Capt. America In Vietnam Mission

DANANG (AP)--Flashing a big grin and waving a triumphant "V" for victory, a living legend stepped from an Air Force helicopter at this war-torn Vietnamese city today and was given a thunderous welcome from thousands of cheering GIs. Captain America, the famed red-white-and-blue Avenger, was airlifted back to friendly territory here after successfully completing a hair-raising mission into North Vietnam which involved the destruction of a super-secret weapons test and development lab where the NVA was reputed to have been perfecting a fantastic new weapon, which they planned to rush into use against American forces.

"I can't talk about the mission," Cap told the crowd of well-wishers and hero-worshippers, "but it was a hairy one and I was just lucky to make it. I'm glad to be back among friendly faces."

(Continued page 10, col. 4)
Never thought we'd make it did you? Well, here we are. With our 10th great issue. This is no doubt our best issue yet, with the best art any fanzine could possibly have.

Of special importance is this: The National Comics Society and my own FF have embarked to produce a fanzine entitled the "FF-NCS SPEC-IAL". This zine has 40 xeroxed pages, an offset cover, with work by Tom Crawford, Bill Cantoy, Gary R. Spievak, Jay Owens, Nans Car-lisle, and ye old editor, Gary Groth. All this for only 75¢. Please order early to insure you of getting a copy.

A new trend has been started in "FF DOM": that being all the pro -- professional contributions we have and will be getting. In this issue alone, we have a cover by JIM STERANKO (possibly the best looking piece of work ever printed by Jim in fandom), and spot illustrations by BARRY SMITH, BILL EVERETT, AND NEAL ADAMS. Thanks to Ron Sutton for inking and sending us the above illo of Cyclops by Neal. The artwork by Bill Everett and JIM STERANKO were gotten at the comic con. In future issues, you can look forward to 3 more covers by Jim, one, fully inked cover of the SILVER SURFER by Barry Smith, a wrap-around cover of The Silver Surfer battling the Vision by Dave Cockrum, interviews with pro's, including, an in-depth, personal interview with Jim Steranko, and possibly a MR. A Strip by Steve Ditko, spot illo's by Jack Kirby, Barry Smith and Dick Giordano. At the Comic Convention, NEAL ADAMS and JOHN BUSCEMA were so impressed by FF 8*9, they said that "[I]n the future we'll be [illegible] doing something" (hopefully, cover illustrations). SO LOOK FOR BIG THINGS COMING UP IN "FANTASTIC FANZINE".

The FF's art staff is growing with each issue: With John G, Fantuccio, Dave Cockrum, Al Cinear, and Barry Smith heading the list, we welcome: William Black, Jeff Rinehart, Dave Russell, Dave Transue, Doug Hazlewood, and Jay Mike. Examples of most of these artists work appears in this issue -- The Captain America to the right was done by Jay Mike, the Nephisto illustration decorating the continuation of Tony Isabella's column was done by Jeff Rinehart, and the Fandral the Dashing illustration decorating the continuation of Club Memo's is done by Doug Hazlewood. Look for their work in future issues. (The cover to the FF SPECIAL # 1 is done by Jay Mike!)

Instead of the normal 2 month wait between issues, there will be a 3-3½ month wait between FF 10 and FF SPECIAL # 1. Also, because of the upcoming school year, after school work, and other activities, FF might have to become a quarterly publication instead of a bi-mon -thly one.

Apologies? Yes, we have some of those, this issue. In one of my ads (in the RB*CC), I stated that there would be an in-depth report on the 1969 Comic Convention, which I attended and thoroughly enjoyed, but after "finishing the 5th up", I didn't have any room left. A brief report on the convention with around 20 pictures taken at the convention.

*CONTINUED ON PAGE 21*
An Interview With Dave Cockrum!

F.F.: Well, Dave, since this interview will be reaching about 800 fans, let's get right into your views on Fandom. When did you first become interested in Fanzines and Fandom, and how did you discover them?

Dave: The first time I ever saw a fanzine, I think was nearly ten years ago; I got a complimentary copy of some 'zine (I can't recall after all this time what the name was, even) because I had a letter printed in a comic 'mag. The 'zine was in ditto and the art was at best mediocre, but still it caught my imagination. Suddenly I realized that there was an outlet for amateur artists to put their work into print for other people to read and see, and I wanted to join up. Unfortunately, the 'zine disappeared before I could write to the editor. I think it was burned with one of my hoard of comics (my folks burned 'em as fast as I could stash 'em.) After that, I heard nothing more about fanzines for several years, and it wasn't until about three years ago that another opportunity came along for me to affiliate with one.

F.F.: What was the first fanzine to feature your fantastic work, and how was it that this was the first fanzine you discovered or decided to work for?

Dave: Another printed letter did it. I had an LO C printed in Fantastic Four and something in it sparked Steve Ziegler of the late YSG to send me a complimentary copy. I sent in a sub & a batch of art, and asked if YSG could use my stuff. That was sometime in 1967, I think...I worked almost exclusively for YSG right up until it folded.

F.F.: While we're on the subject of fanzines, what do you think of the present number being published now?

Dave: I think the field is flooded with them::: There are a number of outstanding or very good 'zines' out, with some real talent putting them out, but there are also a helluva lot of crud...
the urge to go into print. I'm not putting these kids down, anything -- it's a good thing for anyone to try to express himself in a creative fashion, it's a good outlet for spare time and energy -- but if some of the people putting out some of these little 'zines, would instead go to work to improve the quality of some of the good ones, I think you'd see a lot more really good fanzines!! Not as many as there are not -- but much better in quality.

F.F.: Currently, what are your favorite fanzines and which one(s) do you contribute to?

Dave: My base of operations, to speak is Ron Kraus's ENTERPRISE MONTHLY. Though, a fairly new 'zine, it's one of my favorites. I think GRAPHIC STORY ILLUSTRATED is a damn fine zine -- one of the best, though I don't contribute to it. I like Alan Engstrom's COMIC BOOK & have done a seven-page superhero strip for it, but it might wind up in the pages of ENTERPRISE MONTHLY, for all I know, since Ron Kraus bought Hanley out and is now Publishing CB for him!! Besides YSG and FF, I've contributed to COMICOLIGY, had a sort of portfolio (not my best work) in STAR STUDDED COMICS, and am preparing a strip for STAR STUDDED that may or may not be finished in the near future. I also contribute to a lot of 'zines dedicated to Heroic Fantasy -- especially Edgar Rice Burroughs and Robert E. Howard fiction -- & of those my favorite is Paul Allens' BARSOOMIAN. Paul has a huge collection of my E RB work but so far none of it has been printed due to the length of time between issues. Further, his next issue has been laid out around the motion pictures Tarzans, so it'll be quite a while before any of my work does get printed, unless his plans to reprint old issues with new art are realized. I've also contributed to E RB-DM and AMRA, but nothing has been printed yet. I'm a relatively new member in the Swords-&-Sorcery-Fanzine ranks. My favorite 'zine of all, though it can't be classed as a 'zine as such, is WITZEND. There is a damn fine magazine. It's exactly the sort of thing I'd like to do myself if I get established someday -- a medium where comics pro's, normally limited by the Comics Code, can do exactly what they want!! And they all do it well.

F.F.: Dave, just what do you look for in a fan zine? What mean is, what is it that arouses your interest in a particular fanzine?

Dave: The contents. (My wife told me not to say that, but I couldn't resist the temptation,...) Secondly, I look for good art first of all. As an artist myself, I enjoy looking at good work!! Second, since I prefer strips, I look for these. I look for good plots and lots of action. If there are articles, fan fiction, I look for current, pertinent, well-written work from someone who has something to say. Junk articles & critic columns on the latest issues of comicon, I have no use for; I'm capable of doing my own criticizing. I know whether or not I liked the latest issue of the incredible Onion-Man, if I read it, & if I didn't read it, the critic's column is useless, because by the time it's printed, that issue of Onion-Man is no longer on the stands.

F.F.: How do you feel about your work in the Yancey Street Gazette as compared to your work today?

Dave: Poor. At the time, I thought it was good, of course, but I don't any longer, I try to keep my work constantly improving, because I can sit down and show you half-a-dozen weak points in any piece of art I turn out. I want to get rid of these weak spots. One thing I lack is polish. I just don't think my stuff looks professional. Maybe that's because I was the one who did it, though. I'm a lot better than I was in the YSG days, but still have much room for improvement. One hangup I have is that I'll lay out a sketch and get ready to make a smooth of it, and then I'll think: 'Wait a minute now. That's an awful damn conventional-looking sketch. You sure you can't come up with something better than that?' And then I'll stop and think it over, and turn on my imagination. That's my problem, I'm a conventional-looking artist. Why, I felt about that center-spread in FF #8 & 9, it wasn't bad, but after I finished it, I realized I forgot to turn on my imagination. It could have been so much better, but I didn't think of it.

F.F.: When did you first become interested in drawing, and what did you learn to draw first?

Dave: I think I first started drawing when I discovered that one end of a pencil makes a funny mark on paper. I'd get a new pencil and try to draw with the new end. From old Loony Toons and Melvin Melodies sub I had, Gene Autry (from Gene Autry Adventure books) and monsters!! I even oil painted monsters (pretty badly, I might add.) You know how kids are. I got pretty good at the monsters. Later on I switched to superhero-heroes; I dearly loved the original Captain Marvel and the Marvel Family, and used to draw them. I never was very good at it, though.

F.F.: Did you ever attend any sort of art school?

Dave: I took as much art as was allowed in high school, then majored in it for nearly three years at Southern Illinois University and Colorado State U. Unfortunately, when I got tired of college & joined the Navy for (hew) adventure, I was out of college for a while, so I realized that I must've never really learned in class, because I knew next to nothing about art -- especially human anatomy. I went out and bought several art...
books, including an encyclopedia on anatomy, & sat down every night after work to do some homework. Basically, that's what I'm still doing. But most of what I know is self-taught since leaving school. A course of action, which I definitely do not recommend.

F.F.: Let's get to an easy question for a change -where and when were you born? 
Dave: Pendleton, Oregon, on November 11th, 1943. A good date, that.

F.F.: Now what about the comics of today - say compared to those of yesteryear? 
Dave: That's a loaded question. Whatever I say I'm liable to insult somebody. However, there's no question, but that today's comics are far superior in quality of art and story, and in general appearance. Unfortunately, though, I have the same sense of nostalgia for old comics that older collectors than I have toward the comics of the 40's. Even though I know the stories were silly, in fact sometimes down-right stupid, I still think that Captain Marvel was the greatest superhero ever printed.

F.F.: Are there any other fields besides comics that particularly interest you? 
Dave: Definitely. I'd like to try my hand at book illustration, for instance; Sci-Fi & fantasy covers & interior art, like the work put out by Frank Frazetta, Roy Krenkel & Jeff Jones. I'd also like to someday try out an idea I have for a daily newspaper strip, time permitting. I've had the idea laid out for several years now; it's a sci-fi strip called "Galactic Agent" and it involves several people who are special operatives for the Office of Naval Intelligence, five or six hundred years in the future. I'd also like to do some writing. I have several plots in various stages of completion, all sci-fi or fantasy, just waiting to be finished if I ever get the time. I think they're pretty readable, but I'll have to get them finished and into a publisher to find out.

F.F.: Have you ever considered going into the comic field? Do you plan to, sometime in the future? 
Dave: If I didn't, I'd be finishing up those plots right now and getting them into the printer. Yes, I hope to go pro when I get out of the Navy. That'll be in September of 1970! I enjoy drawing comics more than almost anything else I can think of, and if I can break into the field I'm definitely going pro. My work can still be improved but I have more than a year to go and I'm constantly working at it.

F.F.: Are there any people in the comic field who have influenced your work? 
Dave: Nah, it'd be easier to name the people who haven't, then all the people who have. At one time or another I've been influenced by Gil Kane, Frank Frazetta, Wally Wood, Jack Kirby, Al Williamson, Carmine Infantino, Will Eisner, Neal Adams, Joe Kubert, Mike Sekowsky. I could go on indefinitely. I'd say that Frazetta, Kane, Adams, and John Buscema have had the greatest influence on my work.

F.F.: Everybody has his favorite artist(s) and writer(s) in the comic field. Who are yours? 
Dave: I'll have to qualify my answer a bit. I have several favorites, for several reasons. My topmost, super-favorite artist is Frank Frazetta, and of course, he doesn't do much in the comics field any more. I'm also quite fond of Will Eisner because of the way he creates an atmosphere almost without trying -- but again, he's not very active any more. I'm nuts about Hal Foster -- I think Prince Valiant is the best comic books medium work in existence. As far as comic books themselves go, I think I'd have to pick Neal Adams as my current, contemporary favorite. In fact, I even like the way he writes. (I understand a lot of people don't.) I guess I'd have to pick Joe Kubert, John Buscema, and Jim Steranko as close seconds. For writers, I'd have to say either Donny O'Neil or Gary Friedrich; Gardner Fox is pretty good, too, when he's doing Sci-Fi. This "Nightmaster" strip O'Neil writes for DC is outstanding S&S, I think.

F.F.: Let's get into your artwork now, Dave: -- Could you explain a little of the technique you use in your penciling and inking? 
Dave: Haphazard. Personally, I think my pencils are better than my inks. I get a lot more character and subtle shading into the pencils than finally comes out in ink. Basically, I guess I just start out with an idea and kind of quick-sketch it to see what it looks like, then alter it as more ideas come along. I frequently trace a sketch several times with variations, to see which one I like best. When doing a strip, I can't do that, of course -- too time consuming and it wastes paper. And, I use a lot of opaque white poster paint to cover up mistakes of something after I've "Turned On My Imagination."

F.F.: What materials do you generally use in your inking? 
Dave: A small, pointed brush (usually # 1, 2 or 3, although I know most pros use larger ones) and sometimes a crow-quill pen for lighter shading. I like Pelikan ink, but when you're sta-
Dave Cockrum continued...

-tioned on Gaum, you take what you can get.

F.F.: How's your working speed, Dave?
Dave: Lousy. If I was doing it as a regular job, I think I'd be able to turn out a good amount of work on a reasonable schedule, but, when you're married to the Navy for 24 hours a day and have a wife and son who like a little attention now and then, it takes up most of the day. I don't get much time for drawing, and have a helluva time meeting deadlines.

F.F.: Who do you consider to be the best FAN-artist?
Dave: John Fantucchio. The only guy who's close is Vaughn Bode; his war strips are outstanding. I've heard that Fantucchio is working on a strip himself, though, and if it's as good as his posters and single illos, it ought to be fantastic. But then, he takes a lot more trouble in his work than a pro artist could afford to. Too time-consuming.

F.F.: What company, in your opinion, is the best all-around company?
Dave: I'm going to have to hedge a bit here, and even so I'll probably make more enemies. I don't think any of the companies are good all-around companies. All of them have some glaring faults and some outstanding good points. Marvel's stories have more impact and contemporary social significance; they're not afraid to take a stand...but sometimes they carry it to the point where it's like a kid waving flags & shrieking, "Look at me ma -- I'm a crusader!" They blow their horn a lot. Besides, Stan Lee's hypersensitivity & gib wisecracks leave me cold. DC, on the other hand, seems very reluctant to even mention the issues of the day, more often than not, and when they do, their stories seem rather weak & contrived. This isn't always the case, but it's a prevalent characteristic. Not, I think they've been trying hard to please the fans of late -- much more so than Marvel claims to -- and they've turned out a lot of new features lately. Unfortunately, I lot of them have gone bust too; like the Creeper, which I thought was one of the best new characters in years. I can't see what they're doing wrong -- except that they used the same damn villain over and over and the plot was always the same basic one. Their new NIGHTWING zine is a really exciting production, -- I think; I was dubious when they used a rock singer as their hero, but by the second issue I was sold. Anyone who likes Swords & Sorcerers should eat it up. I also think, that DC has, for the most part, better artists -- although lately the two companies seem to be swapping back and forth, what with Colletta at DC and Adams & Kane at Marvel. And, of course, DC has always looked slicker and more glossy than Marvel, but that seems to be what most people like about it! It seems to be an underground production. Tower and Charlton were good too, during their superhero phases; too bad about that. I think I'll just shut-up about the whole thing and say I read 'em all and appreciate 'em on their own merits.

F.F.: What, in your opinion, is the best all-time strip ever published?
Dave: That's a tough choice, if you limit me to comic books. If I can include newspaper strips, there's no question at all. Prince Valiant. Any one of the characters and strips that have ever been put together have been the work of a genius. It's hard to choose one. If I were limited to comic books, I guess I'd have to say Will Eisner's The Spirit. (I'm aware the Spirit was also in comic pages, all you people who thought you caught me goofing). Eisner has the ability to create, with just a few lines on paper, an entire, dark, gloomy world of alleys and back streets, overflowing trashcans and grime-streets, foul tenements and run-down flop-houses; with what seemed like very little effort on Eisner's part the Spirit ran through this horrid, evil under-world righting wrongs in a slightly unscrupulous fashion, and it was all portrayed so vividly that you looked a new and then over your shoulder to see who was sneaking up on you. Realism per se, wasn't Eisner's bag; no normal human could survive some of the things the Spirit endured, and no city of human construction ever looked like the Spirit's Central City. Buildings sagged and twisted and became evil entities in themselves, using their brick and mortar to spell out the very name of the strip, like something out of a Dali nightmare. I've gotta say THE SPIRIT -- IT was the best.

F.F.: I understand that you and your wife "met" *CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE*
Why Are Our Interviews So "!S%&!" Long?

because of a letter you wrote, printed in a Fantastic Four's letter page -- that started you corresponding -- and you finally met each other in 1966 and got married. Could you tell us a little more about it?

Dave: That's a long and tangled story, but I'll try to make it brief. I had a letter printed in an early FF --- # 36, I think, declaring that I thought it was about time Reed Richards & (then) Sue Storm got married. Andrea saw the letter & something about it tickled her curiosity. She wrote me a short letter -- which followed me from one duty station to the next -- and I answered it. This started up a correspondence that lasted for about two and a half years, and during that time Andrea left home and went to Florida to work (her home is in New York; I was stationed in San Diego). Finally she decided to come out to California to meet me and we met first on the first of December, 1966, after a comedy of errors worthy of Laurel and Hardy (she came in on Continental Trailways, and I was waiting for her in the Greyhound Terminal. Fort-unatley, when she called my squadron, some of my friends were on duty there and they'd figured I'd do what I did, so they sent her over to the Greyhound station to look for me. I almost didn't recognize her from her pictures, because she streaked her hair with some silvery gunk -- something to do during the bus ride -- and my first thought was 'that little old lady looks familiar'). Anyway, about ten days later, we eloped to Las Vegas. I've never had any reason to regret it.

F.F.: How does artwork fit into your Navy Career?

Dave: Miserably. In the first place, The Navy naturally takes up most of my time. I have to scratch for time to do my artwork even in off-duty hours. Then, about once a week, somebody comes into the office with a request for a cum-shaw art project (cumeshaw is Navy slang for "un-dess the table" or "midnight requisitioning") -- they want me to do it in my off-duty hours. More often than not, it's an officer and how do you tell an officer -- "stick it in your ear, sir"? Also, I do a monthly comic strip for the ship's newspaper; it's called "Bubblehead", a typical "Beetle Baileyish" strip about life aboard a submarine tender. "Bubblehead" is a Navy term for sailors aboard Polaris submarines (Bubble-Machines). I suppose every guy with an artistic ability who was ever in the service has to put up with the same thing. Funny, though -- nobody wants to pay for it. They all think it comes under your Navy duties.

F.F.: EDITORS NOTE: The next question, readers were directed toward Dave's wife, Andrea Cockrum -- this is, to my knowledge at least, the only interview where the last question was answered by a person's wife. Alright, Mrs. Cockrum, --- could you tell us what kind of a guy, Dave really is? (we could've asked Dave, but he might have been a bit prejudiced...)

Andrea: Dave is a fairly quiet, easygoing guy who knows some of the world's worst puns and is totally dedicated to his artwork. When a guy's six-month-old son crawls around in a superhero costume, that's dedication. (Our boy isn't six any more -- that was quite a while ago.) Dave doesn't beat his wife or molest his neighbors' children, and is very kind to animals. His favorite being snakes and warty old toads. He has, what is politely known as "robust appetite" (meaning, he eats like a horse) and threatens to clean out the refrigerator several times a day -- between meals. And all that is about as close to the truth as I can get without being clobbered. All in all, he's a better-than-average husband and father and I kinda like him... just a personal opinion of course.

+++++++++++++++++++++++++++  

And there it is: The first interview with Dave to be printed in any Fanzine. No doubt, that when Dave turns pro, he'll be swamped with requests for Interviews and I'm only happy that FF was the first to get one. This interview, I believe rival's our history-making Sal Buscema interview, which many of you readers thought was "the best Interview" you ever read. BUT re-member, it wouldn't have been one quarter as good and in-depth as it was, if not for Sal's interest in making it such. I thank Dave (and his wife) for doing such a good job on this one.
When his twin brother is reported killed in an auto accident, and it is learned that the car had been tampered with, Dr. David Bryant becomes the billy-club wielding hero known as CRIMESMasher to carry on where the police investigation left off. That was in 1968. The Search for his brothers killers is still the motivating force behind his campaign to smash crime wherever and whenever he finds it! It has led him to team up with THE MASK and together they now follow the trail of their prime suspect: the mysterious leader of an underworld organization known to his men only as CRIMEMASTER.

The Time: 1968
The Place: A warehouse in Centerline
The Event: A meeting between the MASK and an underworld tipster who may be the key to breaking CRIMEMASTER's grip on the city.

As the two confer within the huge edifice, they fail to see a movement in the shadows. A small explosion is their first warning that they are under fire. One of the figures falls lifeless to the floor, a small hole in the middle of his forehead. THE MASK, sensing that his companion is beyond help, rolls for cover!

Coming up behind some crates, he draws his .38 from his shoulder houster and returns fire. The sound of a door slamming indicates that his attacker has departed.

Our scene switches to CRIMESMasher as he enters the first location on the list he and his partner found on their last raid, a list they believe shows the location of every criminal cell operated by CRIMEMASTER. No sooner is he inside, than the lights come on and the green gladiator finds himself facing a trio of hoods with an equal amount of guns aimed his way.

"So this whole thing was a set-up. That list we found was a phoney that CRIMEMASTER hoped would get us to walk into a trap!"

"That's right, ya' costumed clown. And it looks like you fell for it. Your career is gonna' end right here, You're gonna' die CRIMEMASTER!"

"Not if my partner has anything to say about it --get them, MASK!"

As the killers whirl to look behind the CRIMESMasher throws his billy-club at one of the hoods and leaps toward the others even as it makes contact. A few well-placed blows and his antagonists are out for the count.

"I didn't think they'd fall for that old trick but I'm mighty glad they did. I'd better contact Jim and warn him about the list."

Back at Carter House a little later, the two heroes, in their everyday identities as millionaire James Peters and David Bryant, exchange info and make some observations.

"From what those goons told me, I gather that CRIMESMasher has put a contract out on us. That list was supposed to make it easier for him to find us. In fact, we'd come to them!"

"Right, Dave. And that ties in with what happened to me. That tipster didn't tell me anything we don't already know. My hunch is that the bullet which killed him was meant for me, but I moved at the right time and it bypassed and killed him."

"So, it's open season on costumed heroes, is it? Well, this is one target that's going to fight back. We'll have to watch our step from now on, Dave. We'll be targets for every two-bit hood with a gun once the word goes out. It looks as though the hunter has become the hunted. I have a feeling we're going to learn what it's like to be the prey for a while."

"We haven't let anything else stop us so far. This won't be any different. Brave talk, my friend, but I'm afraid we may both wish we'd never taken up this quest before very long."

And there is yet another, whose thoughts are on the same matter, another who goes by the name of....

*CONTINUED ON PAGE 24*
The Accursed Code

That comic magazines have survived the imposition of The Comics Code Authority proves the value of the medium and the loyalty of its fans. Almost everyone enjoys comics in some form. The few who don't are either devoid of imagination and a sense of humor, or in a moment of puffed-up self-importance, publicly denounced comics and are forever stuck with that commitment.

The Code came into being as a defense against attack at a time when comics were most vulnerable—able to attack. Other than the editors and publishers, comics had no defenders. So, a conditional surrender was negotiated. For almost ten years, comics were pure oatmeal. Then, in the early sixties, Marvel jacked up its publications with a new attitude. At about the same time, nostalgia and "camp" gave the medium another boost. Books were written, collections of great comic books were reprinted and offered in hard back and soft covers. Comics are now considered an art form by many reasonable people.

But, what's to be done now? What is the value and the essence of The Comic Magazine; especially the superhero comic? Does it really have a purpose or a place? And most important, does it have a defense strong enough to allow the artists to progress unhindered by a Code that must have been written by a very religious bunch? I say, yes! And the time couldn't be better. This is the age of enlightenment, and the era of the new whipping boy. The very young and very impressionable spend their time glued to the boob tube. Comi ics are now for the more demanding and the more social. The attitude of (and for) comics has changed from an introverted withdrawal from reality into the most communicable of the entertainment mediums. Comics can be enjoyed alone, with or without a group. They can be discussed before, during or after reading. They are tangible and immediate, no medium is more completely at the service of the en joyers. The Super-Heroes who have survived through the ages offer common ground for discussion for everyone from the very young to the very old. Comics are communication for the generations.

Personally, I'd remove all censorship, and ignore the vulgar and badly drawn magazines. Of course, that's asking for trouble in the form of another crackdown. So, I'm willing to put it in the hands of the masters. The true artists (cartoonists/writers) are the best judges. Good examples of unhindered graphic stories are Steve Ditko's "Mr. A" and Wallace Wood's "ANIMAN." Neither went too far and both were ultra-satisfying.

The following is a breakdown of comic magazines and suggested form of presentation for each. Very likely, some of the ideas are impractical, but so is the current, prevail-

BY BILL CANTY

Types Of Comics -- And Suggestions

1. Funny animals and funny people. Humor on a very low level (with a few exceptions.) These simply drawn comics require little effort on the part of the artists! They should remain 10¢ indefinitely and occupy the lowest level on the newsrack.

2. Comics based on T.V. shows. Censored twice over. Usually very dull. Drop 'em and use the money to beef up the Super-Hero mags.

3. Teen and Love comics. Actually aimed at pre-teens. I can't judge 'em because I haven't checked 'em in fifteen years. You tell me. Personally, I'd drop 'em.

4. Super Hero. The most enduring comic with the broadest appeal. If the industry is deter mined to continue the romance element, this might be the place. A 25¢ mag, starring the hero in action with the hero's private life and problems as a secondary feature, might increase the depth of the character. Taboos against common knowledge subjects (effects of drugs, pregnancy--its cause and cure, pain & injury, etc.) should be dropped. Daily comic strip characters have grown up with the past generation. The Hero often expresses a desire to beat hell out of the villain or to jump on the heroine. This type of magazine should have, at least, as much freedom. Also, shapely gals are not sin on feet. As long as maiden modesty is protected by a strategically placed arm or a well formed thigh, I see nothing wrong with accentuating the female's form as well and as often as the male's. Finally, I enter a plea for more realistic action and reaction; the Super-Hero without moral desires becomes another costumes "fruit."

5. War and western. Demands realism in art & action. War was/is HELL, and frontier life...

*CONTINUED ON PAGE 29*
He Who Rides The Night

"In the days that followed the war between the states, greed and lust for power bred hatred & lawlessness across the rolling hills of the west. With only a handful of brave men, stood their ground to make the vast new territory a safe place for free men to live. One such man was Carter Slade, a school teacher from Ohio who rode west never dreaming that he was destined to become He Who Rides The Night Winds...
The Ghost Rider." (From issue #1.)

With these immortal words, Stan Lee unleashed upon an unsuspecting Marveldom, a new and different character, a Ghost Rider. Yet, Marveldom's involvement with the Marvel Super Heroes caused it to gloss over this new character as if he were a mere blob of insignificance. And, in the midst of this neglect, The Ghost Rider after only seven short issues...

Now let us take a closer look at this man who is gone, but can never be forgotten!!! Carter Slade came west to teach school & settle down.

Yet, he is immediately catapulted into the midst of a feud between the cattlemen and "nesters". For his efforts, he is wounded and left for dead by Jason Bartholomew's men (the cattlemen) who are disguised as Indians. From the midst of the aftermath of the attack, emerges the boy -- Jamie Jacobs who miraculously survived the massacre of his parents by hiding in the cellar. Jamie's attempts to get Carter Slade to the doctor have unexpected results. He heads in the wrong direction. Finally, weak from his ordeal, Jamie collapses!!! The Indians rescue them both.

Flaming Star, the tribal medicine man, heals both Carter and the boy. Carter believes that the Great Spirit spared his life for a purpose. He determines to discover that purpose. According to Flaming Star, the spirits promised to send a white warrior, a man who would ride the night winds. He gave Carter the sacred dust of the spirits (taken from a meteor) that reflects the earth's primal light. And he led him to the ghost horse. Carter names the white demon and christens him BANSHEE.

Shortly thereafter, Carter Slade makes two very important decisions: First, he decides to be a substitute father for Jamie. Second, he dons a white costume treated with the glowing powder of the ancients and becomes... The Ghost Rider.

Like the Two-Gun Kid, Ghost Rider wears a costume and has a secret identity. Like the other Marvel western stars, he rides a horse & fights for justice. But there, the similarity ends! For Ghost Rider is indeed unlike any other western star. He must take his nickname seriously. He who rides the nightwinds must do his effective fighting only at night. For with the cloak of darkness, the Ghost Rider loses his most effective ally, and becomes just another gun hand.

However, in one respect Ghost Rider is like all other Marvel superheroes. From the very beginning almost, he has been thwarted, tragic love life. As Carter Slade, he falls in love with Natalie Brooks, who is engaged to Clay Riley, the local storekeeper. Both Carter and Natalie feel this attraction and react by being cold and uncivil to each other. Yet inwardly their hearts ache because of this love which neither feels that they can openly admit.

To complicate this love affair, Ghost Rider innocently brings about an almost fatal accident for Natalie. During Ghost Rider's confrontation with her brother, the Sheriff, she is accidentally shot in the spine by her brother!! Only an immediate operation in Denver can ever hope to restore life to her legs.

At this point, a comparison between Sheriff Ben Brooks and newspaper publisher J. Jonah Jameson is in order. As all of Marveldom knows old JJJ is Spiderman's sworn enemy. Never a good word does he have to say about the famous web spinner. Not even an endorsement from heaven could evoke one kind word from old JJJ about Spiderman. His many good deeds are misinterpreted on purpose.

Ben Brooks is to Ghost Rider, what Jameson is to Spiderman. No matter how many times he saves Natalie and/or the settlers of Bisco Bend, Sheriff Brooks will not believe he is anything but a desperado waiting for the proper moment to strike against an unsuspecting town!! His hatred, fanned by Natalie's accident, is a major threat to Ghost Rider. Slowly, the people of Bisco Bend are beginning to believe that Ben Brooks is right. Very often, Ghost Rider must elude a well intentioned, but misinformed posee before he can even begin to cope with the real menace.

*CONTINUED NEXT PAGE*
To do this, Ghost Rider employs a variety of weapons. They are unlike those used by any other western hero. Compared to these weapons, the six gun can almost be considered obsolete.

One of the Ghost Riders' most beneficial weapons is his lantern-projector. While he remains hidden in the shadows, the lantern casts his image on the nearest solid structure, a wall for instance. That, plus his inner black cape causes him to appear as a ghostly apparition.

Another useful weapon is the flaming hand. It was introduced in issue # 5; but never explained. "Serialied Stan" promised to explain it "next ish". But the last two issues of the Ghost Rider never mentioned the flaming hand.

The lariat of darkness is rendered an equally effective weapon by the lantern projector. It's black color causes it to appear invisible when the lantern is shined on it. We, the readers, saw it on page 16, panel 1 of issue #2, because as "Think-Before-You-Shoot-Stan" said the panel was covered with a "red" viewing shield, (very seldom, do I ever break into an article, but here I felt I just had to: "Think-Before-You-Shoot-Stan" was sick enough, but when he covered up an obvious artistic mistake with that "red" shield over the panel" bit -- that's a little too much. These cute little remarks must be aimed at 2 year olds. It not only breaks up the action (and the action, was at it's peak on this page), but also gives an all-around bad impression of Marvel to any of it's "never" readers. Just a personal opinion of course -- editor.

But, perhaps the most effective of all his weapons are his ghostly appearance and spectre-like voice which are quite useful in wringing a confession from any stout-hearted evil doer.

Ghost Rider's weapons and ghostly appearance have been used against some of the most usual and colorful villains ever to rob and plunder the west. The best of all the evil ran
ties to lock horns with Ghost Rider is the Tar
rantula. He first appeared in issue # 2. He is a mysterious man clad in black, who sports a quick draw and a rawhide whip. At first, he alone of all the outlaws to cross paths with Ghost Rider could not be fooled or frightened by his appearance and manner. But, eventually he rode off saying that he did not know how to cope with the spirits. Naturally, he rode back into the Ghost Rider's life in issue # 4 & 5. This time he changed his tactics. By dropping a few well-planned hints, causes the people of Bis
don Bend to believe that Ghost Rider is his nef
erious partner in crime.

As mysteries go, The Tantula is a well sustained one. His face nor real name were ever revealed. The only clue to his identity is his south-of-the-border-accents. The mystery deepen
ed in issue # 5 when a blow on the head caused the Tantula to forget his identity, discard his mask and ride off into the dusk, leaving an unconscious Ghost Rider to awaken and wonder what had happened. But Ghost Rider's bewilder
ment was never solved for the Tantula never a
gain appeared within the pages of Ghost Rider.

Another villain worthy of notice is Sting
Ray. Formally in issue # 57 of The Rawhide Kid he was known as The Scorpion. He escaped jail & settled in the town of Bison Bend as a druggist. His blue and red costume would make any modern day super villain envious. His unique weapon is the Sting-Ray's serum causing temporary par
alysis.

Perhaps the most tragic villain was in re
ality, Flaming Star's son, Towering Oaks. In a desperate bid to become powerful, he ambushed Ghost Rider and steals the spirit stone, a gift from Flaming Star to Ghost Rider because of his worthy execution of the duties of he who rides the night winds. Like the glowing dust, the spirit stone also comes from the fateful meteor. He who wears the stone possesses untold strength. But that provided to be his undoing. The very spirits Towering Oak chose to defy and mock reached out and snuffed out his life as if he were an insignificant fleck of dust in the vast universe. Along with his grief, and his son, Flaming Oak buries the stone forever.

*CONTINUED ON PAGE 24*
About a month ago, Gary Groth came to me on bended knee and begged me to do a regular column for his fanzine. As that kind of thing is both embarrassing and sickening, I agreed!!! You should have seen the tears of sheer joy well up in his eyes. I quickly told him to be on his way or I would change my mind. He was getting my shoes all soggy.

Actually, I have an ulterior motive for writing for the FANTASTIC FANZINE. I plan to take over comics fandom. Right now, my agents are working to take over every fanzine being published. For his aid, Mark Evanier is getting this 'zine, I've promised to turn over Betty & Veronica to Ann Henry for torture, Mike O'Neal is getting several of Jim Steranko's used zippa-tone sheets.

So, you'd better read this column & like it, if you know what's good for you. You'll now read: TODAY COMICS FANDOM, TOMORROW THE WORLD!

Speaking of fan fiction, I noticed that FANTASTIC FANZINE is running two serials. Not to attack fans Kowalski and Salter (TONY WROTE THIS ARTICLE AFTER SEEING "FF" 6*7 - ed.), but fan fiction does not work when confined to one page or less. This is the fault of no one person. The editor os a 'zine who specializes in articles and columns can't afford to give fiction more space. (Unless he has a fifty page 'zine). The fan writer has this unnatural tendency, also, to underestimate his plot. He gives it much less space than it needs to be properly developed.

The only kind of fiction that an editor of an-article-column 'zine should present is short-short stories. That's the only kind of fiction that can be done right in his 'zine, unless he'd got the page count of a CONCUSSION.

The fan fiction writer owes it to himself and to his story to find 'zines which can give him the pages necessary to develop his plot. Unfortunately, THERE ARE NO FIFTY page fiction zines.

This brings to me to a plea to prospective fan editors in the audience. Don't bring out an article/column 'zine unless you can offer something different to fandom. Almost unexplored are the fiction 'zine and the amastrip 'zine. If any of you out there are considering such zines, I'll help you in any way I can. For more information, write me at:11203 PEONY AVENUE/CLEVELAND, OHIO/44141

Back to the subject of fan fiction. Both of the pieces in FANTASTIC FANZINE # 6*7 were serials. Serial writing is very common in fanzines. It's a shame, so few are well done. Again, though, this is always the writers fault.

I don't claim to be the world's greatest fan serial writer. (Sherman Howard wins that award). However, I have studied the movie serial and how it can be adapted to text form. I summed up my thoughts on the first chapter of any serial in FANTASY WORLD # 2, I'll restate them for the benefit of those who missed them:

The first chapter, of necessity be the longest chapter, with the possible exception of the final chapter. The first chapter has many functions.

First, it must introduce the heroes and villains (unless, of course, the villain is a mystery figure) and give them adequate characterization. This adequate characterization should be the basis for further character de-
Take it for what you think it's worth. If a character is screaming in rage or madness, capitalize his shouts. This gives added emphasis to his screams. For example, "EVANIER! GET OUT OF MY COLUMN!"

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I've got to commend your groveling editor — Gary Groth (just to prove I remember his name which you've probably forgotten since starting that long winded column). His placements of illusinations in FANTASTIC FANZINE 847 & 849 were just beautiful. The illo's actually had some-thing to do with the articles they appeared within. I may be a minority, but it's always bugged me to see a picture of Spiderman within an article on "How Sue Richards Managed To Stay Pregnant For Twelve Months Without Ordering Pickles and Ice Cream Even Once'. That's not very professional looking.

ALTER-EGO and most of the first fanzines on the market had illos that matched the articles. Either the artists drew special drawings for the articles or the writers wrote articles around the illos, but it looked great. Why can't this be done in more 'zines today? In most cases, except when a lazy person like me just makes the deadline, the 'zine eds have the articles early enough in advance to contact an artist to do special illos. The only problem, I see is that it might put a heavier burden on the artist. (On the other hand, if some 'zine ed were to tell me that Cockrum Grinse or O'Neal had done a full page of the Thing making itself out with Supergirl and asked me to write a special article around that drawing, I most naturally would comply. However, I would probably get drummed out of fandom for bringing up such a stupid topic anyway).

All of which brings me, and isn't it amazing how such an unrelated topic can lead into my next paragraph, to the following question — SHOULD AMATEUR PUBLICATIONS LOOK AMATEURISTICALLY? My answer is NO. Even a dittoed 'zine can look well done. It can still have professional layout, etc. I've seen dittoed 'zines that looked better, even art-wise, than photo-offset 'zines. It's all a matter of working hard — no matter what your limitations or advantages.

All of which, in turn, brings me to the following restatement of policy: I WILL WRITE FOR ANY FANZINE IN THE WORLD and ANY 'ZINE OUTSIDE THAT AREA (IF THEY ENCLOSE POSTAGE TO THEIR PLANET) IF THEY REQUEST IT. The only limiting factor, gentle readers, is time. I am not independently wealthy. I have to work so that I can earn enough to pay for my comics, typing paper, stamps, envelopes and maybe even education.

So please, don't be upset if I don't answer you right away. I'll make every effort possible, but I do get a lot of requests. Sometimes, mail gets lost in the confusion. A whole packet of letters was lost a few months ago. If you don't hear from me in a month, write again. My office is in a state of perpetual chaos and these things happen.

I never ask for monetary rewards. (However if every 'zine editor were to pay 10¢ a word, I could retire and devote my life to writing for fanzines). A copy or two of the issue my work appears in is all I ask. Okay?

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I didn't want to talk on some Marvel topic this issue, so before I get off on some other fashionable subject, I'll state that Barry Smith is a person. A person, a fan or pro that gives freely of himself to make the comic art form a
"THE WINDMILLS OF MY MIND" by Tony Isabella continued...

bit better. Dave Cockrum, Stan Lee, Al Giniage, Mike O'Neal, Jim Steranko, and many others are persons!

Ann Henry is a person and bless her, I only wish there were more female writers. Mark Evanier and Gary Groth are trying to be persons, but...

I really don't want to talk about who's a person and who isn't a person, and why certain people's are in reality enemies, so I'm going to throw out a few opinions about Barry Smith's artwork in the few books he has done.

If I disliked Barry's first job, that single X-Men issue. I thought his layouts unimaginitive, his backgrounds bland, his figures poorly drawn. In short, the issue was a mess!

His figures hadn't improved any in his second job on Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D. His backgrounds had improved slightly. His layouts were very imaginative, comparable with Steranko in some respects. Still, Barry Smith lacked something. He was not doing artwork up to Marvel's standards.

Then, Mr. Smith did a series of covers for Marvel magazines. These, I believe, helped develop a real artistic imagination. His KA-ZAR cover was nothing unusual, but he was using more detail. His ugly background was great. Not too awesome, yet appealing. It did not detract from the action, yet it contributed to the entire cover scene.

Smith's next cover for Captain Marvel # 11 was a masterpiece. It is easily the best cover ever to appear on that title. The swooping spaceship, the fleeing Mar-Vell, the living mountain, the simple background -- combined to make this cover a work of art. It is Smith's best cover to date.

His cover for X-Men # 55 was very well done. His figures had improved immensely over his previous X-Men attempt. It was a well-done cover.

The first issue of Daredevil that Barry Smith drew was only adequate. His layouts were good and his figures and backgrounds were vastly improved. Yet, something about it didn't seem right. This could be contributed to many, many factors. It was Smith's first shot at Daredevil and Johnny Craig's first inking of Barry's pencils. I have to say that the strip moved at a faster clip than Colan's Daredevil-stories usually do.

Then it happened! DAREDEVIL # 51 was one of the finest art jobs done on that title. From every respect, it was great. Oh, there were a few flaws, but on the whole, it was a darn fine job. Smith's interpretation of Star Saxon was fantastic. After that, Colan's version was worthless.

Smith's third issue of Daredevil was just as good as his second. This issue was also Roy Thomas's best issue to date. The ish was just magnificent.

A special note is Smith's cover for this issue. The weird angle shots, the dynamic figures of DD and the Panther leaping down from the buildings, the ghostly figures of Karen Saxon and the police inspector gave the cover an eerie effect. Easily, one of the best Daredevil covers ever.

Barry Smith did a surprisingly good job on the AVENGERS. Suprising when you consider that he is inked by Syd Shores, whose linking style (and penciling, from what I've seen of it) is totally unsuited for super-hero adventures. He had a little trouble with Goliath & the Wasp, but he drew the Vision, Thor, Yellow Jacket, Iron Man superbly. In fact, only Jack Kirby and George Tuska can match his Iron Man. (AUTHORS NOTE TO GET HIMSELF IN TROUBLE WITH HALF OF FANDOM: I never liked Colan's Iron Man. It wasn't Gane's type of strip. He's best on Dr. Strange, Captain Marvel and the Guardians of the Galaxy. George Tuska is the best artist to regularly draw Iron Man.) Also, that sequence with the Vision walking through the SHIELD guard is the best sequence with the character since the first page of AVENGERS # 57.

In conclusion, Barry Smith has arrived! He is a very good artist and I predict in a year he'll be matching, or topping the work Jim Steranko did on SHIELD and CAPTAIN AMERICA.

*CONTINUED ON PAGE 21*
T'WAS A COLD, BLIZZARD BLOWN NIGHT AND SILAS GRUBB, THE TOWN'S RICHEST MISER, SLEPT FITFULLY UNTIL SUDDENLY, A SOUND!

THE SUSPICIOUS GRUBB IS INSTANTLY WIDE AWAKE...

HAA! SOME FOOL'S BROKEN IN! A CLUMSY PROWLER! I KNEW THAT THEY IN THEIR ENVY WOULD TRY SOMETHING LIKE THIS!

BAH! NOBODY CAN SAY THAT I, SILAS GRUBB, WAS EVER UNPREPARED! HEH, HEH! THAT'S WHY I SLEEP WITH MY SHOTGUN NEAR ME, LOADED!

THERE! IN THE SHADOW WITH A SACK ALREADY HALF STUFFED! THE FILTHY SWINE!

BEING AS BIG AS HE IS, HE'LL BE DANGEROUS! HMM... HE'S MOVED INTO THE DEN WHERE I KEEP MY CASH AND PRECIOUS ART PIECES!

NOT HE'S ALREADY IN FRONT OF THE WALL SAFE BY THE FIREPLACE! THE SELFISH PIG? I SHOOT HIM AND I CAN CLAIM SELF-DEFENSE... UH, OH, HE'S TURNING...

BLAGGARDO! TAKE THAT AND THAT! AND NOW...

...SOME LIGHT TO REVEAL THIS EVIL DEV... URRK!

BLAM BLAM

MORAL: "THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS SANTA CLAUS, ...ANYMORE!"
And as long as I'm directly speaking about BARRY SMITH, and since I know he's receiving this issue, I'm going to ask him to write for the next one's opinion on two of the original Power strips (from England). How about it Barry? What do you think of the Python and of Don Starr? & would it be cheating to tell us what you did on the Power Publications?

I've already gone on for quite a few paragraphs, so I'll call it quits for my first column for FANTASTIC FANZINE. However, I'd like to give you my statement of policy for this column. I will follow this policy whenever feasible:

I am the writer of this column & as such it is my duty to make this column as interesting as possible. I should be motivated by two driving forces -- my desire to be heard, & my desire to please the readers. If I deviate from this policy, then this column has no purpose -- no meaning.

I am vastly interested in talking about subjects you want to hear about. So tell me!! Write to Gary Groth with suggestions. Write to Mark Evanier. (Why should I be the only one to suffer? He won't be able to help you, but it will really get him angry at yours truly).

Write to me. But, for Gods sake, write! If Fandom is to function as a living, breathing body, everybody's got to be heard. So, let's hear what you want to hear me sound off about.

Would you like an article on the english reprints? I'll try to get an interview with the editors there. I'll try to provide complete information.

Would you like me to evaluate the Comics Code, paragraph by paragraph? I'll try to deliver the goods. Would you like a review of Seduction of the Innocent? I'll try to get through the entire book this time.

THE FUTURE IS IN YOUR HANDS, PEOPLE....

*THE END*

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FANTASTIC FANZINE #10 (second edition) is $1.25 from DynaPubs Enterprises/RR #1 Box #297-East Moline, IL 61244. Issues 1-10 are not available; issues 11,12 and 13 are $1.25 from EDITORIAL OFFICES listed above.

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CLUB MEMO'S continued...

Response to the IOCC (International Organization of Comic Collectors) has been next to nil. What happened? People said that they would join, people said that they would pledge to join -- and only 25 people joined. It only costs $1.00 for the rest of the year of 1969: already, we have one, offset, 8 page, wrap - a round newsletter out!!! JOIN UP NOW.

This issue is a trifle late, and I apologize for it, but several things have influenced the frequency of FF; first and foremost is the upcoming school year, and next is mail: The mail is getting out of hand. I answer all letters I get, although it may take awhile. To insure an answer, in the future, a stamped --- self addressed envelope would help immensely. Also, for those of you who send in artwork and are trying to "break into Fandom", please send a large brown envelope with enough postage to send it back to you, in case of rejection. If you do not do this, and if you are not on our art staff, I will not send it back. --- I can't afford it. "Col. Thar Kosis" was discontinued because of Tom Crawford's usuage of Marvel's own characters, which could bring us a lawsuit from Marvel. Big things are in the planning for the Bombshell Bulletin. Keep your eyes glued to future Club Memo's pages for news.

The cover of this issue, by JIM STERANKO was a sketch taken from a full color poster, now on sale at MARVELMANTIA. The cover to this issue was gotten at the convention and was, at that time, still in pencil. After purchasing it, I met Joe Sinnott, and asked him if he'd like to ink it. Joe was nice enough to ink it in just a couple weeks of my giving it to him, and I think he deserves a great round of applause from all of you -- thanks again.

Special thanks this issue goes to DAVE COCKRUM, for drawing up to special title "Logos". One, he did for his own Interview, and the other for Tony Isabella's column, "The Windmill -- of My Mind". The Interview with Dave, this issue is just the first, of many fan interviews to appear in FF. I think that it brings the staff of the FF closer to YOU!!

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A REBUTTAL TO................
"A Look At The Future Of Comicdom"
(Originally Presented In 'F.F. No. 8-9)

by Doug Martin

In Fantastic Fanzine # 8-9, Lane Bailey set forth his views on the future of Comicdom, & the past events that will affect the future. I read the article with interest, but I can not agree with many of the statements contained in it; I also feel that this shows a problem that is seen in many fan articles; that being that Marvel fans look at things from Marvel's viewpoint, D.C. fans look at things from D.C.'s viewpoint, but not enough people look at things from a comic fan's viewpoint.

Lane Bailey is obviously a Marvel fan, therefore nothing wrong with this in itself after all, I find myself enjoying most of what Marvel produces. But his article was a look at Comicdom's future from a Marvel fan's viewpoint, and for this reason, I feel he has made several assumptions that are untrue, and destroy the credibility of his predictions.

The first point I would like to set down is this: no matter what the artistic field, once an artist or a product catches on with the public, his/her work will always find an audience. Take J.R.R. Tolkien. His Lord of the Rings Trilogy had been on the market for more than a decade before they finally caught on with a large audience. Now, any and all of his past work is eagerly sought, although it had been ignored for years before. Jacquellan Su-sann, considered by most critics to be a poor author, got a best seller, and barring a loss of the quality that sells them, the rest of her books, bad as they are, will also sell.

This is also true of the comic magazine itself. Once a character catches on, the tendency is for him to stay on the scene. This is one reason why it is said that the first several issues of a hero's magazine will make or break him. This helps explain the phenomenon of the Marvelite who never misses a single issue of a single Marvel Title. Marvel had produced their product in obscurity several years before they were discovered. In an extremely short period of time, Marvel was in the running for the top comic group. One reason for this is that Stan Lee had the foresight to set up his titles in such a way that they were all a part of a Marvel "universe". Therefore, when one title was discovered, they all were. Now the reader gets into the habit of buying all the Marvel titles, because it they are all interrelated. After all, I'm sure most of you know almost exactly which comics you will buy in a given month, because you are accustomed to buying certain ones. It's the same with the Marvel-elite, who buys all Marvel titles, because after discovering one Marvel, he found the rest, & soon got in the habit of buying them. For this reason, everything new that fits into the Marvel "universe" should theoretically sell, and in the past, all of it did.

And this brings us to my second point: Lane made a point that fifteen D.C. titles have failed. These, however, were also old titles as well as new, and were not all new as he would infer. Only a few new D.C. titles have failed, but all that have failed were super hero titles. Also, he said Marvel has dropped only one title; again false!!! What about the Spectacular Spider-man? Also, several of their mags have gone bi-monthly, and Captain Marvel seems to be near death.

Of all the D.C. superheroes who have died, all were either (1) new titles, (2) old ones which weren't really too popular or (3) former popular features whose quality had fallen so far that they lost their audience. The long established D.C. comics with the exception of Hawkman and...
Blackhawk, who fit in (3), stayed on. The Spectacular Spider-Man tried for a different audience level and failed, and if you notice, all the bi-monthlies are new mags. For the most part, they were originally the minor feature in a split mag. As with D.C., the established features stayed. All this tends to show that the super hero is losing popularity. Of the D.C. mags that are around, all the new ones are horror, with some war and western titles. Marvel's newest are horror and romance.

What all this means is that there are two tendencies working against each other. The result, I feel, is that most of the present titles will stay, but there will be little in the way of new SUPERHERO mags. In the case of D.C., this is almost a sure thing, and a couple of border-line cases may yet be dropped, but I think D.C. has pretty well settled down.

Unfortunately, I can't agree with Lane's analysis of Marvel's future. First, assuming Marvel's more popular among fans, and that's quite an assumption, this does not mean they will keep Marvel going. Lane seems to think that the reason Marvel is becoming is because it appeals to the fans. This is ridiculous. Despite what some fans seem to think, fan-dom members make up an extremely small (though vocal) minority of the comic reading public. Even if every fan bought a certain title (and this seems to be next to impossible), these sales, alone would not be nearly enough to sell the issue. Therefore, even though Marvel has the close-kniteness that fans like, this does not insure their future, as Lane seems to think.

Secondly, I think Lane is not write for an adult audience. I have heard this so often that it makes me sick. No editor in his right mind would write for adults. Lee writes for the high-school-college reader. One of the main differences between Marvel and D.C. is that Marvel writes on a more 'sophisticated' level. They write the typical cops-'n'-robbers type story, only it's all larger than life. Stan Lee has said as much. This is the type of story that appeals to the young people of today and not a large amount of adults. This is why most of the villains and many of the hero's speak in that 'Asgardian' dialect. It's all melodramatic to the extreme, and appealing to the older youth.

However, this audience is extremely unpredictable. As I see it, Marvel could continue as it is, with some moderate success on any new titles they might come out with, or they may experience anything from a slight recession to a disaster as the bottom drops from their audience. Of course, I cannot see the latter happening, but I am saying that it's next to impossible to predict Marvel's future, much less say it will over-taking D.C.

As for who is going to sell more, the answer must be D.C. One reason D.C. had such a high drop in sales this time is that it produced more for the new titles that flopped, so it all comes out a little bit less than even. However, they still sold three times as much as Marvel, & as long as Superman and Batman are there, it is safe to assume they will continue to do so. As Lane said, Marvel will continue to advance gradually, but probably so gradually that it will take them years to catch up. D.C. may lose a little more, but only a very little, and this losses will soon be made up.

In the future, I see only a promise for better things to come. Lane seems to think that the graphic story is losing its appeal. Not so! This is only the super-hero. However, the horror mags that would take their place are only water-down versions of the ones of the '50's, and I think people will soon tire of them. Then the time will be right for a rebirth of the SUPER-HERO, and if past experience applies to the future, they will be better than ever.

-Doug Martin-
Continuations

THE SEARCH: CHAPTER III continued...

CRIMEMASTER. In his central base, located somewhere in Centerline, the arch-criminal reads the reports from his men in the field & his anger mounts with each passing moment. In a rage he rips the reports to pieces, shouting his frustrations to the heavens:

"They had CRIMESMasher in their hands and they let him get away. I arrange to have THE MASK executed and my marksman misses. They must lived charged lives, but they shall not live much longer. This I swear, before the year is out those two thorns in my side will grovel before me, begging me to spare them!"

Meanwhile, the objects of his wrath are settling down for the night, unaware of the vow made by their mortal enemy.

Two forces headed on a collision course & no one may say who will survive the meeting, but one thing is sure, meet they will. The only question is WHEN?

Continued Next Issue...

HE WHO RIDES THE NIGHTWINDS continued...

The villainous Ghost Rider encountered in reality was not a villain at all. He was naught but a lonely, half crazed mountain man who was merely defending "his" mountain... His grief stricken mind thought that Natalie was his dead wife, Melinda. In the end, he gave his life that she might live. (#7).

Indifference killed GHOST RIDER, both Stan Lee and Co. and Marvelom were to Super Hero conscious to pay proper heed to Ghost Rider until it was too late. The discontinuance of his adventures leaves many a mystery unsolved and much in doubt. Who is Tarantuala? What is his real identity? What is to be the outcome of his amnesia? Two forces are the secret of the flaming hand? Did Natalie Brooks ever get to Denver in time for the operation which was to restore life to her legs? These questions deserve an answer.

It seems a lifetime that The Mighty Marvel Bullpen promised that Ghost Rider's adventures would be continued in the TWO-GUN KID book. And we all know what happened to TWO GUN. Of course this promise was never realized.

Now, once again, the rebirth of Ghost Rider is being promised to Marvelom. Whether this promise bears fruit or not, is for the future to decide. But if Stan Lee and Co. decide to give Ghost Rider a new lease on life, I am one Marvelite who hereby promises to be there for each and every issue. What say you Marvelom? If the curtain rises for Ghost Rider, will we be there? Or will we allow him to once again be cast into an oblivion from which there can be no second escape?

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DINNER OUT CAN WAIT, VAL!

FIRST, I'M ORDERING FOR F.F. #11, SO I DON'T MISS THE STERNANKO COVER ON THAT ISH!
"THE WORLD OF THE WEIRD"

The Penmen Of Terror
by Gordon Mathews

"INTRODUCTION": Perhaps it is a neurotic or paranoid tendency, but man is attracted by horror. By nature, he enjoys getting the heebies-jeebies out of him. He loves to sit alone in an ancient, empty house, and, by the light of a flickering candle, wander slowly through the terrors contained in the works of Poe, Bierce, and Lovecraft. Undoubtedly this is a good example of the mental instability of the human animal. There are some sicker than others. They thrive on blood and sadism, and grin fiendishly as they leaf through the pages of Chilling, Wierd, Voodoo, and other similar Garbage-zines. But Horror can be art. A true master of horror can frighteningly portray the shuddery terrors of a dark corner, a lonely graveyard, or an old tumble-down house.

Graphic Magazines, (more vulgarly known as "Comic Books") are a form of literature all their own. They are a separate form of communication, and the ideas of graphic art is in itself fully as good and artistic a means of communication as paintings or text stories. It is infinitely more difficult to produce a good graphic story than a good painting or good text story, however. Both script and art must be acceptable, and they must coordinate, and move together smoothly. The slightest flaw on the part of either the artist or the writer can render a graphic story unacceptable.

Surprisingly enough, for all this, there are good graphic stories, which naturally include graphic horror, on which the first part of this article centers.

"THE PENMEN OF TERROR"

Outstanding in all types of art is the famous and popular FRANK FRAZETTA, possibly the most talented and versatile artist today. Although his main line of art is heroic fantasy, he often does in the world of terror; back in the good ol' days with EC, now today occasionally with Warren. The bulk of Frazetta's art is oil paintings used as covers for paperbacks and magazines, which is understandable, as he gets about four times as much money on one paperback painting than a ten-page strip at the highest graphic art prices. He has painted covers for a pair of Ballantine Books -- Tales From The Crypt (one of the EC reprints) and Ray Bradbury's The Autumn People (another EC reprint). Aside from detail, and muscle structure, the thing that makes him a good painter, and the very best painter, is his use of color. He is ambi-dexter in this, and has a definite taste for the macabre. His Horror paintings are usually done in depressive shades of green and blue, at times offset by an eerie orange illumination, such as a harvest moon. Recently he has been using a drab brown, which doesn't work as well. He spins about the paintings a mysterious mist and darkness; colors and objects blend together, creating an atmosphere of lurking danger.

But enough of praise. As a graphic artist, Frazetta wipes out What?! What blasphemy is this? Read his story "Werewolf" in Creepy # 1. Sure, the art is pretty good, but it doesn't fit smoothly with the story. Working with ink instead of paint, he is unable to blend and use his excellent coloring. His figures don't glide smoothly from one panel to the next, and the reader gets the impression of an illogical story wrapped around them. This could undoubtably be remedied by a man of Frazetta's talents if he spent more time doing graphic illustration. However, he has all done with that, and I can't say as I blame him.

Another noteworthy artist from the EC days who has drawn for Warren is Reed Crandall. Though, best known for his line work, Crandall is also capable of employing excellent lettering. He loves to sit on the first page of "Hot Spell", in Creepy # 7. There are two main faults one finds in Crandall's art. While his panels progress more smoothly than Frazetta's, Crandall's figures are stiff and lifeless. Crandall, while being an excellent artist, is more of an artist of separate illustrations rather than graphic art, rather like Frazetta. The other problem is that all of his characters look Italian. Now I have

*CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE*
nothing against dia-goes -- Sophia Loren in particular -- but it gets tiresome looking at no one but Italians. Aside from these 2 faults Crandell is a very fine Horror Illustrator. His is the gothic style, and he seems to like to make his setting in late 19th century European villages & medival times, which is good, as both of those make good horror spots.

While not being one of the greatest nor the best of the graphic illustrator, we must take short note of Johnny Craig for his macabre sense of humor. Seemingly opposites, horror and humor can easily work hand-in-hand. I'm not speaking of comedy relief by means of some moronic simple -- throw into an otherwise serious story (This was popular in the "Golden Age"), but rather very real humor. One good example is Poe's "Never Bet the Devil you Head" with the unforgettable Toby Dammit.

Robert Bloch, famous for "Psycho" and other chillers, put together a large number of horror stories of the more frivolous nature, the one that pops into my mind immediately is "The Bat is my Brother", which is both the most humorous and most incisive vampire story I have ever read. Craig, likewise, mingles the two at times. Take a look at the cover of "The Vault of Horror" # 30. It depicts a group of people on the Bronx Express. A forearm -- alone, unattached to the remainder of its owner's body -- is hanging...no, I won't spoil it for you; look at it yourself. If you can't grab ahold of "The Vault of Horror" # 30 itself, take a look at the cover reprod in Fandom Agent #7. Note the ad at the back of the Express Reading: "Stomach Upset?" This sign is the same artist's touch that separates this from the revolting covers of Wiard, etc. that are apparently meant to be funny.

Another horror artist with a sense of humor is Jack Davis, whose art, even when deadly serious, has a touch of humor. But then, most of his art -- record album covers and magazine cover -- are supposed to be caricatures. Perhaps Davis' best side is uncovered while drawing children and exposing them to the monstrous little fiends they are. Who can forget "Let the Punishment Fit the Crime" Or "Let's Play Poison"? Davis is also good at setting sto ries at small country towns. He is able to do these things, and do them well, because he does caricatures. He exaggerates things delightfully.

Coming into more recent times, we run into Jim Steranko. Like Frazetta, he is talented at nearly all forms of art. Unlike Frazetta, he can do graphic art well. His panels flow along smoothly and the reader gets the idea of a well oiled story. But now, getting to his horror story, "At The Stroke of Midnight". A rather corny title, don't you agree? Another thing is that his "Digger" looks nothing like the versions of Craig and Buscema. Steranko's version looks better. However, it is also more complicated, which is probably why the other two didn't adapt that version. The story is written as well as drawn by Steranko, which is good. If an artist plots and draws the story, the writer fills in the script might misinterpret or in some other manner lose up the strip while if the writer writes the script & sends it to the artist, the script may give the artist the wrong impression, or it might not inspire him, and glaring flaws would appear. "At The Stroke of Midnight" starts out with a nice horror setting -- an old house sitting on top of a lonely wind swept hill and gradually built -ds up suspense. Slowly, deliberately, cruelly Steranko brings his story along and then -- the shocking climax. The protagonists are suddenly and startlingly moved from their own sphere of life into another time, another world. What makes this so startling is the fact that Steranko, while forshadowing doom for the two, never gave us a hint that it would come in this fashion. This story is like a piece of music. It moves along slowly with a mysterious touch and then, on the last page, the key and rhythm changes, but it still progresses slowly, until the final panel: "Then they began to
INTRODUCTION: In the halls of Marveldom, there exists a fantastically powerful beings -- beings possessing that most magnificent gift...immortality. These entities——- these immortals exist in sundry areas of the universe areas including that speck-in-the-universe, EARTH. Upon Earth one encounters Thor, Hercules, Pluto and at times even Zues, and Odin -- the Asgardian All Father. But where do these men come from? Who are they? Furthermore, what are they?

MANUSCRIPT:  

ODIN & ZEUS

Odin, the omnipotent and all-wise and all-just, is ruler of Asgards, the home of the Norse Gods. Odin, as personified by the mystic pen of Stan Lee, owns a myriad of personalities. He can give the mild, gentle, Santa Claus image; conversely, at times, Odin images the full potent force and fury of the raging storm. Odin is not a passive God, he protects his empire; he purges evil as perpetrated by his son, LOKI - the demi-god of evil finds it not too degrading to drive savage invaders from his lands while fighting at the front lines along with his fellow gods, collectively known as the Aesir.

As a precaution against evil, especially evil endangering the Earth, Odin devised the Destroyer. This creation, lifeless and helpless without the driving force of a human spirit, can become the most potent force in the universe second only to the Force Ultimate -- ODIN. The Destroyer's shell has been occupied several times by various men (and woman) including a human hunter, the demi-god Locki and recently by the Stunning Sif. Each time the destroyer was bested and the spirit force ousted from the powerful shell.

Aside from the aforementioned plaything, Odin owns and guards the dread Odinsword. This immense sheathed dagger has the power -- if removed from its scabbard -- to destroy all things and bring an end to all, including the Aesir. This final destruction and death of the gods has the name Ragnarok... Ragnarok has been threatened many times by the Trolls, the Destroyer and most recently by one called Mangog; a being having the combined might of a billion, billion beings. Mangog came within inches of destroying the universe, but he was bested by means of Odin's power scepter.

As a just, as well as forceful god, Odin dispenses his regal wisdom with authority. It was in this same just authority that Odin once exiled his favored son, Thor to Earth. This banishment was to instill a sense of humility in the young, impetuous Thunder God. As he matured in his earthly identity, he likewise matured in his godly identity -- one which he had forgotten through the mystic influence of Odin. Ultimately, Odin triumphed, his son, who had been the young, foolish Thor had changed to the magnificent, not-so-rash THOR.

In his omniscience, Odin realized that he must some how offset his immortality; that is, he must make up for the lack of that final rest which for men would lie in death. Thus, it is at certain times that the All Father rests in the Odinsleep -- a sleep which to awaken from would result in a loss of immortality and a sure death. It was in this slumber that Odin rested during the awesome threat of Mangog. It was only when he awoke himself that he destroyed that creature in one deft blow.

From time to time, there have been appearances by the greek counterpart of Odin -- ZEUS. Unlike the Asgardian, the Olympian sky father is not the courageous lord who craves battle, but rather is a mild luxury-loving god who usually is found reclining at a couch and cooing at sundry dancing maidens.

Odin's character is the very opposite of that of Zues. That is to say, any Asgardian god must be (by the

*CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE*
Continuations....

"THE IMMORTALS - PART 1 continued...
very character of the Norse Myths) fierce and warlike. The Olympians, however, by the force of their Myths must be lounging, luxury loving lords. The character of these gods, mirrors the character of the races who worshipped them....
These races saw the abodes of their gods in two places -- one in the skies of the Earth and on a mountain, the other in the skies of the cosmos.

ASGARD-the domain of Odin, lies in the cosmos an unimaginable distance from earth. This Golden Realm is connected to the Earth by the shimmering rainbow bridge. The Kingdom of Odin lives under the assurance of doom and destruction; that is, the perdition which is known as Ragnarok must and will come. Thus, the Aesir has a dismal future indeed.

Olympus, however, is the site of never-ending revelry. The Olympians live a glorious life, one full of happiness not transitory, but eternal. This magnificent realm is located on that mystic, earthly mountain -- OLYMPUS.

NEXT....THE HEROIC SONS - THOR AND HERCULES

"THE PENMEN OF TERROR" continued...

scream..." Then -- Crescendo! It reaches its peak -- only for a split second -- and then it is gone. The music stops dead. One thing that adds to Steranko's success is that he does his own coloring, and here, he takes a page from Frazetta's paintings. Who can forget that cover of Captain America # 113? That eerie green sky, and the ghastly blue moon (that sort of thing appears about once in a blue moon) sends shudders down the spine. Pense, if you like, the whole, Captain America was a horror mag. Steranko's faults? He doesn't have many, so long as he does his own coloring. However, if the color were removed, his stories might be hard to read, for the coloring is fully as much a part of his artwork, as is his pencilling. You may notice that often lines are unconnected by ink, but are made coherent by his coloring. So long as Steranko keeps working in color, everything's going to be fine.

Another modern artist with a touch for horror is Nick Cardy. Take a look at his covers on Witching Hour #'s 3 & 4 in particular, # 3 is done with some other artist -- Mike Sekowsky. I believe. But it's that extra Cardy touch that makes it good. The effect of wind and dust or fog is done nicely, and the demons perched on the tree above, provides the lurking fear. Color effects are also done nicely. The total effect created is a moody, atmospheric one.

But, perhaps the best graphic horror artist of all is STEVE DITKO. His art produces a depressive atmosphere that none but Steranko and Frazetta, in his paintings can hope to match. Unlike the other two, Ditko's art is fully as good in black and white as in color, which gives him a definite advantage when working on CREEPY and EERIE. No other artist can draw sheer evil like Ditko, and none can imitate the weird drawings of sculpture and trinkets that runs his stories. No one can draw a corpse crumbling apart like Ditko, and there is but one who can match his feeling of mounting terror, that being Steranko. But there is only one Steve Ditko. His art is distinctive. He is the graphic story counterpart of Lee Brown Coye.

AFTERWORD TO PART 1

Who is the best Graphic Horror artist? It is hard to judge. Perhaps their secret lies in the utter separation of their art from that of more prosaic artists. Surely, Paul Biegel & Jack Kirby would not be good horror illustrators. It is this strange distinctive quality in the art style of each, that makes it almost impossible to judge. I personally would cast my vote for Steve Ditko, but then, it's no great secret that I'm a great uncurable Ditko fiend. Who am I to say that he is a better horror artist than, say JIM Steranko?

Horror is certainly not the most popular type of literature. That's why there are few artists who can capture the horror flavor. And those of you who do, olls though you may be, I salute you!!

THE END
It was true: The small farming village of San Marquín was doomed. A huge horde of army ants was cutting its way through the Central American jungle. In less than a week, the creeping menace would reach the outlying fields; and in three days, the crops in the storehouses, as well as those in the fields, would be ravished by the bronzed invaders.

An appeal for help from the government had drawn a vague promise to "look into the situation." But, plagues are not stopped by promises and small villages make small impressions on high officials. Finally, with no help forthcoming, the elders made the only plausible decision. "The Village must be abandoned!"

Then, the young men of the village spoke up, "The Yankees! Perhaps the Yankees would help. Had they not already sent special seed potatoes to the area, grain that grew practically no water? And wasn't it true that a 'pace-core' team was promised, to teach them how to bring the waters of the nearby river to their fields? Surely the Yankees would help!"

"But the time!" argued the elders. "They cannot possibly reach us in time!"

"Then perhaps, they will pass our plea to someone who can!"

So, because there was no harm in hoping, a runner was dispatched to the nearest wire station to send word of their plight to the mysterious Yankees. But, the days passed, and the crawling horror moved closer until advance scouts were evident in the outlying fields!!! Their last hope gone, the people left the village, crossed the river, and camped on the rocky hills beyond. After the holocaust, they would recross the river and distribute themselves throughout the land. Their proud village would be no more, families would be split apart, and they would, ever after, work in the fields of others; living only to be alive. However, the following morning revealed no crop damage, nor the next, or even the next. At the end of the third day, it was decided to recross the river and investigate this strange phenomenon.

The corn stood tall and proud, not a leaf or pod in the bean fields had been touched, and none of the smaller vegetables plots were damaged. Further investigation disclosed that the advancing horde of ants had turned abruptly just short of the fields; choosing instead, the uninhabited jungle. Also, no ants of any kind could be found. Even the small, everyday variety had vanished. But, that was not the strangest discovery. It was the children who found the giant footprints! The elders concluded, a man must be at least ten feet tall to make such prints. The prints intercepted, then led the ravenous horde away from the village... Even more amazing was the fact that the prints diminished in size as they proceeded to lead the ants away. Gradually becoming so tiny, that a reading glass was required to discern them.

No one in the entire village could explain exactly what had happened. But, both young men and elders agreed, that Yankees were a more mysterious breed than they had imagined.

---Bill Cantey---

+++ THE ACCURSED CODE continued+++ was/is rough. Careful attention should be paid to weapons and trappings. A good men-in-action, mag would have to be priced at about 35¢ to maintain the required high standards. I thought Gil Kane's "HTS NAME IS SAVAGE" was a great effort.

6- Science-Fiction/heroic fantasy. Left alone, E C would've done a terrific job. But, it's impossible to produce under any code. A new idea rapidly becomes old when a barrier keeps stifling the action. A 50¢ unencoded, illustrated magazine is the only hope. Heroic-Fantasy requires violent action and naked girls all over the place. Should be displayed at the top of the new rack.

7- Crime & Horror might succeed if presented as an illustrated detective magazine, and placed beyond the reach of children. It should sell for 50¢ to a $1.00 from behind the counter.

8- Fanzines. The first move to re-educate the public should be an influx of professional fanzines. Articles on the best of past and present comics would encourage the aforesaid communicat-ion between the generations.

Those are just some ideas --not perfect and not complete, just ideas. Express yours. Communicate. The greatest thing a fan can do for the medium is to 'infest' someone else with his "virus".

Comics can never die. But, they must progress -- or stagnate!! And Marvel is the best hope for the best era, ever.

---Bill Cantey---
Dear Gary:

Well, I've got a few spare minutes, so if you can put up with my typing, I think I'll comment on "FF" #6*7 and 8*9.

On the whole, I find your zine quite well represented. What with Fantucchio, Cockrum and Grinage -- although the later sometimes dispenses me, as with the cover to 6*7, your first double issue. The Black Bolt illo was quite finely rendered -- save for the shadowed portion on the floor there or whatever Black Bolt's standing on. Really, I thought shadows were dark, entirely black. Not made up of big (well, in this case little) ugly dots that seem to follow a pattern. But then again, "A.U.G." may have decided to apply this type of zipper-tone rather than just ink it in, as the rest of the cover did rely heavily on black area's. None-the-less, I would think a darker pattern, perhaps a zip pattern with the dots spaced more closely would have made a better effect -- but this is trivial -- let's move on.

The professional's you have contributing to "FF" are by far & wide some of my favorites -- Steranko heading the list. And I'm very glad to see he'll be represented in future issues.

Written material, I rather frowned upon, although the inter views I did read. Not only because I enjoy reading interviews, I also like to pick-up on the latest info in comics that are contained in them, and facts pertaining to the artists. BUT -- I find that Ye Old Editor, Mr. Groth, has a serious problem in asking questions for interviews. If you'd have re-read the Buscema Interview, as you're supposed to, (I can only conclude that you didn't, as I will explain here!), you'll notice that you've repeated yourself a number of times -- in effect, just "padding" the Interview. Sure, it's nice to look at zine's and see that they've got a four page interview from such and such that you've all been waiting for -- but when it all comes out, and is read -- well, it could have easily been condensed to one half of its size. Period. Sal Buscema himself even realized you were repeating yourself, so much Gary, that he was forced to remark several of his answers as I said before or 'previous' or some such thing. Get the message? I would think that an offset zine such as "FF" is costly, right? Well, all the more reason you should carefully edit your material. Yes, even Interviews, in order to save space. With this extra space, more features could be offered to the readers -- and believe me, it pays off in spades in the long run -- TAKE HEED!

Glad to see that you're straying from the strict policy of only Marvel oriented-material, written leastwise. Although, I would think that the 'Doc Savage' article was a fairly competent start -- textwise, the art could have been MUCH, MUCH better, really -- again a case of editorial neglect, surely you could have had Grinage, Cockrum, or someone else come up with a better illo of Doc than what you used.

Oh yes, I seem to have neglected to comment on Mike O'Neal's art. Mike's a good buddy and a budding young artist -- all rolled

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WON'T DO THAT SORT OF THING AGAIN. CONTRARY TO YOUR OPINION, MOST OF THE FF'S READERS WANT MORE ARTICLES ON MARVEL AND LESS DEALING WITH OTHER SUBJECTS. THE VOTES HAVEN'T ALL BEEN TAL-LIED YET, BUT IT IS LEANING HEAVILY FOR MAR-VEL. MANY THANKS FOR YOUR "L.O.C.; IT'S LETTERS LIKE YOURS THAT KEEP ME HOPIN')

Dear Gary:

It's really amazing how far FF has come. I can hardly believe it's that same little xer-oxed 'zine that was so ugly. I think it's about time you did away with the Marvelzone bit. Now, I have nothing against Marvel, but putting that down every character Marvel has, has been written about at least three or four times and anything more that's said is repetitious and boring. I can see you're trying to do that with the s/f stories, but it still looks very much like a Marvelzone. Try to bring 'n Swords & Sorcery, horror, and other comic companies. For instance, I don't believe many articles have been done on Bat Lash or Doug Wildey's art on TARZAN... Well, now that the sermon's over, on to my com-ments on "FF" # 899...

The logical place to start is the cover, which Sal Buscema did nicely. The Club Memo's--not being exceptional--just a normal editorial. Fantucchio's pic of Magneto was just beau-tiful! But then, that's only to be expected. The Interview with Sal Buscema was interesting. It's a good idea to get interviews from the more obscure (no offense meant) or new artists and writers.

Next comes The Search, which I attempted to read, but was forced not to finish due to lack of interest on my part. I did chance a cross the name CRINEMASTER. It happens that there was a villain that appeared in Spiderman many years ago also called CRIME MASTER. Watch that!

Now we get to my article, which has a sloppy illo'. A good portion of that smudged background (zip-a-tone) was added by someone else, as I didn't shade a background on the original. I don't mind your shading in the original, but it understandably sort of irritates me when it's "blotted." As for the article itself--Good Lord, did I make that many spelling errors? I was one of the more pleasing aspects of your 'zine. Even though Ayesha isn't an original character, Dave Cockrum handled the story very nicely. And despite what you said previously, he did do the cen-ter spread, as I'm sure great quantities of your readers will remind you. What happens to the one by Tucker? I suppose "Equality & Mr. Leiber," although not followed as well as it could have been, brings up a nice topic: the use of Negroes in comics. Apparently Stan is afraid he'll be lynchedit if he shows a Negro as being a rioter or villain instead of a policeman (there are very, very, very few Negroes in the Marvel comics), and one really cannot blame him. After all, I certainly wouldn't want H, Rap Brown and his band of cronies af-ter my hide. I have no racial prejudice in me. I can really admire guys like Frank Robinson,-O.J. Simpson etc., but I feel that Negro's should be given equal status. I'm sure you know that I'm not a re-dneck, but perhaps we should be putting more Negroes in the comics. In other words, they're just as bad as "we whites" as well as being as good as us. You might say it's just a case of "telling it like it is."

Dwight Decker's article, though terribly

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short, was quite good. To me, the most exasperating thing a comic company can do is discontinue a magazine in the middle of a story. And in a way, once a person (fictional of course) becomes a superhero, it is, in a way, one big continued story! Have you ever placed yourself in the place of a writer of a superhero series, or in the place of the superhero himself, and wonder how it could really end? The most realistic way, of course, is that the hero is killed. An alternate, used by Dwight, is that he retires. But what future does a superhero have? His life is a constant struggle against death, and he always wonders if his next battle will be his last. Those villains aren't gonna keep dying when they’re shooting at you every day, and the villains get tougher every time, so the super-hero wonders. When will the law of percentages catch up with him? Just one tiny mistake and he can wind up with a bullet in his brain...and then, if he's smart, he throws away his costume and settles down to normal life. But of course, superheroes aren’t smart -- their very profession is proof that they're not.

"A Look At The Future of Comixdom", I did not find too interesting. Lane spent too much time reviewing already known facts and not enough time speculating.

"Col. Thar Kosis", I only glanced through but I caught the name "Kree". I don’t want to sound like the voice of doom, but I hope you’re getting the idea. If you’re reading this, because you're not, you're inviting a lawsuit. If you did get permission, you should say so. Ditto with AYESHA. The same advice goes for "The Self-Made Minute Man." Ah, now there was a story! It is too bad not as many fan-fiction writers are as good as Bill Cantey.

Well, that just about takes care of the issue. Only one more piece of advice, and then I’ll shut up and go away. The typing: I know you’re trying to make FF look nice with those even edges on both sides of the column, but you’re making it incoherent instead. I would rather see something like this: - - - - - - - - - - - - t -his, if you get the point. At any rate, I would rather be able to read a “zine” easily than have both edges of the column even. Okay, now I’ll shut up and go away.

GORDON MATTHEWS // 8 PERRY STREET // UNION CITY, PA. // 16438

(THAT'S THE BASIC TROUBLE, GORDON: FINDING SOME GOOD ARTICLES TO WRITE ABOUT MARVEL THAT HASN'T BEEN WRITTEN ABOUT AT LEAST 100 TIMES. AS I MENTIONED IN MY ANSWER TO THE LAST LETTER I DID THE BACKGROUND ZIP-A-TONE-ING ON YOUR TITLE LOGO -- THE PRINTERS SOMEHOW MANAGED TO SMUDGE IT. THAT'S THE REASON WE HAD TO DISCONTINUE "COL. THAR KOSIS"; BECAUSE OF TON'S US AGE OF MARVEL'S "TERMS" AND CHARACTERS, IN THE SELF-MADE MINUTE-MAN, BILL DIDN'T USE THE AC- TUAL NAME OF A MARVEL CHARACTER. ABOUT THE TYPE-ING, SEE "CLUB NEMO'S" PAGE.)

Dear Gary:

You needed comments on your 8*9 issue, boy, am I going to give them to you. Don’t expect a gush of glooey, complimentary "LOC", but rather a truthful, opinionated critique.

You committed a grave error by putting out ads and ready sheets saying certain things would happen, and then you disappoint people when they did not. Don’t you read McGeehan’s Helpful Hints? Your “beautiful color cover illustration of Dr. Strange by Sal Buscema” was good, but it wasn’t in color. Your “second col-cover” by Dave Cockrum not only wasn’t in color, but wasn’t even in the issue! Your “Four page interview with Sal Buscuma (The first one printed in Fandom)” was six pages, and as Sal himself told you, you were the second zine to interview him, not the first. "He Who Rides The Nightwinds’ didn’t appear (in this issue anyways’). "Graphic Traffic" wasn’t in the issue, but your Dave Cockrum, double page spread was-- though right inside the issue, you said it wouldn’t be printed. I’ve heard of mix-ups but FF is in chaos.

The Magneto by John Fantasticchio was probably one of the best drawings to appear in fan-dom. It definitely should have been the cover, or back cover at least. Don’t get me wrong, I adored Sal Buscema’s Avengers, and he is easily the best find in years (in my books he ranks with Kirby, Romita, John Buscema, Colan, Roth etc. as the best artists at Marvel and.comics), but his Doc Strange was only a figure (no background) and should have been the back cover.

Your Interview with Sal Buscema was pret-ty good, but you failed as an editor. Not only did you leave all the colloquial dialogue in (which is the number one no-no in a written inter-view), but your questions were quite use- less. You can’t print: "There weren’t as many good companies, y’know like Marvel and D.C. and some of these other outfits, so I decided to go into advertising and it was a very nice car-eer, and I enjoyed it very much, but I still had this thing about comics in the back of my mind," What you should have said is something, like this: "Back then there weren’t as many good companies like Marvel and D.C. etc., so I decided to go into advertising.

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FANTASTIC FANLETTERS continued...

It was a very nice career, and I enjoyed it very much, though comics were still very much on my mind." Maybe this translation is a little too free, but I've interviewed an artist before (only writers who write better grammatically) and I can't really say how far you should go in improving speech. However, you must admit, my version is far superior to your -s. In the interview, you spent far too much time on discussing his inking, with sickening, recurring questions. If this interview was based on more intelligent questions, and was edited by a better editor (or at least by a better effort from you), it would have turned out much better than it was.

I really liked Smith's Daredevil. It was the best inked drawing in the whole mag. Cockrum's stuff look old; was it?

I have no comments on the xscience fiction, except that Fantastic Fanzine is not a Marvelzine as it is now, and it appears that the consequence is that no quality Marvelzine is left.

As for Lee's false impression of Negroes -- what do you expect in a comic? Face it, Stan writes for the kiddies, not for you. Dwight's Bang article was refreshingly different, and though it was brief, I enjoyed it a lot. Lane missed the Future of Comicon. Soon comics will be completely horror, as the superhero should die in the early 70's. (notice the horror tale in the latest Daredevil?). Who is this Bennett -- he's a good artist. Mike O'Neal's Goliath (?) was a highlight of the issue, though it was obviously influenced by a master artist's inking -- Ted White.

Conclusion: The increased page count helped. Now what you need is better material & better editing. Also, state whether you are leaving "Marvelzinedom" as it looks or not...!!

Keep up the exceptionally good work.

RON LIBERMAN // 63 FOUNTAIN BLEAU DRIVE // WILDWOOD, ONTARIO // 443 // CANADA

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IMPORTANT NOTICE TO OUR READERS:

EDITOR'S NOTE: THE NEXT LETTER IS ONE OF SPECIAL IMPORTANCE TO YOU -- THE READERS, SO PLEASE READ IT CAREFULLY AND CONSIDER IT:

Dear Fans:

I am writing this letter directly to you -- all of you; for it concerns each and every one of us. Yes, from the Bullpen right down to the lowliest comic fan. I believe most, if not all of you, will be quite interested in what I have to say, and I sincerely hope that you will give a great amount of consideration, on what I have to propose. But first, let me lead up to the point:

A short time ago, I received a letter from a serviceman stationed in Germany. Portions of that letter are as follows:

"Dear Pat: I was sitting here thinking if people really wrote to Marvel Comics or if they...

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*CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE*
IMPORTANT NOTICE TO OUR READERS:....continued...

just made up those letters. The answer to your letter is correct. My friend and I came into the Army together and when we got through with basic training, that was the last time I saw him. Now I am in Germany and he is in Viet Nam. So that is the way things go...

He then went on, trying to convince me that I would be better off to stay in school (which wasn't needed), and that's what I got to. I began to think how lonely it must be for men, separated from family and friends, who must serve their country. Of course, he was interested in something that I could answer; but there was more to it than that. Pfc Mark Garrison had learned from experience and tried to pass that knowledge onto another... Now this, in a way is a shame. It's a shame that they do so much for us, when we do so little for them.

This is my request, so to speak. I believe that it is about time that we (fandom) actually do do something. I propose that we begin a subscription fund, so that once each month, we may send a free subscription of a 12¢ Marvel mag to a selected serviceman. Each issue of the FF would announce the name(s) chosen for current months.

How about it, fans? It makes no difference as to what your political beliefs may be, I only wish to help a fellow man with a brighter day ahead each month. Fandom will finally be doing something constructive -- something we could be proud of. Those of you who are interested, and I hope that all of you, simply send a monthly dollar ($1.00) per month to, so that we may always have a full "kitty" for subscriptions. Records of your monthly contributions will be kept. So, please send your hard earned buck to me (not Gary): at 1206 Pontiac Avenue // Cranston, R.I. // 02920. Thanks for listening to my sob story. 

Respectfully, PAT JANSON.

(GARY HERE -- THAT'S ONE OF THE BEST IDEA's TO COME AROUND IN A LONG, LONG TIME, PAT, HOWEVER, I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE SOME SLIGHT ALTERATIONS IN YOUR "PLANS": FIRST OF ALL, I THINK THAT WE (OR RATHER YOU), SHOULD TAKE CONTRIBUTIONS FROM 25¢ UP TO "..." FOR OUR "SUBSCRIPTION KITTY". JUST TO START THE BALL ROLLING, I'LL CONtribute a $1.00 TO OUR SUBSCRIPTION FUND, ALL THE NAMES OF ALL THE PEOPLE WHO CONTRIBUTE MONEY FOR THIS CAUSE WILL BE PLACED AT THE END OF "FANTASTIC FANLETTERS" WITH THE AMOUNT OF MONEY THIS PARTICULAR PERSON HAS CONTRIBUTED. WE WILL ALSO PRINT THE NAME(S) OF THE PERSON(S) (SERVICEMEN) SELECTED, TO RECEIVE THIS SUBSCRIPTION TO A MARVEL MAGAZINE, PLUS HIS FULL ADDRESS, ALSO, REMEMBER THAT THE MONEY YOU SEND FOR THIS "ACTIVITY" IS ONLY PART OF WHAT YOU CAN DO -- THESE BRAVE GUY'S OVER THERE LIKE TO RECEIVE MAIL, I'M SURE, SO PLEASE SEND THEM A LETTER -- START UP A CORRESPONDENCE WITH THEM. MAKE THEIR DAY A LITTLE BIGGER. I SINCERELY HOPE THAT EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU OUT THERE WILL SEND IN AT LEAST A QUARTER -- ALSO, TRY TO GET YOUR FRIENDS TO CONTRIBUTE. LET'S MAKE THIS ONE OF THE BIGGEST SUCCESS'S EVER!!!!!)

QUOTES FROM THE READERS (To The Editor)

...as far as the FF's name goes, Fantastic Fan--

zine suits me fine; any Marvelite should be able

enter to recognize the parallel to the Fantastic Four.

However, I do think something should be done about

the name and content of your newsletter, The

Bombshell Bulletin, I think it's getting to be

obvious that the newsletter is in a slump, which

is allowed to continue, will spell its doom. I

suggest that the BB be changed into an extension

of the FF; a feature 'zine printed between issu-
es of FF with up-to-date news from FF headquar-
ters (like the FF EXTRA you had as a supplement

to ish 67?), a fanzine review, news scoops that

cannot wait for the next FF, polls, etc. Waddy say

Gary? -- JIM WILSON. (REFER TO "CLUB MEMO'S PAGE" -ed)

...as for The Sarn Federation, it's the worst case of open plagiarism I've ever run across; I don't claim that my heroes are the most original but at least I take pains to make their character-

ization different as possible from similar

heroes; Crawford's use of the Skrull, Kree, Askon

and other Marvel races to fit the story into the

readers past experience is commendable, but I

hope for his sake that he dot Marvel's permiss-

ion first. As for The Sarn Federation itself, it

is merely a glorified Star Trek Federation & he

even uses their terminology: Mind Fusion (ala

Spock), "beam down", not to mention the resembi--

lance of the Parallax to the Enterprise (capabili-

ties, not appearance). Although, most the most or-

iginal story I've ever read, it was interesting...

...perhaps because of it's very originality)...

ROBERT KOWALSKI. (REFER TO "CLUB MEMO'S PAGE" FOR REASON OF IT'S DISCONTINUATION -ed).

Some say that the FF's present name sounds "ego-

tistical" or "childish". My comment to them would

be that even if this is true, does it sound any more "egotistical" or "childish" than the new

name for MARVEL's COLLECTOR'S ITEM CLASSICS? After

all, isn't Marvel the very basis of the FF? I say

if Marvel can call a comic MARVEL's GREATEST COM-

ICS, then we should be able to call our 'zine, the

FANTASTIC FANZINE and be proud to be associated

with it. --KENNETH KRAT.

With writing, and drawing talents like Dave Cock-

rum's, he might be the FF's answer to Jim Steran-

ko. --TOM CRAWFORD.

...my favorite article is the interview and if it

is at all possible, I'd like to see an interview in

every ish of FF. Prodom is too far apart from

Fandom to keep up a "peacefull co-existance", and

the best way I know for us to get to know about

the pro's is through interviews. Keep 'em comin'.

--DUFFY VOHLAND.
He Who Rides the Night Winds!

Ghost Rider.

Dave Cockrum