



741.5

SUPERMAN FAMILY

JIMMY OLSEN! LOIS LANE!

SURREAL SILVER AGE SAGAS!

JUNE 2026 - NO. 164

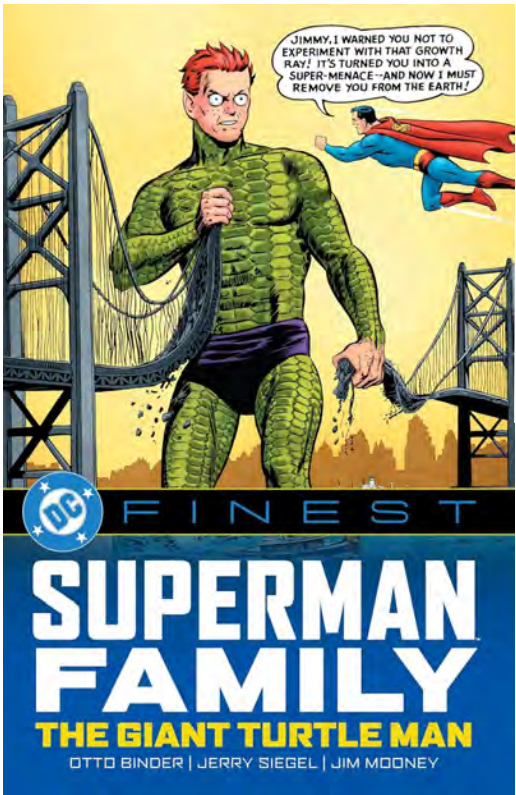


Featuring
****SUPERGIRL****
& KRYPTO the SUPER-DOG!

The Comics & Graphic Novel Bulletin of



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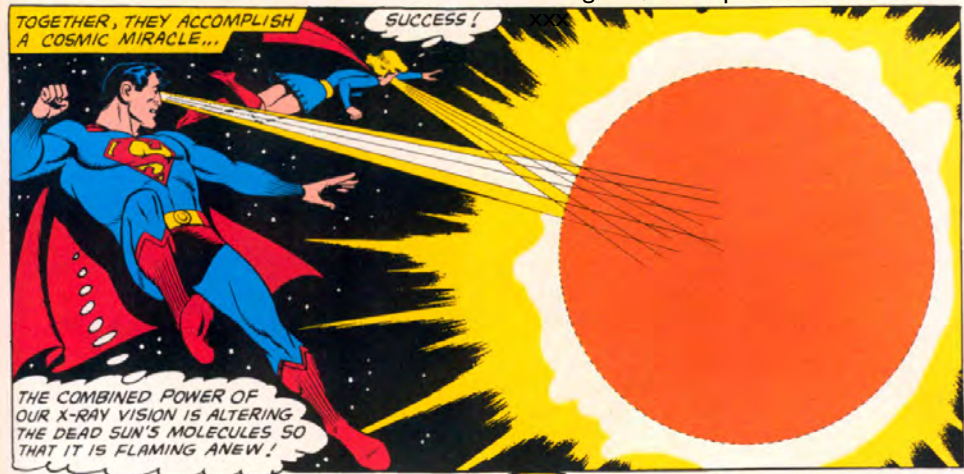
Created for the radio show, Jimmy Olsen didn't officially become Superman's Pal until 1954. After Jack Larson's TV portrayal charmed American children, DC released the first Jimmy Olsen comic. "The Boy of 100 Faces" lived up to that moniker by taking on dozens of identities, from soda jerk to crime boss to giant turtle dude, all while wooing Lois Lane's kid sister, Lucy, often selling 520,000 copies a month.



In a typically lovely panel by the great Curt Swan, Kara Zor-El tells her story to Superman's Pal, Jimmy Olsen, in an example of the crossovers that dominated the early career of *The Girl of Steel*. There's a lot of duplication between this volume and *The Giant Turtle Man*, including "The Battle of the Super-Pets" and "Lois Lane's Super Daughter." Taken from that story, the panel below by



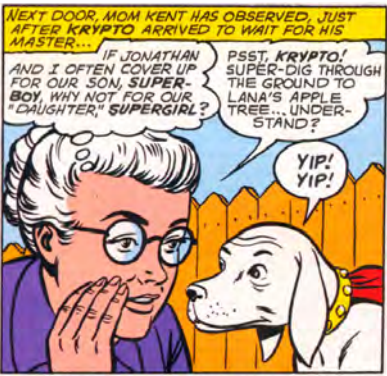
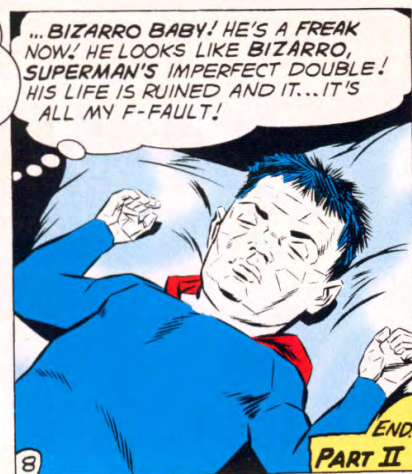
artist Jim Mooney, exemplifies one of the tropes that sold Supergirl to so many kids: in her secret identity of Linda Lee, Supergirl uses her powers to achieve everyday goals. There's also the stories where domestic concerns, like baby-sitting, get weird, often due to a variety of kryptonite. Super-dog Krypto kibitzes quite a bit, especially in the multi-part story involving Supergirl's dastardly doppelganger, Lesla-Lar!



Mort Weisinger was in charge of the "Superman Family" of titles, which included the spin-offs starring Lois Lane and Jimmy Olsen, from 1958 to 1970. Weisinger was very conscious of his audience being kids, and would often ask neighborhood children for ideas. Among those ideas was giving supporting characters like Lois Lane and Jimmy Olsen their own books. Weisinger saw his comics as a child's next step in literacy after picture books, and insisted his artists keep their pages clean and easy to read. No concept was too foolish, no story too goofy, and it worked for years, as proven by their success and influence on a generation of Americans.

SUPERGIRL PREMIERES IN CINEMAS JUNE 26. BEAUMONT'S SHELBY STUART REVIEWS THE NOVEL THAT INPIRED THE FILM! Ever feel tired of being a good person when the world is full of very bad people doing very bad things? So does Supergirl. She's just like us...except she was born on a different planet and watched it die a handful of times. And she can fly! Morbid jokes aside, *Supergirl: Woman of Tomorrow* explores what it means to be a good guy when bad things won't stop happening. Hired as an intergalactic hit-woman by a bereaved alien girl, Supergirl has more than villains to grapple with in this one. **Tom King, Bilquis Evelyn, and Matheus Lopes** create an immersive (dare I say, cinematic) experience that left me torn between dashing through Ruthie's fast-paced, poignant narration and stopping to admire the intricate character art and action sequences. Invulnerability may be a curse, but *Supergirl: Woman of Tomorrow* is a blessing for those sick of living through historical events. **BEAUMONT-MARKSBURY-NORTHSIDE-TATES CREEK**

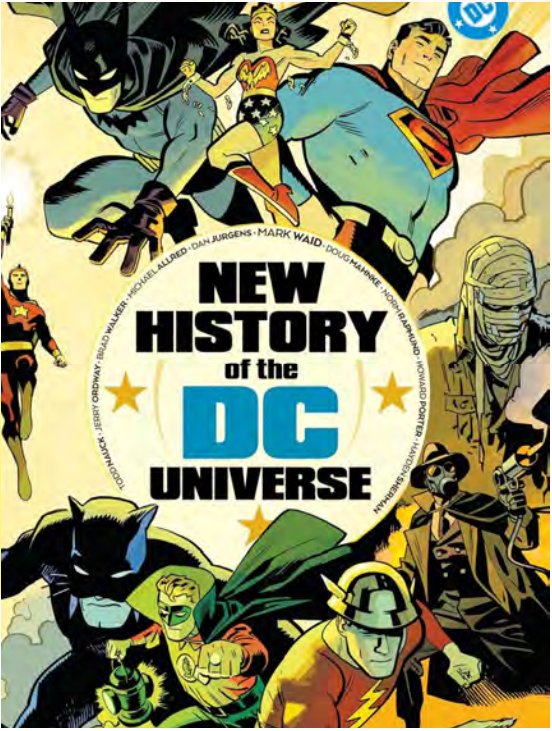
Otto Binder was one of, if not the, most prolific writer in comics, best known for his work on Superman's most successful competitors, Captain Marvel and his brood of spin-offs. When Binder joined DC, he brought that gift for developing derivatives to the Superman titles. He launched the Jimmy Olsen title, then co-created Supergirl, Krypto and the other Super-animals, the Legion of Superheroes, the Phantom Zone, the Bizarros, Brainiac and the bottle city of Kandor, Jimmy Olsen's signal watch, and the concept of the "Imaginary Tale." Along with Superman's co-creator, the uncredited Jerry Siegel, Binder laid the foundation for the DC Universe.



Another collaboration between Marvel Arts and Abrams Comic-Arts, *The Veracity Trap* is Marvel Comics reimagined in the format of a typical picture book for children. It's still comics—panels + word balloons + sound effects—but printed in the larger size of kiddie books. In this love letter to the Silver Age origins of Mighty Marvel, the original Avengers throw down with Loki and learn some distressing facts about their place in the universe. Playing themselves in this metafictional romp, Chip Kidd & Michael Cho have a ball recreating the initial rush of Lee & Kirby's groundbreaking comics. Heck, I wish all the "real" Marvel books looked like this! Fall into *The Veracity Trap* at Central and Marksbury!

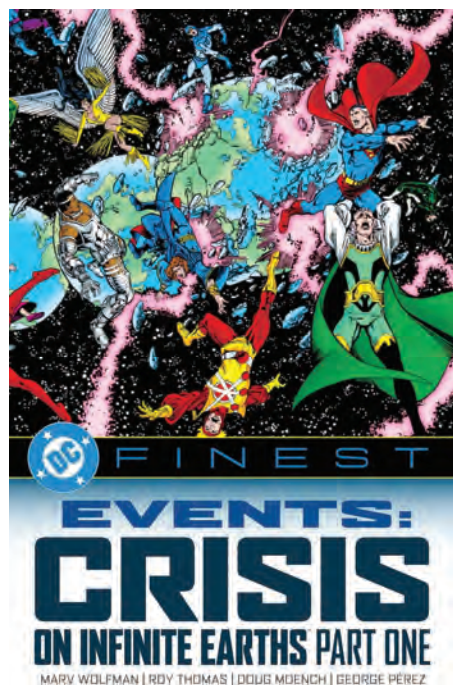


It's the **NEW HISTORY** of the DC UNIVERSE because this isn't the only time the Distinguished Competition has done such. The first one was released back in 1986, around the same time its authors Marv Wolfman & George Perez were wiping that history out in *Crisis in Infinite Earths* (see *Meanwhile*). This take is written by Mark (Kingdom Come) Waid and features a panoply of artists such as Jerry Ordway, Ryan Sook and Michael Allred. From Anthro and Arion to the Justice Society to the Dakota Incident and beyond, the *New History* makes sense of the myriad heroes, villains and crises that defined the DC Universe. And dig those endpapers, eye-popping "Where's Waldo?" riffs full of obscurities like Captain Compass and Dover & Clover!





George Perez drew a few issues reprinted in *The Possession of Franklin Richards*. There's one big panel of the FF in the Fantasticar that's just gorgeous. As noted in last issue's review of *Teen Titans: The Judas Contract*, Perez used imaginative layouts to provide the space in which large number of characters act and emote. That made him the perfect, perhaps the only, artist to draw the monumental DC mini-series *Crisis on Infinite Earths* in 1985. Every page is the superheroic version of a stained glass window in a cathedral. And all that detail was necessary. DC had a host of characters hailing from dozens of universes; that's why the company decided to clean house and simplify its cosmology. It worked...until it didn't. It was easy enough to replace one Flash with another. But the death of Supergirl (in the upcoming V3) left a big hole. DC tried to plug it up



MEANWHILE

The more things change...Though separated by forty-six years, these two compilations of Marvel's *Fantastic Four* are united by storylines centered on H.E.R.B.I.E. The FF's robot assistant was introduced in the 1978 cartoon, replacing the Human Torch in the line-up due to IP issues. He (and it's a "he", not an "it") saves the day in the *Our World Under Doom* (right), ensuring the Four remain Fantastic when they begin losing their powers. But not before we see a universe in which Franklin Richards becomes Galactus and, yeah, that's as ugly as it sounds. Franklin and his potential for greatness and/or destruction are also a major plotline in *The Possession of Franklin Richards*. OG Agatha Harkness takes the Richards Family to her hometown of New Salem, and witchy wackness ensues, with poor little Franklin in the middle. There's also throwdowns with the Frightful Four, Sub-Mariner, the Skrulls, even Asgardians, providing the kind of quality violence that, frankly, the new stuff could use more of. **Bill Sienkiewicz** did the lion's share of the art, hardly recognizable under **Joe Sinnott's** Kirby-fying inks.

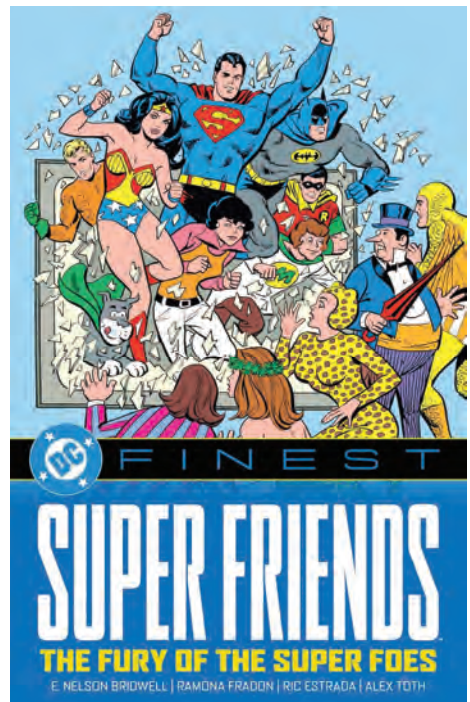


with a fake Supergirl. When that failed, **Peter David** took over. David displayed his gift for making lemonade out of others' lemons in *Body & Soul*. David brought back Supergirl's alter ego Linda Danvers as a damaged Nineties chick and rebuilt the franchise. This was the height of DC's "girlfriend in refrigerator" era, so the stories are rougher and tougher than the playful fables of *The Girl of Steel*. As also noted last issue, superhero comics turned to more adult themes in the 1970s. But DC was unwilling to abandon the kiddies altogether. The fans of tomorrow had to come from somewhere, right? Adapting the popular ABC Saturday morning cartoon series, *Super Friends* was drawn by **Ramona (Metamorpho) Fradon** and written by humorist **E. Nelson Bridwell**. He had edited some of the Superman family titles and sought to revive their frankly juvenile approach in *Super Friends*. 741.5 asked Beaumont's **Shelby Stuart** what she thought about *The Fury of the Super Foes*...I can't lie, the current-day "edge-for-the-sake-of-edge" often found in superhero comics turns me off. So naturally, I devoured *DC Finest: Super Friends*, available at Central, Eastside and Marksbury. I won't say I was born in the wrong generation, but campy humor and bright colors are much more my speed. The

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wholesomeness comes from more than the color palette. The Super Friends and their young wards are always prepared to beat the bad guys, but never take it too far. In one episode, Superman instantly regrets punching a baddie off of a building: "Wouldn't want him to be killed, even if he is a villain!" Heck, even some of the villains have standards. When the Junior Super Foes learn their mentors are plotting murder (which is apparently "pretty far from cool"), they switch sides and help save the day. Superman even promises to vouch for them in court. (The idea of Superman testifying in court is, in itself, hilarious.) As much as I enjoy the ill-timed puns, there was one serious moment that had me tickled. Upon being attacked by a mind-controlled Batman, a startled Green Lantern exclaims, "You're turning lawless vigilante?!" Buddy, you ain't seen nothin' yet!



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