

JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR FORTY-TWO



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Guardian, Newsboy Legion TM & ©2005 DC Comics.



Jack Kirby  
K. Kirby



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(with Tom Ziuko)

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# THE NEW JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR

ISSUE #42, SPRING 2005

Jack created a pair of custom pencil drawings of the Guardian and Newsboy Legion for the endpapers of his personal bound volume of *Star-Spangled Comics* #7-15.

We combined the two pieces to create this drawing for our front cover, which Kevin Nowlan inked. Delete the Newsboys' heads (taken from the second drawing) to see what Jack's original drawing looked like.

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## OPENING SHOT

by John  
Morrow,  
editor of  
TJKC

(below) The truth about Morgan Edge is revealed in *Lois Lane* #118. Much like the idea (never stated by Kirby) that the '70s Newsboy Legion were clones of their 1940s counterparts, this plot twist made sense in the scheme of things.

(next page, top) This panel from *Jimmy Olsen* #135 shows what the Kirby/Colletta Superman head originally looked like, as well as the Al Plastino paste-up that was actually published.

(next page, bottom) Loose ends are wrapped up in *Jimmy Olsen* #152, several issues after Jack had left the book.

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Some of the hippest stuff going on with Jack Kirby's Fourth World in the early 1970s didn't occur in the *New Gods*, *Forever People*, or *Mister Miracle*. It took place in a book that, strangely enough, featured a character who was linked closely with Superman, but had no super-powers or secret identity. It was a magazine that, before Kirby jumped ship from Marvel to DC in 1970, featured some of the goofiest plots and stories, and most generic art, of any magazine in the DC stable. Once Kirby arrived, the book took on a new life, with multiple story threads and plot elements weaving from issue to issue, making it far more interesting than it'd ever been before.

And no, I'm not talking about *Superman's Pal Jimmy Olsen*.

Kirby's arrival at DC sparked the most profound change in the *Superman* family of books ever to occur up to that point, and only the John Byrne revamp of the 1980s ever rivaled it (and the Byrne run certainly took its share of inspiration from what Kirby brought in years earlier). While the *Olsen* book became a wellspring of inventiveness and creativity once Jack took it over, another strip, *Superman's Girl Friend, Lois Lane*, took a giant leap ahead in quality as well.

The Lois Connection really started in issue #111 (July 1971), when miniature clones of the Justice League of America, produced in Darkseid's Evil Factory, make her life difficult. Then, the Edge clone is introduced in #118 (Jan. 1972), where we learn that not only is the "Smiling Cobra" an evil duplicate, but the real Morgan Edge is being held prisoner by his twin behind two-way glass in his own penthouse apartment. The real Edge even manages to escape, but everyone thinks he's suffered a mental breakdown when he tries to tell them about his clone, and he's recaptured before anyone figures out what's going on. But he slipped away again in #119 (Feb. 1972) by hooking-up with Yango of *Jimmy Olsen's* Outsiders biker gang, and hiding out in their commune.

All in all, it made reading *Lois Lane* a lot more interesting for a couple of years, and it was so well-thought-out, that I've always wondered if Jack might've had a hand in coming up with the Edge plotline. (However, there was spectacular stuff coming from Denny O'Neil over in *Superman's* own book of the period, with ol' Supes losing half his powers, Kryptonite being done away with, Wonder Woman—in her hot pants, with I-Ching—appearing, and that "sandy" Superman showing up off and on, so there were certainly plenty of capable minds at work cranking out interesting stories without Jack's help.)

Another tangential Kirby Konnection appeared four issues after Jack left the *Jimmy Olsen* book, when editor Joe

### CONGRATS!

A special TJKC note of congratulations goes out to Jack's granddaughter Tracy Kirby on her recent engagement to Jonathan Lewengrub. We join with Kirby fans everywhere wishing the couple every happiness in their new lives together!

# LOIS & JACK: THE NEW

The Fourth World influence was brought in by E. Nelson Bridwell, DC's continuity cop. It only made sense that Lois, working at the *Daily Planet* with Jimmy Olsen and Clark Kent, would be affected by all the changes brought about when Morgan Edge took over the company. So the *Lois Lane* comic introduced a recurring plot thread that, while it never showed up in Kirby's own books, made perfect sense: that Morgan Edge was an evil clone, created by Darkseid's Evil Factory.

Orlando decided someone needed to tie up the loose ends of the Morgan Edge clone subplot. In *Jimmy Olsen* #152 (Aug. 1972), Jimmy, with the help of Yango, stumbles into the thick of the Edge clone situation that was left dangling in *Lois Lane*, and it's resolved when Darkseid personally steps in.

Bob Brodsky spoke to writer Steve Skeates about *Olsen* #152, and Steve had this to say:

"I got to kill off the Morgan Edge clone in a *Jimmy Olsen* story because they were trying to tie-up some of those loose ends that were left when Kirby's books were cancelled. I wrote just one *Jimmy Olsen* story. Joe Orlando was the editor and Mike Sekowsky the artist. It was a fun story. I got to try all sorts of fun things and it was after being out of doing any super-heroes at all for quite awhile... There were some experiments that I played around with in that one *Jimmy Olsen* story. I did a talk show going on in the television studio where Jimmy Olsen worked. There's a fight between Jimmy Olsen and killers who are working for Darkseid and they're interrupting this talk show that's going on. I did part of the talk show itself before the fight scene."

I bring all this up to point out just how pronounced Kirby's influence was on DC of the early 1970s. When he came aboard, they literally revamped the entire *Superman* line around his concepts, and it resonated with varying degrees of power throughout much of the DC line. The Black Racer even made an appearance in *Lois Lane* in issue #115 (Oct. 1971)! And strangely enough, the Vinnie





Colletta inks on Kirby's art in *New Gods* actually helped make these Colletta-inked *Lois Lane* stories look not so out of place in the scheme of things. (And so, in a way, did DC's practice of always replacing the Superman heads with ones drawn by Al Plastino or Murphy Anderson.)

We'd see another wave of Kirby influence hit after Jack left DC in 1975, when the ongoing *Kamandi* book sprung a string of tie-ins, as DC made an attempt at linking the future worlds of OMAC and *Kamandi* together (something Jack apparently considered, with OMAC being Kamandi's grandfather) with the Atomic Knights and *Hercules Unbound*. And this all while Jack was busy drawing for another company! Such is the impact Kirby had in those few years at DC Comics.

The 1990s television show *Lois And Clark: The New Adventures Of Superman* (starring "Desperate Housewife" Teri Hatcher in the title role) gave a few nods to Kirby as well, building off some of what he introduced in the early 1970s. While Lex Luthor, rather than Morgan Edge, took over control of the Daily Planet, Jack's hi-tech criminal mob Intergang was a recurring menace during the show's run (although there was never any mention of Darkseid



# ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN



being behind the organization). A Superman clone, created by Luthor (perhaps inspired by Edge in *Lois Lane*) appeared in one episode. And for a couple of weeks, the Jimmy Olsen character hung out with a rough-around-the-edges street kid, very reminiscent of the Newsboy Legion's Tommy. The kid got a job at the *Daily Planet*, and wouldn't you know his name turned out to be "Jack."

Kirby was a middle-aged Jewish guy, trying to speak to the hippie generation in the early 1970s. While some of his dialogue may have landed with a "thud" on his hip readers' ears, his concepts sustained a series of books that have stood the test of time.

DC recently reprinted all Jack's *Jimmy Olsen* stories in trade paperbacks, and if you've never read these stories, you're in for a treat. But don't forget to check out the *Lois Lane* stuff too. While not directly by Kirby, you'll feel the Kirby influence, and be in for an enjoyable ride. You'll also get a sense of what things might've been like if—as Kirby envisioned when he first came to DC in 1970—he'd been able to brainstorm new series for others to produce, rather than produce them himself. Based on those *Lois Lane* issues, it's a pity it never happened. ★

P.S. Next issue, we'll have a surprise announcement that'll knock all Kirby fans' socks off! It'll change Kirby collecting forever!

## NEW, IMPROVED KIRBY-L!

I'm happy to let everyone know that I've recently made some changes and now Kirby-L is better than ever. Come talk about Kirby Kowboys, Kirby Colleagues, and Kirby Komics with Kirbistas from around the world! Kirby-L members are more Kirby Crazy than they've ever been. To join, you can point your web browser at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/kirby-l/join>, or send me an email at [rhoppe@lemoncustard.com](mailto:rhoppe@lemoncustard.com) if you have any questions. I look forward to hearing from one and all!

Randolph Hoppe (Kirby-L Kontrroller)

[Editor's Note: If you're not a member of Kirby-L, it's a great way to get a regular Kirby fix in-between TJKC issues. Check it out!]



# UNDER THE COVERS

**K**evin Nowlan is probably best known recently for his spectacular work with Alan Moore on the “Jack B. Quick” strip in *Tomorrow Stories* from America’s

Best Comics. But he’s an accomplished penciler, inker, and colorist with a two-decade career in comics. He graciously agreed to ink this issue’s cover, and had to take three stabs at it before he was happy with the result. Here’s what Kevin had to say about the experience:



(above) An example of Kevin Nowlan’s work on “Jack B. Quick,” and his first two tries at inking our cover.

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*much of my own style on the Guardian’s face but the secondary characters are reasonably consistent with Kirby’s pencils. Kirby’s not easy to ink, at least not for me. I love those thick and thin zig-zaggy lines but I sure couldn’t figure out how to make them work. Mike Royer sure made it look easy.*

The pencils Kevin worked from are a combination of two custom drawings Jack drew on the endpapers of his personal bound collection of *Star-Spangled Comics* #7-15. To make the cover, we combined the two pieces, so we’d have both the Guardian and the Newsboy Legion shown. Presented here is the completed second piece that the

Newsboys’ heads were lifted from, while the first piece is presented on this issue’s contents page.

This issue’s back cover is Jack’s unused cover for *Jimmy Olsen* #147. We only had a fuzzy xerox of the pencils available, and had an idea. Readers have often pondered the practice of Murphy Anderson Superman and Olsen heads being added to Jack’s art in the series. What would it have looked like if DC would’ve just had Murphy ink the whole book over Kirby’s pencils?

To get an idea, we asked Murphy if he’d be willing to give the cover inks a shot, and he happily agreed (he’d inked Neal Adams’ pencils on the published version). Murphy had inked one





previous Kirby-penciled *Jimmy Olsen* cover; #145 (Jan. 1972), and while all we have to show of Jack's pencils for it is a crummy quality photocopy (right), it gives us an idea of what Murphy was working from. (This cover always seemed kinda strange; some people thought the circle was a Boom Tube, but as best we can tell, it was supposed to indicate Superman's X-Ray Vision.) Murphy's one other gig inking Jack was on the cover to *Secret Origins* #19 (Oct. 1987, shown on the previous page in pencil), when Jack was well past his prime.



As you can see, Murphy hasn't lost his touch over the last 30 years, and we think this new Kirby/Anderson *Olsen* cover was worth the wait! His son, Murphy III, colored the piece for us (with Tom Ziuko coloring the text and logos), and Mike Royer graciously agreed to letter it to give it an authentic '70s DC look. Thanks, guys! ★

[Editor's Note: Learn more about Kevin Nowlan in *TwoMorrows'* new book *Modern Masters Vol. Four: Kevin Nowlan*, available now. however, our book *The Life & Art of Murphy Anderson* is now sold out.]



(above) Jack's pencils, and Murphy Anderson's inks for the cover to *Jimmy Olsen* #145.

(previous page, top) *Secret Origins* #19 cover pencils (Uncle Sam by Murphy Anderson, Guardian by Kirby). Murphy inked both characters on the finished cover.

(previous page, bottom) The second custom pencil drawing by Jack in his bound volume of *Star-Spangled* #7-15.

(left) Unused *Jimmy Olsen* #147 cover pencils.

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(below) Jack's cover art to *Marvel Super-Heroes* #22 (Sept. 1969). Inks by John Verpoorten.

(right) Gerard Jones' book *Men of Tomorrow*. We kinda like that name around here!

(next page) Jack's pencils to the cover of *Captain America* #202 (Oct. 1976). Note the addition of the big arrow with a copy blurb in it, and the change in story title; something Marvel must've felt was necessary to make an effective cover.

Captain America, Falcon, X-Men, Daredevil TM and ©2005 Marvel Characters, Inc.

*A column answering Frequently Asked Questions about Kirby by Mark Evanier*

**B**efore I do a pirouette into the mailbag, I'd like to recommend a book to anyone with an interest in the history of the comic book industry. It may be the most important one ever written on the topic.

Gerard Jones is the author and the book is *Men of Tomorrow*. It's about the men who built the industry, with special emphasis on Harry Donenfeld (who founded and owned DC Comics), on Jack Liebowitz (who ran that company when Harry was drunk) and on Jerry Siegel and Bob Kane (who made that company into something when they co-created its star characters). There's also some material in there about our Mr. Kirby.

For some time now, I've been telling people that any understanding of comic book history has to flow from a study of the Depression-era generation, particularly of the culture and world in which the young men who formed that business

then resided. Most were Jewish, a few were Italian, and some managed to be one but bond well with the other.

Most of the writers and artists of comics' first years shared a certain common background, finding themselves expected at an early age to bring home a paycheck and contribute to the family's subsistence. Spurred on by some creative muse they'd derived from movies, pulps and comic strips, they scurried to find that income in comics before it became necessary to give up the dream and go build a career in a metal-stamping factory. Siegel and Shuster... Bob Kane... Jack Kirby—all of them, young and determined and talented in one way or another—built an industry because they had to. They needed a place to earn a living.

That story has been told before, though rarely as well as Jones does in *Men of Tomorrow*. What he does that is unique in my experience is to explore the lives of the men who financed that trade—the Donenfelds, the Martin Goodmans, the Charlie Gaineses—and then he details the intersection of the financiers and the creators. Guess which generally got the better of that marriage.

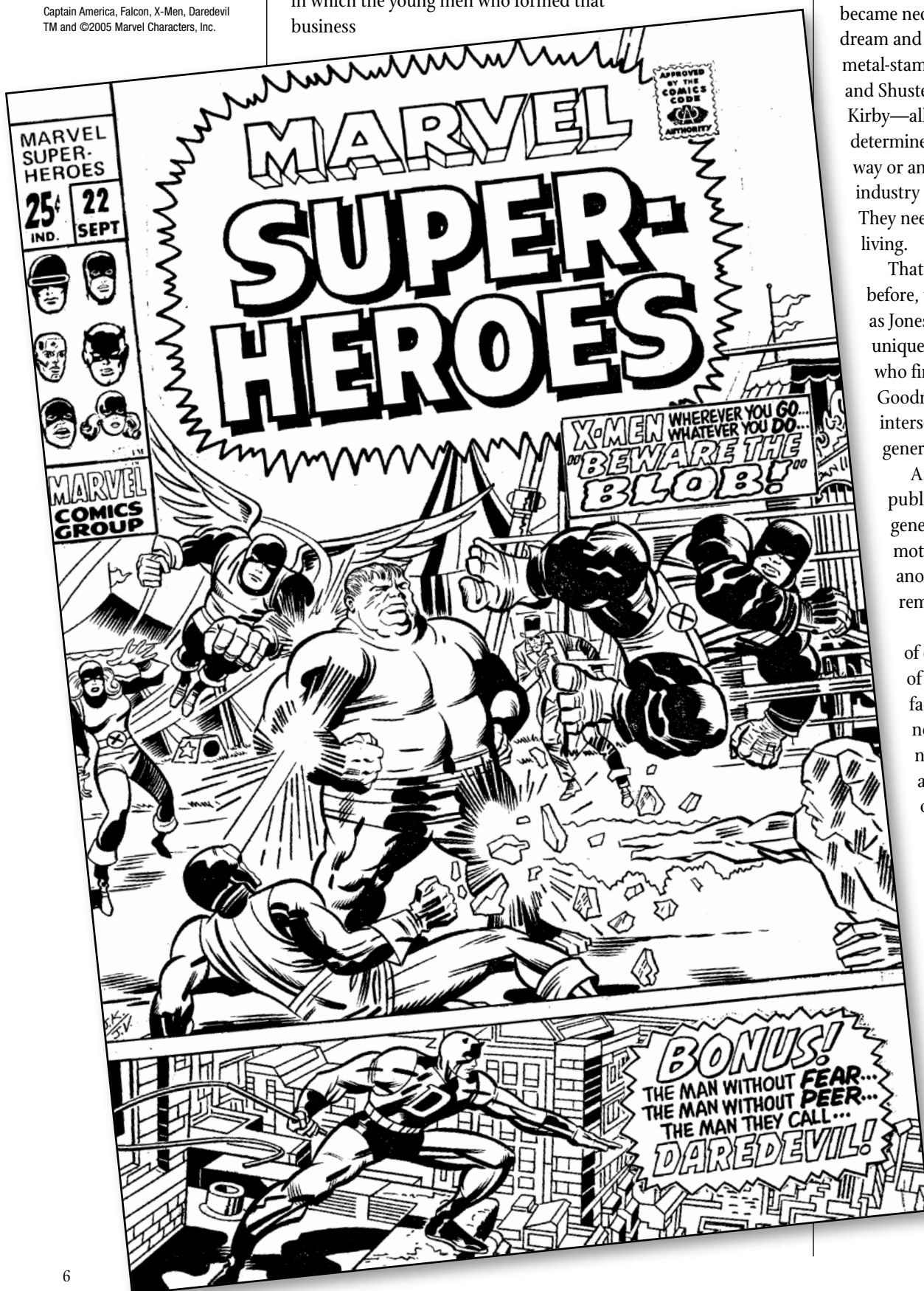
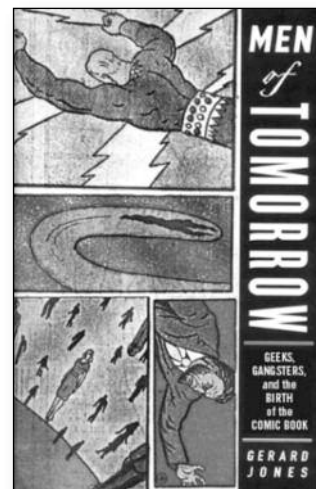
And yet, the book is not rooted wholly in the rich publisher/screwed creator mentality, even though that is generally what occurred. Gerry sifts through the lives and motives on both sides to discuss how they needed one another and how they used one another. It really is a most remarkable narrative.

I am cited repeatedly in the book as a source of info but, of course, the bulk of it did not come from me. Still, most of what's in there corresponds to my knowledge of the facts. There are paragraphs with which I'd quibble, but none of those affect the overall portrait of the players, nor would they alter any of Gerry's astute observations and deductions. Maybe we can do a convention panel one of these days and discuss a few of these areas.

Overall, the worst thing I can say about this book is that there are many places where I wish its author had expanded on a certain player or event and written more. It's such a rich, insufficiently-explored topic that it deserves further exploration... and this book deserves purchase by anyone interested in how the comic book industry came to be.

Now to some Kirby Kwestions. Here's a letter from Mike Kanafani...

*A few of the stories Jack did at Marvel in 1970, just before he left, didn't have Kirby covers. FF #102, FF #108 (the Janus story that was originally meant as #102), Thor #179, Amazing Adventures #2, 3 and 4, Astonishing Tales #1 and #2, and Silver Surfer #18. (I'll never believe Jack had anything to do with the published version!) Question: Did Stan reject*





*[Editor's note: Here's a remarkable find, sent to us by San Diego Comicon founder Shel Dorf: an interview conducted on November 9, 1969 at Jack's home in Orange County, CA, a few months before the first San Diego con. Shel made several trips to Jack's house, bringing along a batch of San Diego comics fans and his tape recorder, and this is the result of the first trip. The visitors included Shel, Barry*

*Alphonso, Mike Towry, Bob Sourk, Dan Stewart, and Richard Alf. This interview features their voices and questions, even if we're not always sure who's saying what. Several San Diego fans would soon be immortalized in the pages of Jimmy Olsen as the San Diego Five-String Mob as a result of one of these visits. Of additional note is the time frame it took place in; right*

*after Jack sent in the art for Fantastic Four #100. At this point he was making plans to leave Marvel for DC, so it's fascinating to view his answers in that context. The interview was transcribed by Steven Tice.]*

**SHEL DORF:** Your name?

**FAN:** Barry Alphonso.

**SHEL:** And your age?

**FAN:** Twelve. Mr. Kirby, will you be doing any writing for Marvel in the future?

**JACK KIRBY:** Well, if I'm assigned that kind of thing, I'll do it.

**FAN:** Do you know if Stan Lee is going to sign any new artists or writers to work for Marvel? I mean, hire them?

**JACK:** Well, I can only get substantiation from Stan or Sol Brodsky and people who work in the office. When I do get substantiation, I might hear a rumor they're hiring somebody new. But I know that from time to time, they do hire people, and I get to know about it eventually. And that's my only way of knowing, because I work at home.

**FAN:** Do you have any personal favorite artists besides yourself?

**JACK:** *[laughs]* I must admit that I have a lot of confidence in my own work. I feel that I have control over what I'm doing and I like what I'm doing, so naturally I like my own work. But I feel that every artist in the field encounters the same problem that I do and they feel the same way about their work that I do. Some of their artwork pleases me and some of their artwork does not, and I don't know why. And I try to analyze it. I don't feel that there's such a thing as good or bad artwork. I feel that somewhere some of us missed the boat, and could use a little more thinking on his work and possibly improve it in that way. But I don't feel that anybody is either good or bad as far as doing anything. I feel that some people have not done all they could and are capable of a lot more. And I feel that way about myself. I feel that I'm always capable of a lot more, and I try to take time out and think about these things, and try to project the kind of work I'm doing now into what I *could* do with it, the many channels that I haven't gone into yet.

**FAN:** Why did you stop drawing *Captain America* and turn it over to *[Jim]* Steranko?

**JACK:** I understand that Jim Steranko wanted to do *Captain America*. During a conference with Stan, we did talk about it, and Stan happened to mention it. And I didn't have any objections to it. Certainly, organizationally, like any other artist, I do the artwork that I'm assigned to do. And Stan was considering hiring Jim to do *Captain America*, and he asked me what I thought of it, and I thought it was fine. I think that *Captain America* done by any competent artist can't be hurt, and can only be made more interesting.

**FAN:** Do Stan Lee or you have any new characters that you're going to use in your *Inhumans* book?

**JACK:** Not so far. I mean, we began to broaden the scope of the Inhumans by stressing the people around them. In other words, we became aware that there were a lot of Inhumans involved outside the family that was created. So we have concentrated a little on the other Inhumans and giving them all sorts of powers and characteristics that we haven't seen in the Inhumans, themselves. I mean in the Inhuman principals that we've known. We've begun to concentrate on the people outside them, within their own group, who have genetic traits outside of the Inhumans that we've known so far.

**SHEL:** Your name, please?

**FAN:** I'm Dan Stewart.

**SHEL:** And your age?

**FAN:** Sixteen.

**SHEL:** And do you have a question for Mr. Kirby?

**FAN:** Not at the moment.

**JACK:** We've got the tape recorder going, so if you have anything on your mind, why...

**FAN:** A lotta hair.

**JACK:** That's all right. I have no objection to growing your hair any way you please. If it pleases you, why, that's what counts. *[pause]* If you can grow it, grow. If you can't do it, don't. I am now speaking with a cigar in my mouth, so if my words are indistinct, tough luck. You'll find that there's a logical reason for the blurred sounds. *[laughter]*

*[someone gives Kirby something]*

**JACK:** Oh, isn't that great! May I have it?

**FAN:** No. *[laughs]* Yeah, you can have it.

**JACK:** Is this for me?

**FAN:** Yes. Everybody thought it was the Incredible Hulk.

**JACK:** Because I never know what's going on, y'know? And if that's what's going on—

**FAN:** It'll go on the table.

**JACK:** —I'll go along with it.

**SHEL:** Oh, c'mon. Don't be modest. This boy has been working very hard and he's just modest. I think that's what—the whole thing behind this is he's modest, he did that just for you, Jack, and he wanted you to have it.

**JACK:** I thank you very much. What I'm holding is a clay head of the Thing and I think it's well done. It shows a lot of good perception on your part, and certainly a lot of good feeling, which concerns me. Certainly I can only respond with a kind of a warmth, which I don't usually feel towards other human beings.



(above) The first visit by San Diego fans to Jack's studio on Nov. 9, 1969, the day this interview was taped. Front (holding a sweet-eee-t Kirby Captain America drawing): Barry Alphonso. Left to right, behind: Dan Stewart, Bob Sourk, Richard Alf, Jack Kirby, Shel Dorf, and Wayne ...? (sorry, we're not sure of his last name; can anyone help?).

Photo, milk, and cookies by Roz Kirby.

(next page, panel one) The San Diego Five-String Mob performs its one and only concert in *Jimmy Olsen* #144 (Dec. 1971). Clockwise from top: Bill Lund, Scott Shaw!, John Pound, Mike Towry, and Roger Freedman. Barry Alphonso also appears in panel three as Barri-Boy. The Apokolips rock group came about from a subsequent visit by a group of fans to Jack's studio, also spearheaded by Shel Dorf.

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# WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE GOLDEN GUARDIAN?

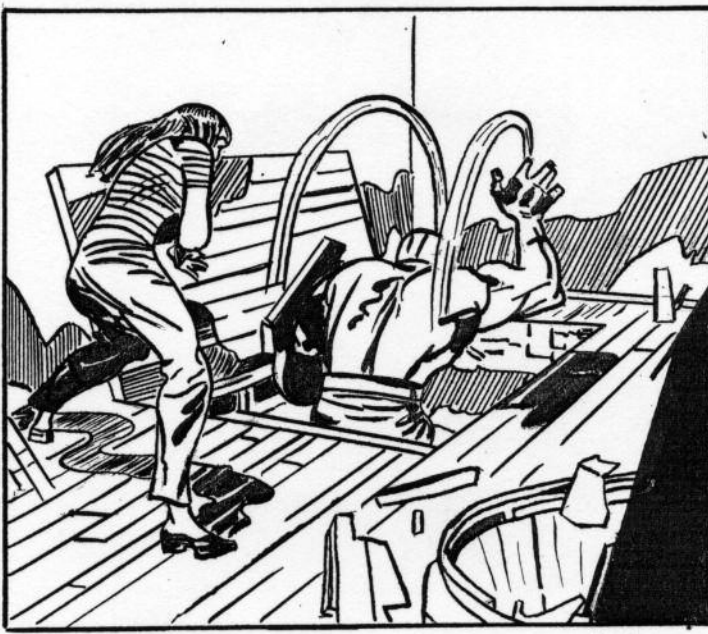
by John Morrow

Yeah, I was ticked off that the Guardian—possibly the coolest addition to Kirby's 1970s *Jimmy Olsen* run—mysteriously vanished after page 7 of issue #146, never to be seen again under Kirby's reign. Did he stay behind in Terry Dean's discotheque and par-tay? Did he slink dejectedly back to the Project, miffed that Superman took charge of investigating the tunnel they'd discovered? Did he run off and become the sixth (make that seventh) string in the San Diego Five-String Mob?

Unfortunately, we'll never know, but this unused page (apparently meant for *Olsen* #144, page 15) gives us Guardian fans one last chance to see our hero, Kirby-style! While ol' Supes flexes his super-muscles (show-off!), Jim Harper's clone jumps into the fray to find out what hides below the Cosmic Carousel!

What did the Guardian discover in this page's last panel? Why did Jack opt to have Superman uncover the tunnel's secret instead? My guess is Jack learned he'd soon be off the book for good, and saw this as his last chance to explore the Superman plot threads he'd left dangling from his first *Olsen* issue and *Forever People* #1. So he deep-sixed this page, and it was off to Supertown for Superman!

Just who inked this page is anyone's guess, although it's weird that they left Superman's "S" symbol uninked; the kind of thing Vinnie Colletta would do, knowing DC would want it redrawn to spec anyway. Suggestions, anyone? ★





A look at a Kirby-related curiosity, by Jon B. Cooke



(above) Radioactive Man and Bartman.

Radioactive Man ©2005 Bongo Entertainment, Inc. Bartman ©2005 & TM Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation.

(right) *Radioactive Man* V.2 #9 cover.

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(below) The Golden Age incarnation of ol' Bolt-Head, Radio Man gets the faux Simon & Kirby treatment by writer/artist Batton Lash and inker Bob Smith in the *RM* V.2, #9 back-up.

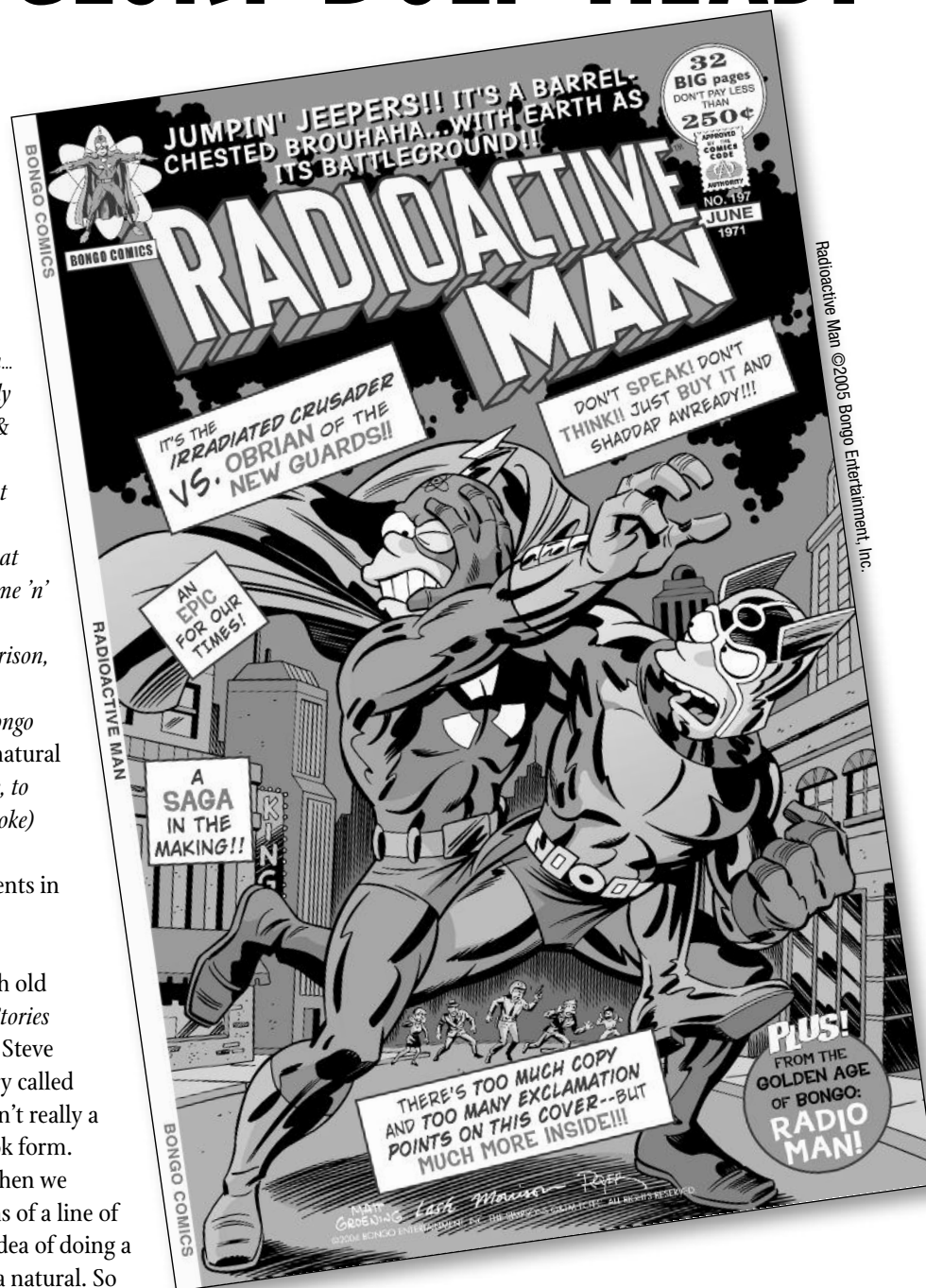
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(Okay, so I'm rifling through the latest issue of *The New Yorker* at my neighborhood magazine shop to see if Spiegelman or Ware or Crumb or Mazzucchelli are contributing and my eyes glance down to the comics section (yep, my beloved Healey's Newsstore still carries funny-books!) and for a nano-second an impossible notion enters my brain... spying a colorful cover's spine, an exact parody of the early 1970s DC Comics 52-page "Bigger & Better" comics, I think, "Omigawd! A new *Fourth World* ish! I have died and gone to New Genesis!" But no! I regain my senses to realize it's the current *Radioactive Man*, this one affectionately poking fun at the circa '72 New Gods. I pays my \$2.50, takes it home 'n' I relishes the spot-on satire, impressed enough to conduct an e-mail Q&A with two buddies—Bill Morrison, Bongo Comics Group art director (and creator of Roswell: Little Green Man), and Batton Lash, Bongo freelance writer (and creator of Wolff & Byrd, *Supernatural Law*)—who helped perpetrate such a four-color crime, to ask just what the heck they were thinking.—Jon B. Cooke)

JON B. COOKE: What's your respective involvements in the genesis of the *Radioactive Man* title?

BILL MORRISON: Well, my first involvement with old Bolt-Head was way back in *Simpsons Comics and Stories* [1993], before Bongo even existed. [writer/artist] Steve and [writer/colorist] Cindy Vance and I did a story called "Lo, There Shall Come A Bartman" [1993]. It wasn't really a *Radioactive Man* story, but he's in it in comic-book form. That's the first time I drew the character. Then, when we decided to form Bongo and were thinking in terms of a line of titles related to *The Simpsons*, the idea of doing a *Radioactive Man* series was just a natural. So we did the original six-issue mini-series ['93-'94] and then followed that up with a DC *80-Page Giant* [Summer '95] parody and a serialized Steranko-style story that ran in the back of *Simpsons Comics*. I really loved doing *Radioactive Man* and wanted to revive him with another series. That's where Batton came in.

BATTON LASH: I think the seeds of my involvement were planted when I did a story for Bongo's '98 *Treehouse of Horror* issue [#4]. I had a great time and loved working with Bill, Terry Delegeane and the Bongo people in general. I pretty much had *carté blanche* on that story and was able to do layouts for the artist... I had a ball! Still, when Bongo decided to revive *Radioactive Man* a couple of years later as an ongoing title, I was surprised to get a call from Bill asking if I'd like to write it. I never considered myself a super-hero writer; I thought he was calling to ask if I wanted to write the *Futurama* title they were starting! Since the "mandate" of *Radioactive Man* was for each issue to spoof a different era of comics (the 1994 mini-series established that there were 1,000 issues over 40 years), Bill thought I'd be appropriate for *RM*. Bill read *Supernatural Law* [Exhibit A Press] and was aware of the



many parodies I would often do. He thought that my knowledge of the history—and mind-numbing minutia—of the comics industry would be ideal for *RM*. Frankly, I had no idea how much I wore my geekiness on my sleeve!

MORRISON: Well, I guess it takes one to know one! I really couldn't think of anyone better to tackle the series. Batton has the perfect blend of storytelling ability, sense of humor, and knowledge of comic book history for a book like *RM*.

COOKE: Was it your intention to cover specific aspects of comics history, or at least specific titles and comic book publishing lines at various times in the last half-century?

MORRISON: Yeah, the original mini-series set that pattern right from the start. I remember lobbying to do a Neal Adams/Denny O'Neil *Green Lantern/Green Arrow* parody which Steve let me co-plot. We also touched on Cold War era comics, early Kirby Marvel, *The Watchmen*, Image Comics... If you read [The *Simpsons* creator & Bongo bossman] Matt Groening's message on the inside front cover of *RM* #1, he jokes that our intention was to eventually fill in every issue in the entire run, from 1952 right up to the present.

LASH: I look at *RM* as the archetypical comic-book title that has had to adapt to changing attitudes and fads in the field and each issue reflects how the industry rewrites the "rules" from previous sales eras.

# THE SLUM SENTINEL

Serving Suicide Slum Since 1942

## The Paper Trail Of The Newsboy Legion

**This Just In...**

by John Morrow, staff reporter

A lot of readers have questioned my not-so-well hidden affection for the Dingbats of Danger Street, the short-lived strip Jack produced in the early 1970s. But my enjoyment goes far beyond the group's one-shot (three-shot if you count the two

series. Scrapper was tops in my mind—perhaps because he was the most closely based on Kirby himself—while I personally identified with Big Words, and felt Gabby was simply a riot! Of them, only Tommy seemed bland and lacking in a distinctive personality. (Even Flippa-Dippa had his “hook” of scuba-diving.) But still, any scene with the Newsboys was always the one that I enjoyed most, and I was fascinated by the allusions



**Famed Artist Revisits His Roots**  
by Jacob Kurtzberg, staff reporter

Slum dwellers were recently treated to a return visit by an alum of the Boys' Brotherhood Republic, the organization founded to give ghetto kids responsibility in hopes of aiding them in their journey to adulthood. Renowned comic book artist Jack Kirby, co-creator of such characters as Captain America, the Fantastic Four, X-Men, and the Hulk (shown above drawn by Kirby), grew up here on the Lower East Side of New York, and never forgot where his roots are. He appeared at a weekly meeting of the BBR board, entertaining the kids with stories of his days growing up here, and drawing sketches for the enthralled crowd. The artist took time out of his busy schedule to remind kids that anything is possible if they apply themselves. “You’ve welcomed me back warmly, and I thank you for that,” Kirby told the boys who gathered.

(For the complete story, turn to page 3D.)



Artist's rendering of Newsboy Legion (l to r): Tommy, Gabby, Big Words, and Scrapper.

unpublished stories) appearance in *First Issue Special* #6. It's actually more about the whole Kid Gang genre, which I didn't even know existed when I first discovered Kirby's work. It was upon reading *Jimmy Olsen* #133 for the first time (two years after its release, as a back issue) that I learned of my first (and fave) Kid Gang, the Newsboy Legion.

This plucky group of youngsters was, to me, way more interesting than Jimmy Olsen or Superman, the actual stars of the Olsen

to these kids having been around in the 1940s (or, more accurately, their doppel-ganger dads). When the Olsen mag went to 25¢ and started including Golden Age exploits of the gang, I was hooked for life.

Like in the 1970s, the Guardian of the '40s was mainly a supporting player to the kids, and as cool as I thought Jim Harper's alter ego was (particularly with Jack's revamped helmet on the '70s version), this

(continued on next page)



(continued from front page)

was the first time I wasn't enjoying the book mainly for the superhero, but instead for the "everyman" supporting cast. When Kirby left with *JO* #148, I was just as disappointed that I wouldn't see any more Golden Age Simon & Kirby reprints ("Who was this Simon guy, anyway?" I wondered) as I was that the Whiz Wagon, Hairies, and the Project wouldn't be seen again.

So began one of my earliest comic collecting goals—to track down all the remaining S&K adventures of the Newsboy Legion. After finding one additional reprint in an issue of *Detective Comics*, my goal remained unfulfilled for many years, due to the high cost of Golden Age original issues. But now, with the help of eBay, some disposable income, and a lot of generous *TJKC* readers, I've finally reached that goal, and proudly present the ultimate overview of the Newsboy Legion's appearances on paper!

It all started in *Star-Spangled Comics* #7 (April 1942, and reprinted in *Jimmy Olsen* #141 and *Adventure Comics* #503) with the Guardian getting second billing on the cover to this gang of kids from Suicide Slum. Rookie beat cop Jim Harper gets beaten himself by a pack of thugs, then dons a blue and yellow costume, crash helmet, and police badge-shaped shield and exacts revenge, becoming the "guardian of society" he couldn't be while working within the law. But his moniker attains double-meaning when a gang of local newspaper peddlers (all orphans of deceased parents) turn to robbing a hardware store to put food

on the table. Officer Harper is assigned to be their legal guardian, but the kids resist the Big Brother treatment, and turn to stealing hubcaps. When their Fence sets them up as a diversion for a fatal hold-up, the boys begin to appreciate Jim's law and order stance, and get imperiled trying to even the score with the crook. The Guardian saves the boys, who later return the favor as their first episode ends with them suspecting Harper and the Guardian might be one and the same—a subplot that would run through most of their Golden Age adventures (but wouldn't be resolved until Kirby brought them back in the 1970s *Olsen* book).

Rather than spend a lot of space recapping the adventures that were reprinted in *Jimmy Olsen* #141-148, all of which are readily available as inexpensive back issues, here's a brief run-down with ratings from 0-5 badges:

- #7: "Newsboy Legion" (★★★★★) Great lead-off and concept.
- #8: "Last Mile Alley" (★★★★★) Plenty of action, great S&K.
- #9: "The Rookie Takes The Rap" (★★★★★) Great characterization for Jim Harper.
- #10: "Kings For A Day" (★★★★★) Excellent plot and art.
- #11: "Paradise Prison" (★★★★★) Ditto.
- #12: "Prevue of Peril" (★★★★★) Superb art.
- #13: "The Scoop of Suicide Slum" (★★★★★) Excellent tension in Big Word's development.
- #14: "The Meanest Man on Earth" (★★★★★) Another solid S&K yarn.

(below) Covers to the first eight adventures of the Newsboy Legion, all of which were reprinted as back-ups in *Jimmy Olsen* in the 1970s. Shown throughout are all the Golden Age *Star-Spangled* covers featuring the Newsboys.

All characters TM & ©2005 DC Comics.



Now let's continue on with an overview of the rest of the Simon & Kirby Newsboy Legion stories—and a few that aren't. (And before I forget, let me mention two other Golden Age appearances: their cameo in *Detective Comics* #76 in the “Boy Commandos” strip, and in *Boy Commandos* #1, both by Simon & Kirby. These were reprinted in *Mister Miracle* #5 and #6 in the 1970s.)

#### #15: “Playmates of Peril” (●●●●●)

Boredom hits Suicide Slum when there's no crime for a day, so Jim Harper takes the opportunity to become the Guardian during his patrol shift, and gets in hot water for dereliction of duty. With his sergeant watching



his every move, it's up to Jim's wards to tail the badguys. When they're captured, a member of a rival kid gang tells Harper, and it's up to him to save the Newsboys from death on a playground. Outstanding Kirby art, even if the plot's a little weak.

#### #16: “The Playboy of Suicide Slum” (●●●●●)

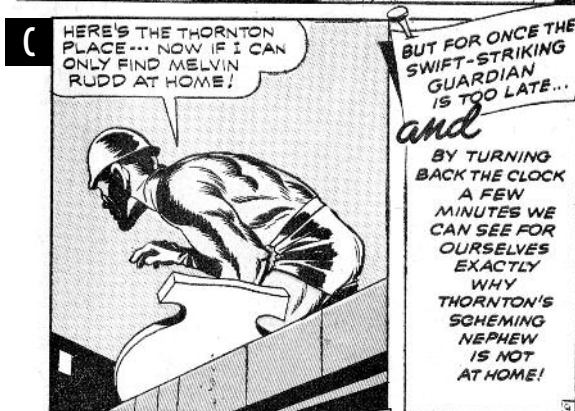
Tommy saves a little girl from being hit by a millionaire's car, and the wealthy businessman adopts him. There's some great characterization for Tommy, the most generic member of the group until now, showing how torn he is between his new affluent life and his loyalty to his old

friends. It turns out there's bad apples in all classes of society, as a rich nephew schemes against Tommy to save his inheritance, and Tommy learns the real value of friendship when his old pals and the Guardian have to save his neck. There's lots of non-Kirby panels, but the action shots are all-Jack.



#### #17: “The Rafferty Mob” (●●●●●)

Some mediocre Simon & Kirby studio art brings down an otherwise interesting tale of a new kid gang that elbows in on the boys' territory and wreaks havoc on Suicide Slum. Led by Rafferty (a very different street kid than any we've seen so far), I'll not spoil the surprise, but this story features a great scrap between neighboring gangs, à la Jack's upbringing on the Lower



East Side of New York, and even a little romance. Outstanding cover art.

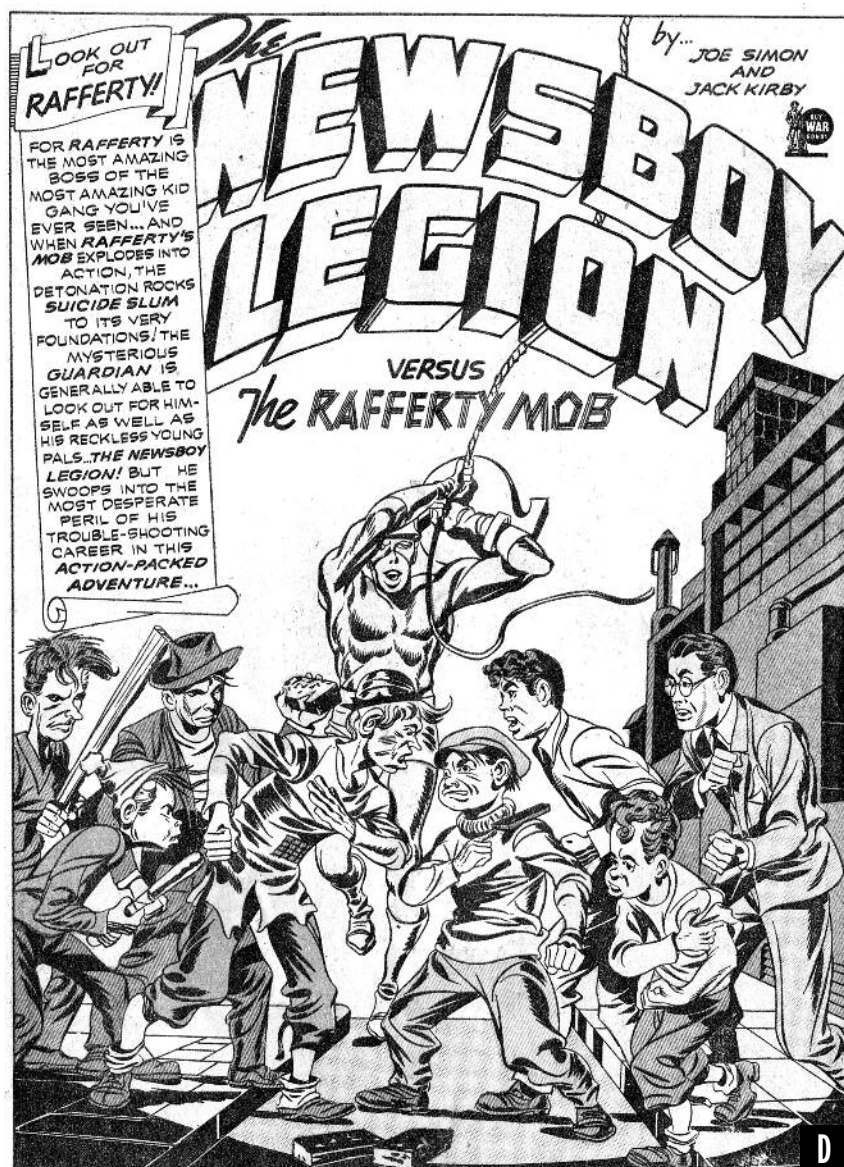
#### #18: “The Education of Iron-Fist Gookin” (●●●●●)

The toughest (and dumbest) mug in Suicide Slum isn't content with just being able to whip anybody in a physical encounter, so he hires Big Words to “loin him” some, er... big words. A gang of crooks sets Iron-Fist up as their boss to pin raps for their crimes on him, and the result is a slugging match between Gookin and the Guardian. Great splash page, somewhat rushed art otherwise.

EDITOR'S CHOICE!

#### #19: “The Fuehrer of Suicide Slum” (●●●●●)

I'm giving this yarn six(!) stars out of five, as it's the best of the lot. The boys mix it up with Gashouse, a slum kid who supports the Bund (the real-life American Nazi sympathizers). This may be the finest example of anti-Nazi propaganda ever produced in comics, as Hitler's forces actually invade New York



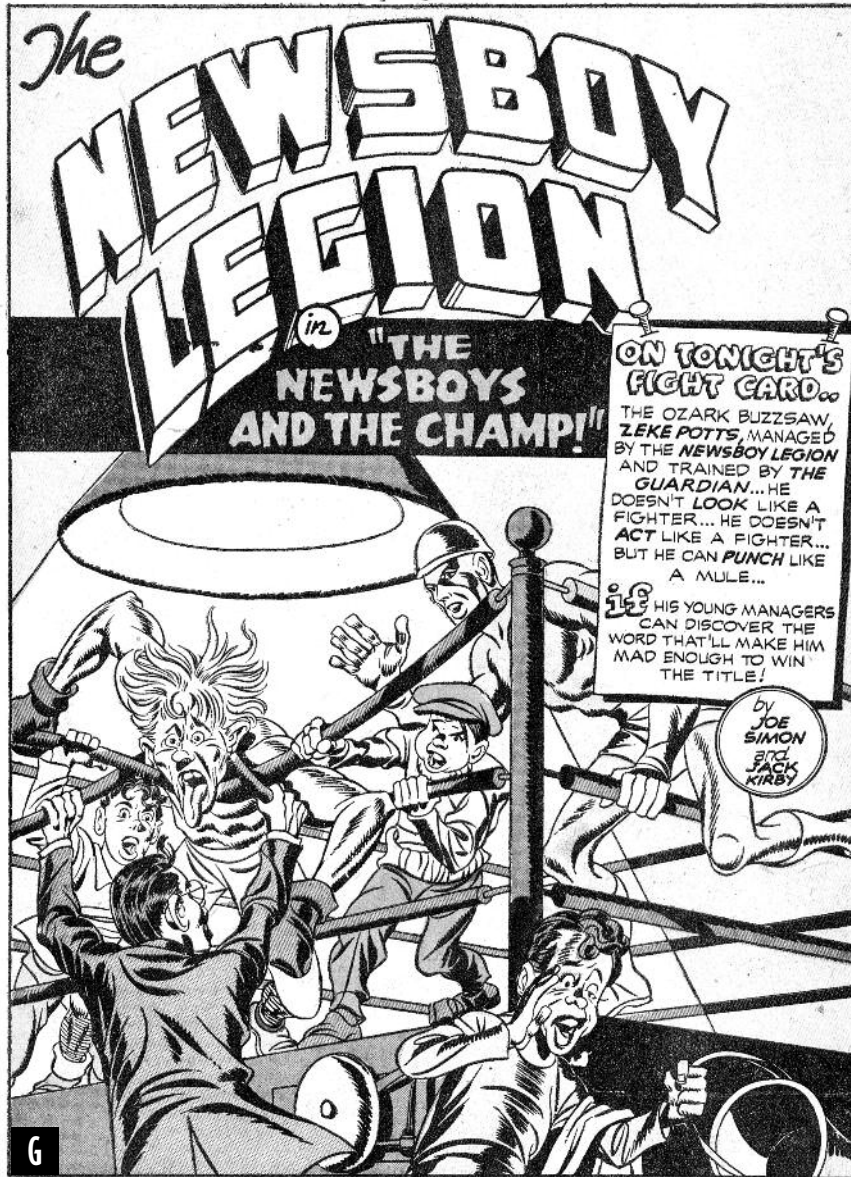




City, turning Yankee Stadium into a concentration camp, with the Newsboys and the Guardian as prisoners, and Gashouse in charge! Pure Kirby throughout, with tons of action—absolutely riveting story and art, with a great ending! You can tell Jack was really into this one, with Scrapper (Jack's alter ego) taking center stage.

#### #20: "The Newsboys and the Champ" (●●●●)

A below-average story with above-average art, as the Newsboy Legion trains a down-on-his-luck Ozarker named Zeke to win a prizefight, in order to build a gym for Suicide Slum residents. Even the worst of the S&K stories far outshines the other strips in *Star-Spangled Comics*, which is undoubtedly why they supplanted the Star-Spangled Kid from his own comic as the lead feature.



(A) S&K slam-bang action from *Star-Spangled* #15. Try spreading your feet that far apart and throwing a punch!

(B) Tommy underwent some great character development in *Star-Spangled* #16.

(C) Remember these two panels from *Star-Spangled* #16. You'll see them again later!

(D) Splash page from #17, featuring a scene right out of Jack's Lower East Side upbringing.

(E) The Simon & Kirby signature "round" panel is put to good use in issue #18.

(F) Two panels from the best of the Newsboys' Golden Age adventures, in issue #19.

(G) Splash page from *Star-Spangled* #20.

Characters TM & ©2005 DC Comics.



#### #21: "The House Where Time Stood Still" (●●●●)

This story was reprinted in *Detective Comics* #442, so I'll refrain from much comment except to say that these reprints really don't do justice to the originals. I've heard that DC literally traced off the old comics in ink to get usable art for these reprints. Whether or not that's true, the original issues are much cleaner and crisper than what appears in the reprints, but you can still enjoy the stories. This one is another war propaganda piece, using two hermit brothers to demonstrate the problem with World War II isolationists. An interesting curiosity is that DC prepared art for *Star-Spangled* #7-14 to run in *Jimmy Olsen*, but this next reprint to see print jumps a number of issues to #21. I wonder if they prepared the art from #15-20 and never used it?





by Shane Foley

When Kirby took over the *Jimmy Olsen* strip, he poured his unique creativity into it, proving that even a strip so un-Kirbylike as this could be molded in his image. Some elements of his Fourth World Epic appeared here and nowhere else and helped to flesh out the saga in ways that Jack probably had not previously considered. From the first-ever appearance of Darkseid, to the DNA Project, the DNAliens, Mekkari, Simyan, the Golden Guardian, Dubbilex, the Four-Armed Terror, etc., this strip was chock full of new characters and concepts.

(these two pages)  
The "Tales of the DNA Project" back-up from *Olsen* #139, and a page from #143.

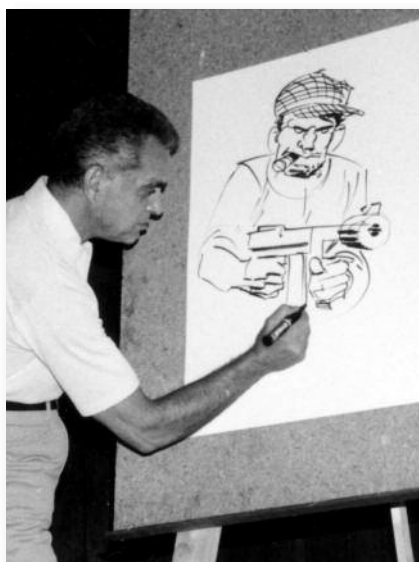
After the first 6 months or so, there was a slight detour as Jack explored a Goody Rickles storyline. Then there followed a wide detour into Transilvane. But then it was head-long back into the breach once again as Jimmy and Co. went head-to-head with the minions of Darkseid. And once again, Jack's imagination was in overdrive as he returned to his original *Olsen* themes and even wrapped some of them up.

(pages 52-53)  
Pencils from *Jimmy Olsen* #143.





# AN OFFER WE COULDN'T REFUSE



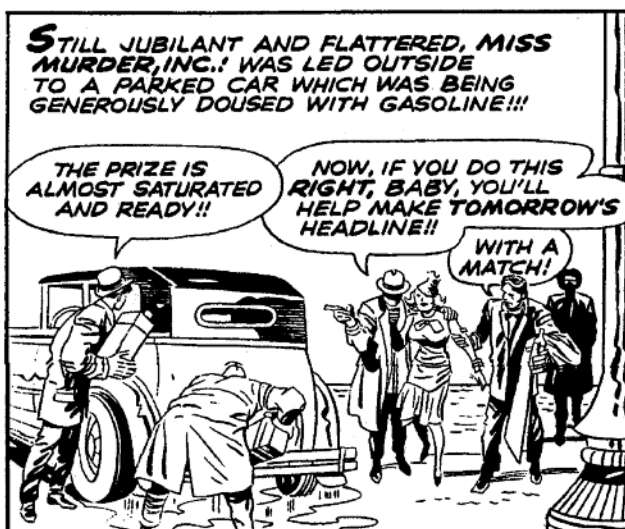
*"Never look a gift horse in the mouth, for fear its head will end up in your bed."*

Okay, I'm paraphrasing the famous expression, but it never held truer than here. Kirby fan Chris Fama recently contacted me, saying he'd worked out a process to chemically bleach old comics pages, leaving only the black ink intact on the paper, making for crisp, clean originals to scan for reproduction. Would I be interested in having him supply Kirby line art from "public

domain" (i.e. out of copyright) stories for *TJKC*?

Did Marlon Brando ever say "no" to a slice of pie?

It seemed appropriate that we kick off this new feature with a 1940s gangster story, as a sort of parallel to Jack's *In The Days Of The Mob* book from 1971. You'll see in this story (from *Justice Traps The Guilty* #9, April 1949) the same Kirby that brought to life a virtuoso performance of violence and mayhem in 1971. Our thanks to Chris for his efforts on this new ongoing *TJKC* feature! ★



(above) Jack does a "Chalk Talk" drawing of a gangster for fans at an early 1970s San Diego Comicon.

(right) Final page from the unpublished 1971 "Ladies of the Mob" story from *In The Days Of The Mob* #2. Inks by Mike Royer.

In The Days Of The Mob TM & ©2005 DC Comics.



# WE WANT THE FUNK!

Wherein Jack proves it really is hip to be square, by John Morrow

In the 1970s decade of CB Radios and Disco, Jack mined the vein of popular culture to come up with some remarkably fun books. In *The Days Of The Mob* harkened to *The Godfather*, a year after the Mario Puzo novel was released, and *Spirit World* appeared the same year the 1971 novel *The Exorcist* debuted. *Dingbats of Danger Street* mimicked the TV show *Welcome Back Kotter* (with its four stars virtually transformed into comic form), and both debuted in 1975. *Soul Train* was a television hit when it premiered in Oct. 1971, even if Jack's 1971 *Soul Love* book never got published. Jack even delved into some martial arts action in *Richard Dragon*, *Kung Fu Fighter* #3 (Aug. 1975), three years after David Carradine began snatching pebbles from his sensei's hand. And what was his unpublished 1970 *True Divorce Cases*, but a twist on TV's 1969 show *Love, American Style*? Had Jack stayed at DC, was it only a matter of time before we saw him tackle comic book versions of *Charlie's Angels*, *The Love Boat*, and *Fantasy Island*?

Whether it's a crime that some of these were never produced, or one that some were, is for you to judge. Either way, enjoy this look at some of the funky, clunky stuff Jack produced at 1970s DC Comics. ★

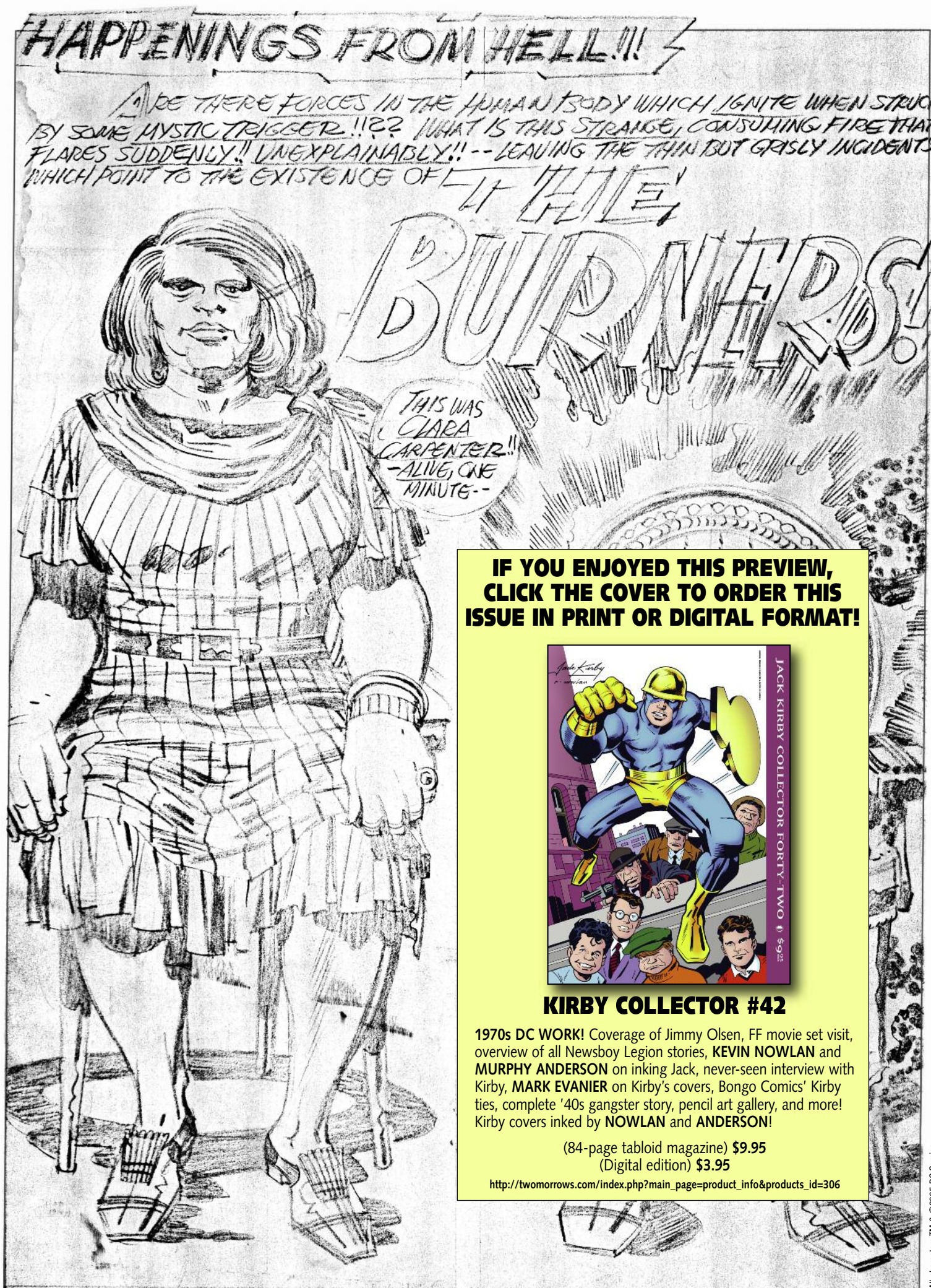
(page 68-69) Two pages meant for *Spirit World* #2, and eventually published in *Weird Mystery Tales* #3 (Nov. 1972).

(page 70-71) Splash page from the unpublished *Dingbats of Danger Street* #2 (circa 1975) with inks by Mike Royer, and final page pencils from the still unpublished *Dingbats* #3, showing that Bananas was up next for an origin story.

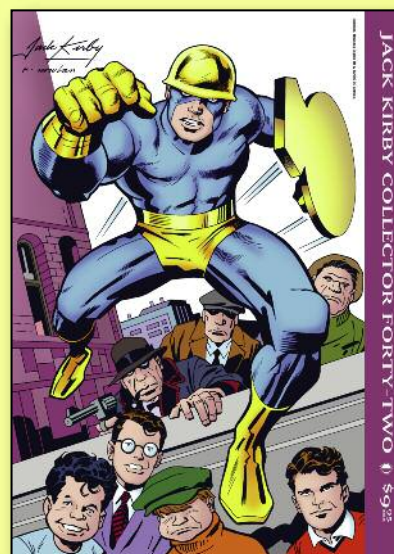
(page 72-73) Two pages from "The Maid" from the unpublished 1970 magazine project *True Divorce Cases*, showcasing Jack's ability to draw lovely ladies.

(page 74-75) Another of the proposed "Speak-Out Series" of magazines, *Soul Love* never made it to press, but here's two pages from the story "Dedicated Nurse," inked by Vince Colletta.

For a full overview of DC's failed black-&-white magazine line of the 1970s, including Jack's *In The Days Of The Mob*, *Spirit World*, *Soul Love*, and *True Divorce Cases*, check out *BACK ISSUE* #10, TwoMorrows' newest mag, on sale now!



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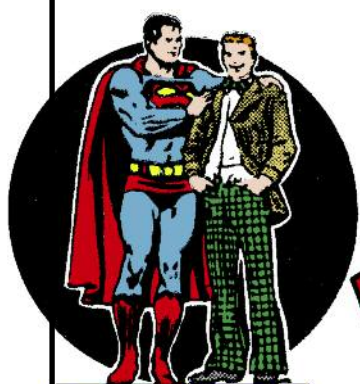
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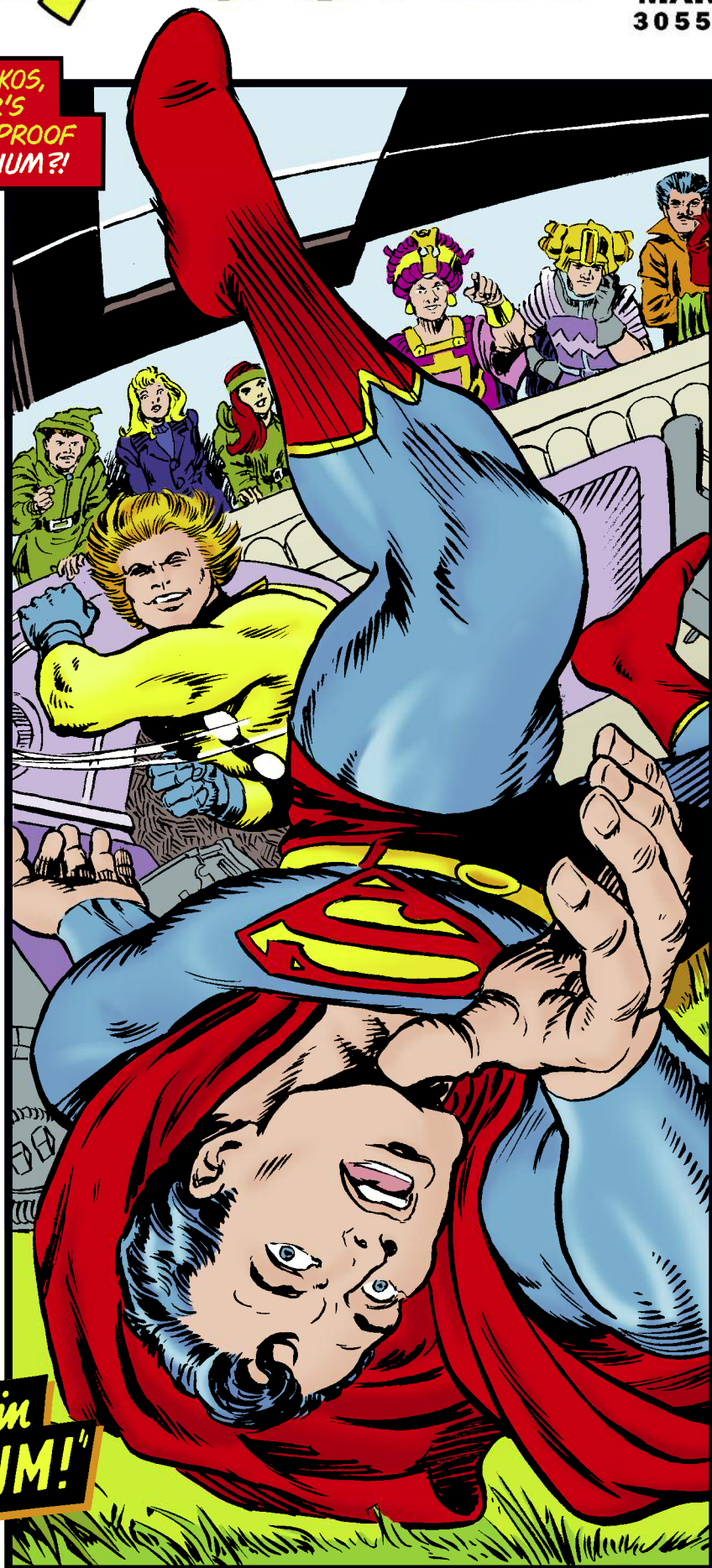
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