

# Disney buys comics giant Marvel

By RYAN NAKASHIMA  
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES

The Walt Disney Co. is punching its way into the universe of superheroes and their male fans with a deal announced Monday to acquire Marvel Entertainment Inc. for \$4 billion, bringing characters such as Iron Man and Spider-Man into the family of Mickey Mouse and Toy Story.

The surprise cash-and-stock deal sent Spidey senses tingling in the comic book world. It could lead to new rides, movies, action figures and other outlets for Marvel's 5,000 characters, although Mar-

vel already was aggressively licensing its properties for such uses.

The men were reunited with their families early Sunday after they were

long that we were going to have to endure this."

The deal won't have benefits right away, and Disney stock sank on the news. Disney expects a short-term profit hit, and Marvel characters from X-Men to Daredevil are locked up in deals with other movie studios and theme parks. But Disney's CEO, Robert Iger, promised an action-packed future.

"Sparks will fly" is the expression that comes to mind, Iger told analysts.

Stan Lee, the 86-year-old co-creator of "Spider-Man" and many more of Marvel's most famous

ing, and Curtis Hall, 28, of Palacios.

"I knew we were coming home; I never had a doubt," Phillips, the boat

characters, said he was thrilled to be informed of the marriage Monday morning.

"I love both companies," he said. "From every point of view, this is a great match."

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