularly and establish yourself as a trustworthy customer. The top rule is to do as the distributor suggests. He holds all the aces and can take your $5.00 a week or leave it.

Crackle borgward, 'Doc' Larry Brinicky
Comic Art: Fact or Fiction?

By Scott Edelman

If you're a fan of comic art, you're probably familiar with the name Scott Edelman. He's a talented artist who has worked on many popular comic books, including "The Spirit" and "Superman." But did you know that he's also a writer? In this article, Edelman explores the relationship between art and life, and how comic books can be both a form of entertainment and a way to express important ideas.

In his essay, Edelman talks about the importance of comics as a medium for storytelling. He discusses the ways in which comic books can be used to explore themes such as life, love, and loss. He also talks about the process of creating comic books, and the challenges that artists face in trying to bring their stories to life.

Edelman also discusses the role of the artist in society. He argues that artists have a responsibility to use their work to address important issues, and that comics have the power to do just that. He cites examples of comic books that have tackled topics such as politics, social justice, and personal growth.

Overall, this essay is a thoughtful exploration of the relationship between art and life, and the power of comics to inspire and engage readers. If you're interested in comic art, or in the role of artists in society, this is a must-read.
Strange comrades-in-arms, thought Godfrey, as he and the Redbeard crossed the mountainous hills. On a strange mission. After a strange foe. Traveling through a strange land.

Loki had stolen his Thunder-Chaircoat, Thor explained, and used it to create havoc on Earth-earthquakes, floods, wars. Loki said he would crush the universe. Thor intended to crush “that weasel” long before that could happen. The harsh words of a man concerned only with revenge. Spelling could only wonder, how could he ever understand the emotions of a god?

Their path was crossed by a horrible apparition, a woman half-beautifully-alive and half skeleton-dead. This was Hel. Redbeard described her as “a woman never truly alive who longs for death, a death that can not come until the last of the gods have been taken in her care.” Hel moved on, indicating as she did the direction in which Loki waited. They followed as best they could. Spelling occasionally broke the silence with a new query.

"Thor, tell me about Asgard. Where was it?"

"Asgard? It wasn’t a place as you think, friend. It was the combining of men and ideals. We took it wherever we roamed. We were gods, men said. We thought ourselves dedicated beings. None of us perfect, but dedicated. We were strong, perhaps. We made the mistakes of men, certainly. Yet we never lost sight of the ideals we believed in, no matter the stain on our past. The best and worst, but always striving for the best. That was Asgard."

They were silent, these two, as they walked their roads. One was lost in images of the past. The other thought of courage, the dream of love, perhaps the promise of sleep.

Hel floated before them, leading them.

Loki waited.
Loki's sword snaked forward. Thor brought Mjolnir up under the sword and knocked it aside. A blast of powerful fists sent Loki sprawling onto the ground. Thor Redbeard raised his hammer to strike a final blow. Loki desperately smiled and played his final ploy.

"Hold, Redbeard! Destroy me and you destroy the universe. I have already put my plans into operation!"

"No tricks, sinister one. Your time has come. Prepare yourself for your daughter's touch!"

"THOR! WAIT!"

The eyes of the immortals turned to Godfrey Spelling, a small man in a world of giants who, nevertheless, stood between two gods and the life of his world.

"Are you mad, mortal? To disturb the doings of the gods?"

"Listen to me, Thor! Didn't you hear what Loki said? He has already started his plan to destroy the universe! You can't kill him. You can't toss away a billion billion worlds!"

"You presume too much, mortal! Leave us whilst I take long-awaited revenge on this worm!"

"VENGEANCE! Is that all you can think of? Is that the end of the regard you paid me, Thor? You're not a hero, much less a god of any kind! Gods care! You're a selfish, unthinking war machine that doesn't know the war is over! Your revenge? What about that world down there, my world? How about those three billion people down there? Don't they mean anything?"

The god of thunder raised his hammer to silence Spelling. He caught the burning gaze in the newsman's eyes and was amazed. It had been a long time since that had been leveled at him and he knew it had been too long. Was this the ultimate fate of a hero? To slowly become unable to distinguish between the good and the evil? To battle without thinking?

"I know what I must do, Spelling," Thor said calmly. "I know you've done all those terrible things. We, you and I, are the tools of destruction. Think, fool! Did you ever look at the world down there?"

"Science rules there. We are the only survivors of an existence when magic ruled all. We pose a threat to science's rule and our mere presence has disrupted the universe. What will happen? The fall of the World's and, as science grows, so does our power until everything erupts in the final holocaust. All will die!"

"And do you know how the universe can be saved, Redbeard? By our deaths and our deaths alone! And you have given your word not to kill me. The final jest, Thor! The heroes do this all!"

(Continued on page 22...)

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A fellow that stands out among his peers is Ben Grimm, our verbal Play-thing! Test-pilot, weight-lifter, and deep-sea diver are but a few of thevacations Ben has followed in his job as trouble-shooter for Richards & Associates, a Manhattan-based firm. But home-standing in the Big Apple doesn't keep our Mr. Grimm down! A natural bon vivant, Big Ben is just as at home in exotic locales as he is on Yancey Street. "Yes, I get around a little," asserts Ben.

Always one for physical fitness, Ben can often be found on a brisk spring day in Central Park, jogging down the paths, feeding pigeons, and assaulting the occasional mugger. "Guess I'm just a kid at heart," he says. "Exercise is good for you! It improves your disposition... and it's good for your appetite."

The orange wonder is perfectly impertinent in his diet... he'll try anything once! A typical Friday night might find him with favorite date, Alicia, at someoney's "I'm a sucker for pastas but I'm just as at home at Nathan's snarfing franks."

As for his romantic plans... well, Big Ben's eyes never seem to stray far from his. But he admits to having some misgivings about future marital bliss. "I'm a romantic like the next guy," says Ben, "but I don't know if marriage is right for me. If I settled down, it might break some hearts. I guess ya might say I belong to my public."
PLAYTHING OF THE MONTH
The wild laughter of the god of evil told Godfrey what Thor's centuries-long pursuit of mad Loki had done. The constant fear worked on Loki and took its toll. And Thor? He grasped Loki's arm firmly and raised Mjolnir once more.

"No, Thor! You promised! You promised that you would let me live! I want to live to see the end of everything!"

"Relax, mad one! I shall not kill you."

There was no mistaking the emphasis on that one word. A look was exchanged between immortal hero and nastier nemesis. A look of farewell. Then, with all his might, Godfrey Spelling shoved them, shoved the gods off the edge of the world.

Loki's scream lasted a very long time, long enough for the souls of the last of the Asgardians to collect the souls of the last of the mortals. The flash of light marked their demise. A similar flash returned the weary editor to the clear streets of Lakeside City. He peered from the shelter window and saw that the bus was coming.

Godfrey Spelling got on the empty bus, walked to the last row of seats, and wept. Wept for the last of the gods. The driver ignored him, relieved that he not chosen to burden him with whatever problems caused the tears. He looked at his watch. One A.M. The hour of thunder had passed.

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Dear Rogie-2000,

The cover of CPL #7 wasn't too visually impressive for me. Take a look at it. It took me a second to notice the design. Strange and what is holding him is fire, ectoplasm, smoke, ice, and a voracious Big Mac.

All in all, CPL was pretty bad without "Doc" Larry Brinicky's column. Bring back this feature immediately to improve the next issue greatly.

Grackle Borgward,
"Doc" Larry Brinicky
W. Lafayette, Indiana

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Dear Bob,

I'm taking the opportunity now to write you. My schedule takes up most of my time. Unfortunately, it's an around-the-clock life.

Believe me when I tell you it's a marvelous thing to see magazines like yours because of the tremendous interest in the business of making comics. Represented in CPL.

Thanks for thinking of me.
Sincerely,
Gene Colan
C/o Marvel Comics

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Dear Rogie,

I have so many great things to say about CPL that I don't know where to start. The cover was wonderful, good lettering and excellent drawing by Craig Russell, which could have been better inked. I feel that a regular series is a must for CPL. Just think of a series drawn by Adkins, Gulacy, Byrne or Russell.

Also, I feel you should answer fan's letters in the letters page. Do you agree?

Jackie Frost
West Monroe, La.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: "YES."

Dear Rogie-2000,

First, who is Storn? Secondly, was CPL-2000 got to do with CPL? (although I love the Byrne illos of him.) And third, how do you manage to put together such a great fanzine for so little a cost as 50c? Ken Meyer Jr.

Savannah, Ga.

EDITOR'S NOTE: (1) A mad Latvian war rancher with delusions of godhood. (2) The real brains behind CPL/ Gang Publications. And (3) slave labor. Satisfied?

Dear Gang,

What a delightful fanzine! I've only received it during a coffee break, but the visual impression was good. It makes me ache for 1967 when all I had was a book. It's not that way anymore, though. I've got to re-adjust to being a real free-lance artist again.

Thanks for thinking of me.
Michael Kaluta
New York, N.Y.

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Dear Rogie-2000,

I'm writing because of a desire to write a blistering retort to Warren Pringle's MISSIVE.

I was once told (by a teacher) that in order to have a valid opinion, the opinion should have substance in fact. Just because John Byrne is not Mr. Pringle's "cup of tea" and Duffey is not an idea of a goodinker (I'm assuming this from his third paragraph statement) doesn't mean that the work lacks merit.

In fact, I doubt Pringle's ability to judge a good piece of artwork from a bad place. As an art major and fan artist, I find John's work utterly fantastic! His work is usually well inked (whether he or Duffey does the inking), well constructed, dynamic and above all, excellent.

I really don't understand what Pringle's life-long hatred of Marvel has to do with Duffey's Tavern and whether or not it was done "for me and I like Marvel...and National...and Charlton...and Warren...and Skywald...and Red Circle...and Gold Key...and anybody who has a comic worth reading.

And belittle Duffy just because he does backgrounds for National (continued on page 31...don't yell!)

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BACK ISSUES DEPT.

C.P.L. #6 features art by Dan Adkins, John Byrne, Mike Royer, Joe Simon, Dennis Fujitake, Val Mayerik, Paul Gallico, Ben Heaton, and Denny O'Neil. Articles by Roger Slifer, Steranko, and Larry Smith. Only 75 copies are left available, only 40 copies are left available. (Cover by Adkins and Simon.)

C.P.L. #7 features portfolios by Val Mayerik and Craig Russell along with letters by Paul Gallico, Ben Heaton, Dan Adkins, John Byrne, and Denny O'Neil. Text by Roger Slifer, Steranko, Harryuvro, and Craig Russell interview. Only 20 copies are available now, but if demand is great enough, perhaps we can reprint #7. Please let us know if you are interested in purchasing a copy. (Cover by Craig Russell.)
WHO NEEDS REALITY?
by C.C. Beck

Comic strips originally were comic, as some few still are. They told jokes taken from ordinary life. But for some reason many clowns want to play Hamlet and some comic strip creators do almost exactly the same thing. They dress all the characters in costumes and have them jump around in heroic poses. And standing... and posing... with little or nothing to say.

Now when an actor (and that's what a comic strip character is, an actor) has nothing to say and nothing to do, he's pretty dull. Lavish backgrounds and elaborate layouts don't help, they only make things worse. Comic strips often become like those super-production movies thrown out by Hollywood at its worst when full symphony orchestras, hundreds of chorus girls, and thousands of extras were used in every scene and stories were so unimportant that the audience often left out.

A good comic artist will want to make his readers laugh or cry at his act, not admire the costumes and settings. For this reason he'll keep his costumes and backgrounds simple and show only the action necessary to his story. If he's telling a joke, he'll get a good joke to tell first! All the costumes, dialects and elaborate settings in the world won't make a poor joke better. Their story is just a story, an ending that makes people laugh. If they laugh at the wrong time the joke is ruined; if they laugh at the storyteller's act is destroyed. A joke is just one kind of story, of course. Other stories make people cry, gape with wonder, thrill, pant, shiver—perhaps not so that they'll rush out and buy tickets later, but that's the same thing.

People with the ability to tell good stories, that is, to create them in the first place, are very rare. A man must have something very special to keep people interested in his act. He must be able to gather a crowd of his fellow men and hold their attention with nothing but his words. Some story creators are so good that their stories still hold audiences long years after the authors are dead and gone. Such stories are as enduring as the old comic stories beautifully told, acted, or staged and lighted by master craftsmen.

Now since good storytellers are very rare, there are never enough of them around to fill all of the comic books, magazines (of which comics are one variety) that publishers and theater-owners have waiting. The few who make penny-ante comedies are constantly supplying the public with inferior products and the sad thing is that neither the public knows the difference. Both the clown and Hamlet laugh just as heartily at the sight of a cripple or a deformed human being as at a man in the makeup of a clown. The public will flock to a hanging, a fire, or any disaster such as an earthquake, a plane crash, or a shipwreck. When such entertaining natural events are not available producers and promoters will put on religious plays, political conventions, religious gatherings and similar staged events in their place.

People always like to think that what they're reading in a book or watching on a stage is real, not made up. As reality is either very dull or utterly overpowering, often quite beyond human comprehension—what is presented to an audience must be selected and put together by what are called artists, that is, people who make artificial arrangements of things. These are the very people who are in such short supply, as we have said. Even when they are available producers and promoters often refuse to listen to them, believing that the public (which they regard as a collection of utterly mindless morons) wants only meaningless junk. In this they are partly right; meaningless junk is closer to reality. And the public thinks it wants reality.

But it doesn't. It wants to escape from reality. It wants heroes bigger and bolders than life; it wants heroines smaller and fairer than real women ever were; it wants kids and animals much cuter and more endearing than real ones. It wants villains and heroes and plants and witches and ogres. It wants magic—whether it's a witchcraft—or above all, gods and demons, or better yet, a God and a Devil. After all, that's the first story ever told, isn't it?

But since those two co-creators started everything off so splendidly the producers and the property men and the ticket sellers have taken over, and look at the shows the world's looking at today. You couldn't even make a comic strip about it! So let's forget about reality, as far as comic strips are concerned anyway. Let's have some fun and jokes and entertainment... even if it only exists in our minds.
WOMEN IN COMICS
by Paty

With one very talented exception, there's no such thing as a woman in the coloring department... behind the scenes... everywhere EXCEPT the main creative fields (i.e., editing, writing, penciling, inking) but there are no women in creative roles in either of the two major companies. Why? There are plenty of adequate-talent people in both writing and art fields. Maybe I suggest that it is one, a combination of, or even all of these reasons.

1. Women writers and artists are usually not as pushy about their work. They are less inclined to bug the people in charge of competition. They are less inclined to overwhelm themselves and therefore may not make their interest known.

2. The ratio of males to females in the field is very low. There ARE female character designers, probably because comics (except for those insane 'love' rags) are male oriented. The woman in them aren't real women... so there is no reason for male designers to want to read them to any great extent. Therefore, there are less talented women who even CONSIDER comics illustration or writing.

3. Women—because of their physiological, psychological, and social make-up—tend to view things differently, and the formula for comic book art and writing has always been based on the male interpretation of how women view the world. Women tend to pick up on small things and fine details most people miss—expressions, reactions, relationships of characters, etc., etc. (Only one male artist I've seen even begins to see things as a woman sees them—Neal Adams. And even Roy Thomas admits Adams is bucking the formula! But they're not "male" because not only is he an artistic genius... he's MALE!) So... is it that the editorial policies and formulas cannot cope with the female view... or is it that women won't work for people they don't know... or is it that doing scenes and dialogue that is all wrong.

4. The companies themselves are too confusing to work for. They are either not sure what to expect from women or what to ask for. Case in point: (this from my own experience) on Cat #3, I was given three intro pages to pencil... which I assumed they liked since R.T. then sent me the summary of the rest of the story with instructions to do a very lightly pencilled break-down and then to bring it in. In talking with the writer, if I had told the story, I would have been able to change anything; obviously if anything had to be changed it would be easier to change before a lot of shading and detail work was put in. A week or so later I was back with the 'lightly pencilled breakdown' which they took (very mumbledly, saying that this pencilling was still good) and which I never saw again. I never talked with the writer, but since they only switched two panels I guess everything was OK. But...get this... THEY RAIDED THE BARE BREAKDOWN!!! with no shading added, no details, or background, no nothing! AIEEE! Did they want a breakdown or a finished pencilling? I still don't know (and I have a sneaky suspicion they don't either).

There are, as I mentioned earlier, a goodly amount of gals in coloring. Perhaps the 'bosses' don't realize the importance of good coloring and, thinking it less important, allow women (slave labor) to do it. Hamm, didn't anyone ever tell them Coloring can make or break a book?

Speaking of coloring... five I'll getcha ten that's where Mie Severin is! With all due respect to this lady's obvious talent in the coloring field, I, for one, miss her pencils on my Western wish to crop pencilling chores on this mag... or was it THEIRS?

While we're on the subject of women in comics, let's zap off on another tangent and look at women characters. by Day! (roughly translated Du Pain...) I've said it before and I'll keep on saying it... comic women are not REAL! The people who decide what kind of a person any given character is (either editors or writers... artists have very little to say about anything) are all
MARTIPECE OF BUNGLEING the dialogue of a male-female scene! If one truly understands the dialogue of these two characters, the result is quite possible. The vision's answer would have produced anger and withdrawal. It becomes as much a declaration of fact as it could make under circumstances. Only a sharp and stony retort to the effect that I am useless and not for my actions... or a similar statement could have produced in the audience confusion and subsequent withdrawal. Understanding why women are not seen as equals by many men, the key to understanding how they react... and the key to making them real. Never have they lived or acted like that before. I'm afraid... I'm sorry. But I'm afraid of Spidey, the Avengers, etc. was wrong the main character. How? Because the women were the main characters... and women are not men!

The same can be said for just about all the females in the era of the super hero. Superwoman, Batgirl, Wonder Woman... they may have wanted to play super hero... they may have even wanted to play the male role... but they never did. Women are not men. They cannot be super heroes. They cannot be the main character. How? Because the women were the main characters... and women are not men!

For example, one could bring a FEMALE hero to the screen. But who would play the lead role? Would a woman be chosen to play the role of the super hero? Would a woman be chosen to play the role of the main character? No. Women are not men. They cannot be super heroes. They cannot be the main character. How? Because the women were the main characters... and women are not men!

Dear Gang,

I just picked up the CPL 'zine at Calliet's Emporium and I was rolling with laughter over your article on the course. Funny as hell. Let me tell you what you were missing and what you're getting. Talk to Jay on TV and print coverage---JEWISH MANAGMENT THAT'S THE SECRET BEHIND the comic. Now, if you ever meet and Jay in person sometime in the near future, myself and all of good Yiddish background... will... for a mere 10%... manage you the way they managed me last week!

As to CPL, while we're on the subject---

Fine art, very enjoyable! Where can we look forward to seeing more of Paul Gulacy in pro comics? As to the "The 10 Most Original Comic Series of 1973," I'm sorry but I must report true! I would add either Adventura, E-MAN, Shazam, or Brave & Bold, instead. Ah, well!

I would disagree with Craig Russell's assertion that you think of his work (even his early stuff---Nightshade, Thanos of Bagrock, etc.), his Aquaman, Phantom Stranger, and the like. Russell is a great artist, but his stories are often too complicated and his plots are often too rushed. That's classic work! I hope fans remember all that when awards voting begins.

Best,
Michael Uslan
Bloomington, Ind.

(Thanks, Mike! The last time we saw Piero, he was running on a Kosher Frank and nothing smelling about him. But if you look at Paul's work, you'll see a lot more going on.)

Dear Roq-2000,

I must disagree with Warren Prindle's comments on Byrne's art. John Byrne is a damn fine artist. He has a nice, smooth creative style that is perfect for the kind of stories he is telling. I am viewing past work by John, I am presently inclined to say he will make it big in the comic industry (when he gets in). I've only seen one of his strips and the layout, style, everything was very, very good. Duffy is a good artist, considering what little experience he has had. He tends to be a little scratchy in places from time to time, but he has had the experience that Sinnott, Adkins, or Andru... etc.

Best,
Doc Lehman
Orville, Ohio

Dear Bob,

I see in TBO that you are advertising CPL 7. So I dug out my copy of CPL 5 to see if it was any good. It is not just any good, it is very good. I liked it! What is even stranger you seem to have a bimonthly one that is published bimonthly (not on the same day) that isn't done, fanzines must be published at irregular intervals.)

William Danhole
Mano Park, Calif.
THERE'S a lot better at organizing things than I can ever be. He was having a pretty good turn-out with his Free University comics on comics. Then there's the fact that he grew up in Deal Park, New Jersey! Mike's 'From Deal' asked Maynard between bites of his pretzel. "Hey, I used to know this dynamic chick from there! I ever tell ya about..."

"Don't interrupt! You wanna know why Mike is famous and I'm not, or do you?"

"My apologies, Sahib, but what does growing up in Deal have to do with the great one's greatness? Just accessibility to the stars. Unshaven one! Deal is in the very backyard, so to speak, of Manhattan. Do you have any idea what it's like to be a growing comic fan in the New York area?"

"No, I don't!"

"Neither do I. However, Mike does. While other kids were learning to steel hubcaps & fake I.D.'s Mike was hanging around the innermost bowels of the DC vaults with guides like Julie Schwartz. Not a bad situation."

"So he knows some people in the industry!"
As a comic collector, I tend to stay away from purchasing comics via subscriptions. Over the years I've had enough experiences to know about torn copies or missed issues. Frustrating annoyances we all like to avoid, and so I generally go visit the six or so stands in our county weekly, and have been able to satisfy my collecting needs; more or less.

That is until I discovered Charlton's newest super-hero mag, E-Man, was not being locally distributed. Being an avid Joe Staton fan, I realized the situation was a desperate one. Even to the point of ordering a subscription.

It was only by sheer coincidence that I then discovered Charlton was at this time offering not only an extra issue with each $1.00 sub, but also a give-away booklet entitled THE COMIC BOOK GUIDE FOR THE ARTIST-WRITER-LETTERER. Now that kind of bargain really helped ease the pain and so I sent in my crisp, new dollar bill.

Several weeks later, I arrived at home to find an envelope from the Charlton Co. in my mail. But that was all! An empty envelope.

My mind reeled in total fury! Grr! "They blew it," a tiny voice inside echoed repeatedly. "They blew it!"

Realizing, by the size of the envelope, it had been intended to carry their give-away guide, I immediately took up pen and wrote directly to Charlton's editor George Wildman. If the error was to be corrected at all, there was no time to waste.

My letter was cordial; yet to the point, and before I finished I also mentioned the bad distribution given E-Man in our locale. With fingers crossed and a prayer on my lips, I mailed it off.

As the days went by, since the mailing of my letter, my thoughts envisioned further confusion and mix-ups. Would I ever get my first issue of E-Man due me? What if all my letters received were empty envelopes? And if so, could there possibly be a fandom for envelope-collecting? The agony was unbearable!

Finally the cloud faded away, the sun rose high in the sky... and Charlton replied. And how!

In one swift blow I found myself with (A) two copies of E-Man #2 (one as my subscription starter and the other as a complimentary copy from Mr. Wildman), (B) one copy of E-Man #1 (again, as a gift from Mr. W.), (C) two copies of the Guide Booklet! (you guessed it, again an extra copy) and (D) one fan friends kind letter from Nick Cuti, the assistant editor. Mr. Cuti apologized for the goof and explained the extras were given in retribution to any inconvenience they had caused. By now I was nearly in shock! There was even a comment to the effect that my problems with distribution of Charlton comics would be promptly handled.

Perhaps in this day of Watergate and I.T.T. scandals, we are prone to distrust so madly. Each of us has become that tiny bit more cynical, and in so becoming, we have lost a great deal.

Optimism is a flower of faith. It grows in love and truth and is nurtured by trust. Okay, so perhaps the majority of comic management folks don't give a damn about fans. But some do!

Thus on the day my second son, Kevin Douglas, was born, I received a letter from the gentlemen in charge of distribution for our region. Somehow, I wasn't surprised. I knew that his letter would contain beneficial information and that he would be only too happy to be of further assistance in any way possible. I knew because the people at Charlton had told me such.

You know, Mr. Wildman and Mr. Cuti, it's quite a nice world at that. Thanks.

Ron Fortier 13A Water St. Somersworth, N.H. 03878
"WAITING FOR THE SPIRIT... OR SOMETHING LIKE HIM"

It was 1952 when Danny Colt last took a regular breath. Oh, it's true that we had an occasional glimpse of the rough-muscled sleuth amongst the publications of Harvey and Dell, and we've never really seen his return until days most recent. First it was special printings of old issues, but now we've really got something to sink our teeth into. The Spirit is back...in magazine form...on a regular basis! Yes, it seems like oh! Jim Warren is trying to play Santa Claus. Oh, the book is just social! But what a reprint! And that cover is the stuff it says it all: "Starring the World's Greatest Comic Character!"

"But it's only a bi-monthly!" you say. "What'll we do in the meantime?"

Funny you should ask! Because Uncle Will has a couple of goodies up his sleeves that'll have you coming back for more! We're speaking of a couple of oversized paperback publications from the Poofhouse Press, entitled "Occult Cookery," a sequel to "Communicating with Plants." What are they? Let's take a peep, imagine, if you will, Commissioner Dolan's in-law, Ebenezer's uptown cousin, and the Friendly Folks, who used to live just down the block from the Cob's. Now imagine those same folks giving useful instruction in how to live in meaningful relationship with the world of flora. Got it? Good now, on to (drol) "Occult Cookery!"

Occult Cookery is your basic off-beat cookbook...with one important difference! This "sauce" is appertized to present culinary recipes that have some mystic properties...from ideas for soups that provoke herbal curses to charmed appetizers guaranteed to boost your income, liven parties, and...umm...cure virginity.

As that as it may, both books are profusely illustrated in the distinctive Eisner style and deserve your immediate attention. If you can't find them in your friendly neighborhood bookstore, they can be ordered...along with two other Glorious Guides, Facts, Trivia & Statistics of How to Teach Your Dog to Sing from Poofhouse Press, 481 Pack Ave., South, New York, New York 10016. The price is a mere $1.95 each.

Oh, and in case we forgot to mention it, anything Mr. Eisner does is loved and cherished by your obedient robot...who knows what to review and when?

Re: 2000

*IMPORTANT NOTICE: This is not our pun! The blame falls solely on the shoulders of one Willis Rensie of New York City!"

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THE SECRET LIFE OF PETER PARKER...PART TWO

THE KOSHER ARACHNID by Frank Maynerd

Comics—like it or not—rely on stereotypes with regards to character personalities. Oh, there are exceptions, but for the most part comic book characters can be found to revert to (stereotyped) types. A certain character is found to be "clumsy," in another, "a bookworm," in another, "a wannabe," etc. So, with this in mind let's take a close look at Marvel's wallcrawlers.

Just what do we know about Peter Parker? An orphan, he was raised by a doting aunt and uncle in the city of Queens, New York. Mary, a frail, new girl, was never really into the boy with affection. She seemed to be constantly feeding him sandwiches, which he ate happily, probably with good reason! Peter, while hardly the weekling he was thought to be in his pre-Spider days, was a slight boy, taking more after his natural mother in this respect (both his father and uncle were stocky build). Because of his strong family influence, his slight physique, and a general clumsiness which could be attributed to a lazy adolescence, Parker quite naturally developed an inferiority complex. Given time he probably would have come out of his shell, perhaps during, and after, his high school career or at least shortly after he entered college. But, of course, such things were not to be.

Parker's possibilities as a late bloomer would have seemed all the more promising due to his incredibly analytical mind and...more than-normal empathy. Peter was not an unattractive youth! He was, in fact, handsome enough to appeal to his contemporaries (Liz Allen, Mary Jane Watson, and the late Gwen Stacy) and to women a few years his senior (Betty Brant). And for all of his complexes, Peter was—smart. His natural savviness for science and mathematics was particularly evident in his interest in the new, now familiar Spider-Man.

This has recently been substantiated in Spider-Man #130, page 17, panel 4 and panel 5, ed.) Not only would the works of philosophy and religion by preachers and school counselors and the like, but they would provide an excellent medi-
on Alexander Portnoy? Well then, let's see if the analogy can be pushed a little further. Let us devote for a moment.

There exists amongst certain religious groups a basic ethnicity that is often manifest in the member's personality. To take a rather drastic example, Amish children are taught the virtues of somber clothing and the distrust of machinery. Drastic, true, but other more widely-spread religions have -- all we say -- religious-based traits which are acquired environmentally and subtly influence their character.

Now, if we return to the original idea of comic book characters having stereotypical personalities, what a fantastic possibility arises! Could it be that Peter Parker is Jewish? The places of the personality-puzzle certainly appear to fall into place! After all, an old stereotype falls, new ones often stand to take their places. Just as the bearded pawnbroker was a stereotype of old, so the hung-up Portnoy is steadily becoming a stereotype of today! But certainly no such stereotypes would consciously be applied in the formative years of the early sixties, when the Comics Code Authority still wielded a mighty blue pencil. Ah, but what of the subconscious? Doesn't a writer often put a bit of himself into his work, his characters? And couldn't that stiltie touch of the subconscious get by the sometimes crossed-eyes of the CCA, yet still show up in the characters? In other words, isn't it possible that one Stanley Leiber put just a little bit of the kosher into his web-slinger? Possible, but still highly theoretical. But still, too, what great new possibilities come to mind!

Think for a moment what new facets a bit of ethnic Jewery could open in Parker's personality. The mind boggles. In fact, it is a wonder that Mr. Lee with his penchant for throwing the occasional morality-play gambit into his books didn't recognize the untapped potential many years ago. But will we ever see Spidey blossom into an ethnic hero? Probably not. Aside from the fact that anti-Semitism still rears its ugly head in parts of the country, Parker and his costumed counterpart exact too much of an identification with youthful readers across the country to interject any drastic deviation on religious grounds at this late date. So, we can probably forget any notions of a theo-ethnic

tag for our young hero. Still, I can't help but wonder....

"Is Parker orthodox or reformed?"

something BIG is coming AUG. 1st.