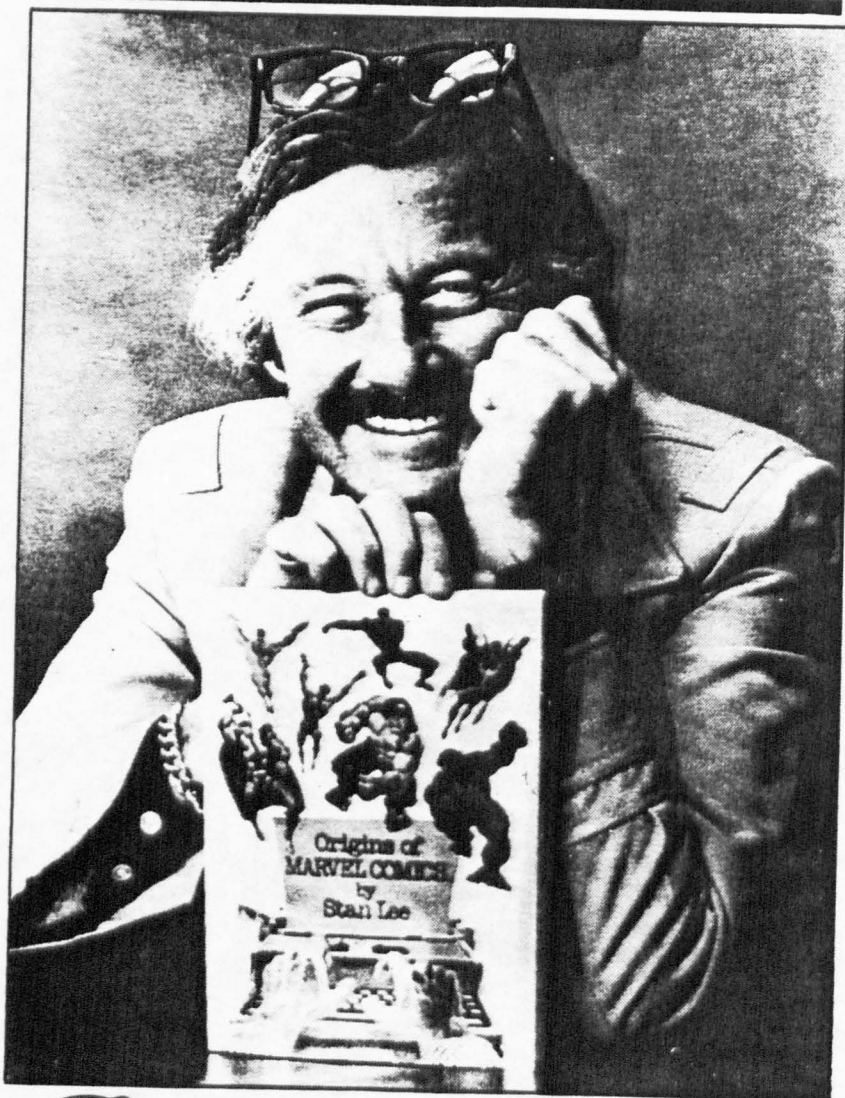


## The Foom interview:



# Stan Lee

**FOOM:** Well, despite the fact that you're quite well known for the Marvel Age of Comics, your own origin is still shrouded in mystery.

**STAN:** The Origin of Stan Lee?

**FOOM:** Yeah. I was wondering if you could talk a little bit about where you were born and grew up — and how you were "created."

**STAN:** I was born of man and woman, in New York City on 98th Street, a little over fifty years ago. And I've lived virtually all my life in New York. First in Manhattan, for most of the time; then, for a little while, I lived in the Bronx. I went to DeWitt Clinton High

Conducted by  
David Anthony Kraft

School, Moshulu Parkway in the Bronx.

I was on the school newspaper and magazine, and I grew to love lecturing when I was in high school, because I used to lecture in classes in order to make some extra money. In those days, they had students who sold subscriptions to the *New York Times* to other students, and they were allowed to go into a class, during a break, and make their speech to the other students. So I

did that. I went from class to class: "Hi, I'm Stan, and I'm selling subscriptions to the *Times*, you lucky people."

I must have been a little bit crazy, even then, because I remember they had a school magazine called *The Magpie* in those days, and it was published in a room called The Tower, which had a very high ceiling, and there was no way anybody could ever reach that ceiling. It was not quite a hundred feet high. One day it was being painted, and one of the painters had left the ladder when he went down for lunch, so I climbed up and wrote *Stan Lee Is God* on the ceiling, which was one of the earliest evi-

Then I decided to be an actor. They had something called the W.P.A. Federal Theatre, which was started by Franklin Roosevelt. It was to keep people working and busy. I went to a show and fell in love with one of the girls who was on the stage that night, and I figured the only way to meet her was to join the W.P.A. Federal Theatre. I did, and I met her. We were friends for

Then I got a job as an office boy for the second biggest trouser manufacturer in the world. I hated it, because nobody ever took the time to learn my name. There were about a hundred people in the office, and there was another office boy, too, who had been hired first. I was the second. Whenever they wanted something they'd shout, "Boy!" And we both were supposed to drop whatever we were doing and come running. After a few weeks, I realized I don't like being called "boy." I mean, dammit, I have a name. I was always doing things wrong and getting in trouble, and hating being called "boy."

Not only was it a lousy job, but they fired me because business was bad. Well, I got so angry about the way they did it — two days before Christmas — that when I left, I took a couple of those coffins of oaktags and I turned them all upside down and just scattered them all over the room.

A blast from Stan's past! Even then, he knew

When I started working here, I was about sixteen, and after a little while, my bosses Jack Kirby and Joe Simon left, and I was all alone. Then, I was made the editor, because I was the only

**STAN:** Well, we were more-or-less a big factory. Unfortunately, we weren't really leaders, and I was so young that it never occurred to me to try to change things. In those days, young people weren't really as smart as I think they are

Stan tells all, in a little booklet published way back when

My name was Stanley Martin Lieber and I felt, well, if someday I'm going to become a writer or a great actor, I want to use that name for the really important things I do — I didn't figure I'd stay

Sometimes I'd be in the reception room and some guy would come in and see me sitting there in my dungarees and sweatshirt, and say, "Hey, kid, where can I find Mr. Lee?" It always embarrassed me, because I didn't want to say, "I'm Mr. Lee," 'cause then I knew *he'd* be embarrassed, so instead I'd say, "Just a minute, sir, I'll tell him you're here." Then I'd run out and say to the girl, "Tell him Mr. Lee went for the day," just to save him the embarrassment of walking in and seeing me.





## PERSONNA DOUBLE II

30 Second TV Commercial "Stan Lee"



LEE: You know, here at Marvel I've got Spider-Man and all these characters and super villains like Dr. Doom to worry about.



I can't waste time worrying about things like shaving.



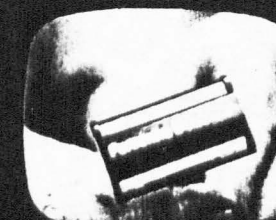
This guy calls me and he says



"try a Personna Double II." And I said "OK, I'll try it."



This Personna is beautifully designed.



Twin blades on each side. It's clean, it's got quality.

today. You had a feeling, you don't tell older people what to do — older people know best. Years ago, nobody twenty years old would dream of saying to a boss that things should be done differently. So, I took it for granted that the way we had always done things was the way they should be done. The scripts were extremely simplistic, and I always thought the artwork was a little better than the stories, in those days, although some of the plots were good. I'd like to think I wrote a few good ones, but basically they were all one-dimensional. The good guys were good guys, the bad guys were bad guys, the stories had happy endings, and that was the end of it.

We did westerns, we did war stories, we did romance stories, we did funny animal stories, we did crime stories, we did monster stories, we did humor stories — there was no type of story that we didn't do, at one time or other. And I wrote all the different types. I'd usually write the first ones, to set the style.

**FOOM:** Wasn't this about the time World War II began?

**STAN:** Yeah. And shortly after the war started, I said to myself, "What am I doing here, writing comic books?" I was seventeen or eighteen, I don't know. "Gotta get in the army, be a hero like Errol Flynn or John Wayne," so I enlisted. I figured I was good — I'd go to penny arcades and shoot those little guns and win prizes all the time — so I'd probably become a real war hero. Instead, they found out the kind of work I had done, and they put me in the Signal Corps., in the film division, writing training films and instructional books.

I wrote movies and books, and drew posters — educational things. I've never illustrated comics here at Marvel — but when I was younger, I drew. I

must have drawn a hundred posters for the army, all different kinds. I drew them, I painted them, did everything. I loved it. I always wanted to be an artist — which is why I like the comic book business, although I couldn't draw a strip now — I'd have to go back and start studying all over again. I don't have the patience for all the work and the detail. Posters were easy. It was one drawing, and you were finished.

I've always been impatient, which is also why I like comics. I can script a story in one day, or one afternoon. The thought of writing a novel, having to live with it for months, do the plotting and planning — that's like work. Writing a comic isn't. You sit down, you spend a few hours, you get up and it's done.

Anyhow, the army had me write books and films about *nothing* that I knew anything about. For instance, at that time I had never owned, or even held a movie camera, so I got a job

writing about the operation, maintenance and care of the 16mm Emu movie camera, operated under battle conditions. That was one that I had to write.

I knew how to read, so I would get hold of a training manual, read it, and then I would do a film on it — or I would rewrite the manual in comic-book form. I rewrote a lot of training manuals as comics. I wish I had copies of those now; I never thought to save any.

I found out when I was discharged that there were only nine men in the whole United States Army who had my military classification number — I was classified as a playwright. And I was a sergeant, a tough buck-ass sergeant. But I wasn't tough! I was a skinny little curly-haired kid, and I felt so embarrassed about it. Occasionally, I would meet these rough combat guys; they were sergeants and I was a sergeant, so I'd wear the dirtiest, oldest fatigue uniforms I could find. I'd try to muddy up my face, and I'd spit a lot. I tried to look as tough as they were, but I always felt very out of place.

I almost got court-martialed once. While I was in the army, I was also still writing stories for the company. I had appointed somebody to be here while I was in the service. He'd write to me every couple of weeks, saying: "Stan, we've got to have a Captain America story," or "We need a Destroyer story," so I'd stay up one night or on a weekend and write it for him. One day he called and said he wanted me to do a story — it was a real emergency — so I said O.K.

We had mail call the next day, and I asked, "Where's my letter?" The mail clerk said, "I got nothing for you, Sarge." In those days, the mails were very dependable. He said he had nothing for me, so I figured he goofed. This was Saturday, and at lunch hour

they locked the mail room and the clerk left. I happened to be walking past and I looked in the window — and, sure enough, there's my letter in one of the slots! The guy had put it in the wrong slot and he hadn't noticed, but I could recognize it.

So I ran to the Officer of the Day and I said, "Hey, you gotta open the mail room for me — I've got an important letter there and I've got to get it. There's a whole company in New York waiting for me to write this story." The guy was reading a magazine and didn't want to be disturbed, so I said, "I'll open the room myself."

I went back to the mail room, took a screw driver, and just unscrewed the lock on the door, opened it up, got my letter, put the lock back, went home, and wrote the story. A few days later, I got a call from the company commander. I was his pet peeve. He thought of me as a wise-guy New Yorker. He said, "Well, Sarge, I got you now. I think you'll go to Leavenworth. You robbed the mail."

I said, "What do you mean, I robbed the mail?" He said, "Did you or did you not break into the mail room?"

"For crying out loud," I said, "there was a letter of mine there, I couldn't find anyone to open the door, so I opened it and took my own letter." He said, "That's a federal offense." This guy meant it, he was all set to court martial me, and I don't know what would have happened.

Well, luckily for me, the colonel, who was the commandant of the post, intervened. I had just written a training manual on finance for him. They were having trouble training finance officers quickly enough, so comes pay day and the men in the foxholes wouldn't get paid. There weren't enough payroll officers around to pay them. It was wrecking hell with the morale in the army. So I took the manual that told them how to

fill out the forms and I rewrote it in comic-book style; we were able to cut the training time in half, because they could learn quicker from this comic book. The colonel from our post got a commendation, because of the book I had written; in fact, he expected to make brigadier general because of it. So when the captain called to complain, and said he wanted to court martial me, the colonel said, "Another word out of you and I'll send you to the South Pole."

But I was always in trouble. I was in love a hundred times. They shipped me to different cities all over the country; every city I'd go to, I'd meet some other gal I thought was terrific. But I always felt a little guilty because I wasn't overseas; I wanted to go to officers' training school, because I figured if I became a lieutenant, they'd have to send me overseas. And they wouldn't let me. They said, "We need you to write these films and stuff, and if you become a

lieutenant, they'll take you away from us." They tore up my application.

So there I was, a stateside soldier. **FOOM:** And after the war, you came back to Timely?

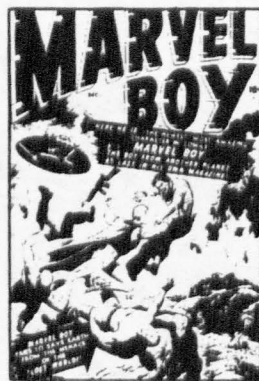
**STAN:** Yeah. There was a time when we had a staff of close to a hundred people, artists and writers. I had three secretaries myself, and I kept them busy. I used to dictate stories in the office. I was a show-off, in my early twenties, as I look back at it. What I would do was dictate two or three stories at a time. I'd quickly dictate a page of one story to one girl, and while she was transcribing it, I'd dictate a page of another story to another girl, and then maybe a third one to a third girl. I had this great feeling of power, that I was keeping three secretaries busy with three stories, and I knew that occasionally people were watching — and I was so proud. We had a big staff, artists, writers, editors, assistant editors, colorists, proofreaders, assistant proofreaders... and I got a kick out of playing to the crowd.

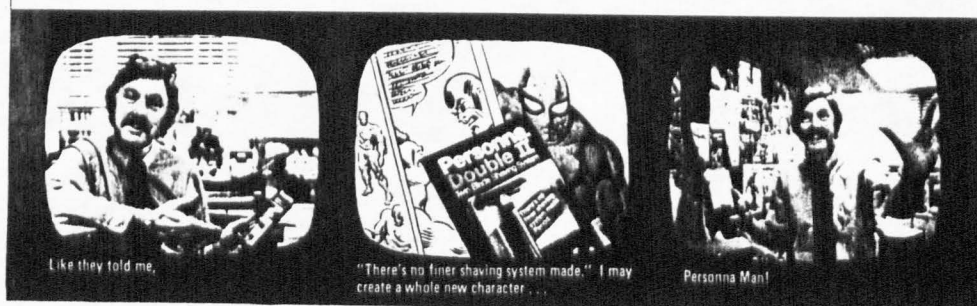
**FOOM:** How did it compare to Marvel today?

**STAN:** Bigger. We had a bigger staff then we have today. Now we have other things — we have circulation men, people in the licensing and merchandising departments. We didn't have any of that in those days, we just had artists and editors and writers. It was just the creative part. And I was never involved with anything but the creative part.

I didn't know what an engraver or a printer did. I was just concerned with producing material, taking care of the art and the scripts.

We've had so many guys who have gone on to great things. Many of the people at *Mad Magazine* and at *National Lampoon* used to be with us. Al Jaffee used to write *PATSY WALKER* and draw it, and he was an assistant editor





here; same with Dave Berg. Jack Davis, who's one of the top advertising artists today — he does covers for *Time Magazine* and for NBC — has done strips for us; Mickey Spillane used to write stories for us. Anyhow, we had our ups and downs.

We used to have bad periods when the comic book business hit rock bottom. I remember once my publisher said to me, "Stan, we have to let the whole staff go. I'm just going to keep you, but I want you to fire everybody." I said, "I can't do it!" He said, "You'd better!" and he went off to Florida, while I was given the job of firing more people than I could count. I think that's what I hated most about my job — whenever I had to fire anybody.

I used to put out extra books we

didn't even need, just to keep guys working. If there was an artist or a writer who didn't have anything to draw, it was always so easy — you'd add another book. But, after a while, you reach the point that you can't keep doing that. And we had our ups and our downs all the time. There were good years and there were bad years. Strangely enough, with Marvel it's been different.

We've never had a bad slump like that.

**FOOM:** Do you think it's inherent in the market that there are ups and downs

— or was it just the period?

**STAN:** The problem was a deeper one. We were never the leaders. Nobody was a leader. We were all just putting out books. We were subject to the trends; nobody created trends, not really. Simon & Kirby came out with romance books when they were working for Crestwood, and they did pretty well for a while. Then, everybody started putting out romance books, and that fizzled out. EC came out with their line of books for a while, then they fizzled out. There was a company called Lev Gleason Publications; they were quite big for a few years, until they fizzled out. Nobody really lasted.

I think that Marvel really changed things, because when we went in hot-and-heavy with the superheroes, we

stopped following the trends and created our own, and by doing that we changed the whole complexion of the comic-book business. We weren't subject to the whims of fortune any more — we were really doing our own thing.

**FOOM:** How did the changes that you must have gone through in those years — especially with the start of Marvel — affect your own thinking, your own attitudes?

**STAN:** They made me very happy. We were turning out those monster

magazines, and then one day my publisher found out that National Comics had a book called the *Justice League* that was selling reasonably well. Better than our monster books, at least. And he said, "Hey, maybe there's still a market for superheroes; why don't you bring out a team like the *Justice League*. We could call it the *Righteous League* or something." I worked for him and I had to do what he wanted, so I was willing to put out a team of superheroes. But I figured I'll be damned if I'm just going

to copy National

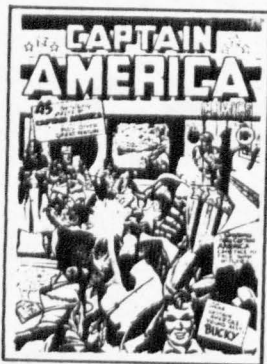
I said, "We'll do a superhero team, but let's make it different." And I thought this was the chance to do all the things I would enjoy — to get characters who acted like real people, to try to be more imaginative, to make some stories have happy endings and some not, to continue the stories and set them in the real world.

While I enjoyed doing it, I never thought it was going to catch on the way it did. I never knew we were starting

Spidey speaks out! Stan and Johnny comment on the candidates, back in the 16 April 1972 issue of the *New York Times Magazine*.







something new — a new phase of comics — it was just a kick.

**FOOM:** When did you realize what was going on?

**STAN:** I think when the fan mail came in. We never used to get fan mail, then all of a sudden we were inundated with it. And it was wonderful.

**FOOM:** So you changed your whole approach?

**STAN:** I realized this had always been my approach, but I never had the sense to do it. I was now writing the way I wanted to write. Up until this time, I was writing the way I felt the publisher wanted — and it was my job to please the publisher. So now I forgot about the publisher; I was off and running; I was going to have fun with my things. It came easy to me, because it's my own natural style. Even though the other stuff had come easily, too, I never really enjoyed it. This new style I began to enjoy.

I wasn't trying to write satire; I didn't even feel the stories were that different; all I knew was that it was fun to make



them continued, instead of each story existing in a world of its own. I got the idea that if they're going to be living in the real world, the characters might meet each other once in a while. So we began to let Spider-Man meet the Fantastic Four in a story, or to have the Hulk passing by while something was happening to Iron Man.

Of course, it was very easy for me to control, since I was writing virtually all of them and could keep track of them. Also, I could keep them in the style I wanted. I was creating my own universe. Now, of course, it's a little more difficult, with different people writing the different strips and ever-changing writers and artists. One of our biggest problems is keeping the styles intact, keeping the characters true to what they are and what they should be.

**FOOM:** I notice that in most of the Marvel Comics you came up with, there was never a complete family unit. There was Thor, Loki and Odin — but no mother; Peter Parker and his Aunt; J. Jonah Jameson and his son. What's the story behind that?

**STAN:** That's very interesting. I had never thought of that; I think it just never occurred to me. You just have so



much room in a story. Also, I think most of the legends are very vague about Odin's wife or wives; the few that I read always mentioned different women, and I could never pin it down. So I thought of him as a widower.

With Spider-Man, part of the concept was he was living with his aunt and uncle, because he was an orphan. His uncle was killed, and then he was the main support of his aunt, so that was the basis of that.

I thought we really had more families

involved than other comic books. But it would have become too hard to handle, if I'd had to have entire families — nephews and nieces and in-laws. There just isn't room for it, because with any more incidental family characters, you'd never have time to get into the plot.

**FOOM:** Since you're listed as publisher, maybe you could run down just what a publisher does?

**STAN:** I don't really do what a publisher does. In fact, publisher is a very vague word. Usually, in this business, years ago, the publisher was the fellow who owned the company. My publisher



owned the company. But today, no one man owns Marvel Comics. A conglomerate named Cadence Industries owns Marvel, and they're a public company.

I, as publisher, should be responsible for the business end — for the circulation, financing, distribution and so forth. But I don't function that way. I work with Jim Galton, who's president of the company, and is involved in management — in contracts, licensing, circulation, financing, and all that sort of thing. I limit myself just to the creative aspects. I'm like an over-all editor and art director.

Also, I apply myself to new projects. I've been instrumental in getting us a relationship with Simon and Schuster, so that now much of our material is being done in book form — and we're going to have more and more. In fact, we're working now on a series of our strips just done in popular paperback format, so you'll be able to buy a library of Marvel Comics, permanently bound. I'm working on television shows for our characters. I'm also working on movies for them.

I meet with the editor and art director, and with as much of the staff as I can — as often as I can — to determine the way things should be.

Basically, a better name than publisher might be creative head of the company. I think it's important to have the title *publisher*, because when I deal with a movie company or with Simon and Schuster or with other outside companies, the word publisher sounds so impressive that I can get the attention Marvel needs by being introduced as the publisher. People never react quite as graciously when you're an editor or a writer. People are funny.



What I do mainly is worry about the product we are turning out — about the strips. I make sure we have the best editing, the best writing, the best artwork, and that we're going in the right direction, putting out the right kinds of books. I check the sales figures, of course, and I read the books as much as I can. As I say, I'm really like an over-all executive editor.

**FOOM:** How much say do you have over new projects?

**STAN:** In life, nobody has total say. President Carter, if he wants to do something big, has to have the approval of Congress. If I want to do a new magazine, I'm the one who's supposed to precipitate these things, but I then have to get the president of the company to okay the budget to make sure I'm not going to be spending more money than we can afford. He, in turn, has to get the conglomerate, Cadence Industries, to okay his okay. Basically, if there's something I want to do, it'll get done. I also still do some writing. I write Stan's Soapbox. I write the newspaper strips, the *Origins* books, and film treatments.

**FOOM:** Maybe you could talk a little about the newspaper strip?

**STAN:** For years people have said, why don't you put Spider-Man in the paper, but I wasn't anxious to, because I had a really rotten experience with the newspaper syndicates, years ago.

I did a strip called *Willy Lumpkin*, and another one called *Mrs. Lyon's Cubs*. Now, *Willy Lumpkin* was supposed to be a great strip. Originally, it was about a cop on the beat; I wanted him to be a real hip cop, and he'd meet real people on a New York City beat. I had some great gags. It was really going to be the *Doonesbury* of its day, way before *Doonesbury* came out. Political gags, urban crises gags, and stuff like that. I brought it to this newspaper syndicate, and I called it *Barney's Beat*, the name of the cop being Barney. They loved it.

Then, the head of the syndicate said he wanted me to change it to a mailman. He wanted it to be set in a small town and to feature a lovable character that everybody would love. The kind of strip they'd understand in Chillicothe, Ohio. The next thing I knew, it's called *Willy Lumpkin* and it's a bucolic strip, and if there's one thing I'm not comfortable with, it's a bucolic style of writ-



ing. I'm not that kind of a writer.

But again, I was young and I thought they knew best. I did the strip, and it lasted about a year. It wasn't that bad, but it wasn't as great as it should have been. Finally, I gave it up.

Virtually the same thing happened with *Mrs. Lyon's Cubs*, which was about the Cub Scouts. Mrs. Lyon being the den mother. I never wanted to do that, but I wanted to sell a newspaper strip. I had tried a few great ideas, but they didn't bite, so one day I said to this



cartoonist jokingly, "I'll bet if I did something about Boy Scouts they'd take it, they'd think it was nice and clean and respectable. You could probably call it *Mrs. Lyon's Cubs* and they'd say it was great."

I submitted it, and they took it like that, so I was stuck with a strip I didn't particularly want. I don't know anything about Boy Scouts and even less about cubs! And that strip died.

So I felt the people at syndicates don't know anything.

As Marvel Comics became more and more popular, over the past few years, newspaper syndicates would come to me about doing one of our characters. I didn't want to. "It wouldn't work for you guys," I said; "you ruin everything."

Finally, Marvel became so popular and so big that the syndicate people came to me and said, "Stan, you can do it any way you want; we won't interfere, we won't touch it." Well, this was incredible. Years ago, it was hard to get my foot in the door at a newspaper





A stroll down Memory Lane with the boys from the Bullpen: left to right, the top row includes Joe Letterese, Morrie Kuramoto, Dan Crespi, Sal Contrera, Herb Cooper, Artie Simek, Vince Madafferi, Carl Burgos, Stan Starkman, Neva Del Vecchio and Chris Rule. Bottom row: Sol Brodsky, Ray Holloway and Stan Goldberg. Whew!

syndicate, so I figured, okay, I'll give it a try.

I discussed *Spider-Man* with a real nice fellow, Denny Allen of the Register and Tribune Syndicate. I wanted John Romita to draw it, because John and I had played around with one many years—we'd done a few samples, but never did anything with them. The strip just started in newspapers this January, and it's one of the biggest-selling strips to hit the country. It's already in more than 200 newspapers, in just a month. The syndicate is delighted with it, but it's hard to write, because every time I turn around I've got another two weeks of it to do. I try to write it on weekends.

I sold another strip, called *The Virtue of Vera Valiant*, which doesn't have anything to do with Marvel. That was a gag, also. I was talking to some syndicate guy who wanted me to do a detective newspaper strip. I said, "How can you sell a detective strip to newspapers today? No detective story can succeed, unless it's either sexy or violent. You can't be sexy or violent in the newspaper." I told him you'd have to do something that's current, something timely. For instance, if you did a take-off on *Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman*, it would probably succeed. So the next thing I know, we're off and running. I try to write *Vera Valiant* on Saturday and *Spider-Man* on Sunday.

Then, evenings, I've got these books for Simon and Schuster. We're doing one about the super women, which should be finished by now, yet I haven't even begun it. I've got to start that this week. Then I'm doing *THE SILVER SURFER* with Jack Kirby—a hundred-page original hardcover. I'm excited about that. I hope it turns out to be a great book. I'm also doing *HOW TO DRAW FOR THE COMICS* with John Buscema. I'm doing an *ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MARVEL COMICS* with George Olshevsky, which I think is going to be a real fun thing. It's going to be literally an encyclopedia, just of the Marvel Universe. Two big volumes, probably—or maybe one huge book. Anyway, I've got those four to do.

I just had lunch with a guy from Simon and Schuster, and he wants two more *Origins* books, for the next two years.

And then I write a column—a little paragraph, every month or so—for *Celebrity*, the "Publisher's Perspective," and of course I also write the "Soapbox" for the Marvel Bullpen Page. I write advertisements for our other stuff in trade papers, and so forth, and I'm the consulting editor or associate producer of our television and movie projects, so I've got to read all those scripts and give opinions.

**FOOM:** What can you tell us about

them?

**STAN:** We're working on a *Spider-Man* pilot film for CBS—a live-action, prime-time series, like the *Six Million Dollar Man*. The script has already been written by a very good writer, a guy who's written a zillion television shows. I'm working with him as consultant on it, and it'll be on the air by the end of this year, if all goes well. We're working with Universal Pictures on a deal to take four of our characters and do a television series—also live-action. We're also working on a Classics Comics animated show—*Marvel Classics Comics*—which is very exciting. We may do the animation ourselves; we may set up our own little animation studio. There are probably other things that I'm not remembering at the moment—there's really a lot happening.

**FOOM:** Whatever happened to the movie you were working on with Alain Resnais?

**STAN:** I never seem to have the time to get to it. In fact, he was here this morning. He just finished his latest movie, *PROVIDENCE*, and he asked me when we were going to start. I told him I need at least six months to clear up the things I'm doing, so he said he was asked to do a very quick movie in France, and maybe when he's finished, we'll start. Sooner or later, I'm going to have to do this picture with Alain, who's one of my closest and dearest friends.

**FOOM:** Is it anything related to Marvel?

**STAN:** Totally separate. It's called *THE INMATES*, and it has to do with the whole human race, why we're on Earth, and what our relationship is with the rest of the Universe. It poses a theory which I hope is a very original, unusual one. But it's done in human terms, like a regular story; it's not a far-out science-fiction thing. It's very philosophical—but there is a lot of science fiction. I think it's a great story. I've written the treatment for it, and I suggested that Alain get another screenwriter to do the screenplay based on my treatment. It'd still be our story; I'd still be involved in it; yet, this way, we wouldn't have to wait. But he keeps saying he wants it to be my script completely—he wants it to be my language. So I'm very flattered, although I don't have the time to do it, right now.

**FOOM:** Over the years, you've done some things outside the comics field. Are there any we haven't covered?

**STAN:** I used to write radio shows,

Unfortunately, I can't mention titles, because I ghosted them under other people's names. I wrote some western radio shows, years ago, and a detective radio show. I ghosted a number of television shows. I ghosted newspaper comic strips. I wrote the *Howdy Doodie* newspaper strip, which I was able to put my name on. I did some advertising work: I love writing advertising copy. The one other thing I do is a lot of lecturing. I go to schools all over the country, all the time, and I love it, because it's the closest you can get to being an actor without actually acting.

**FOOM:** And it also keeps you in close touch with the readers.

**STAN:** Well, that's the most important thing. Actually, I think I learn much more from the people I speak to, than they're learning from me! We have a questions-and-answers section after each lecture, and I learn so much by the questions they ask about what they're interested in and how they feel. It's invaluable.

**FOOM:** What do you think about the Marvel merchandise, which seems to have been burgeoning lately?

**STAN:** Well, it's very good for us, because it's great income, and the money that we make enables us to pay the artists and writers to put out more books. If you want to know what I think about the items themselves, I really don't have much to do with them, or pay much attention to them. Some of the toys and games and coloring books are great. I'm sure. It's the type of thing that's really very hard to keep up with, unless you spend all your time working on it. Basically, the few things that I've seen have been pretty good, though. It's also very nice to know that people like Marvel enough to buy all these various things—so I'm quite happy with it.

**FOOM:** Where do you see Marvel going in the future?

**STAN:** I have played most of my life by ear, without too much of a master plan. I guess I'm inclined to feel the same way about Marvel. I see nothing but great things for us, but as to specifically where we're going, each day I get a different feeling about it. I think we're going to be big in television and movies. Eventually, I would really love it if we could produce our own motion pictures and TV shows.

I don't know why we couldn't, because to me the media is all very similar—there's not much difference between a newspaper and a magazine, or a movie, a stage play, a show. It's all the

same—it's all a part of entertaining and stimulating the public. If you know how to be interesting and how to make people care about what you're saying, doing or thinking—then what's the difference whether you're doing it on screen, in print, or in front of a microphone? Since I feel Marvel is pretty good at entertaining the public, I would like us to be doing it in every type of the media.

I think maybe we should publish

some more glossy magazines, higher priced—and I don't mean like *National* is doing, just buck comics—but different kinds of magazines.

To me, the most fun you can have is doing new things. I don't know where we'll be three, four or five years from now, but you can be mighty sure we'll be going in a dozen different directions—and moving faster than ever!

*Exclusion!*

—David Anthony Kraft

