

THE **FOUR COLOR**

# COMIC BOOK HISTORY COMICS



**COMICS FOR ALL**

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# COMIC BOOK HISTORY OF COMICS

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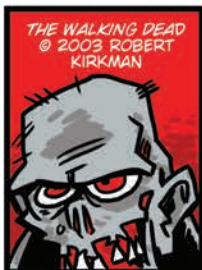
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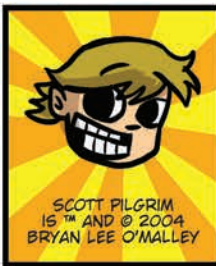
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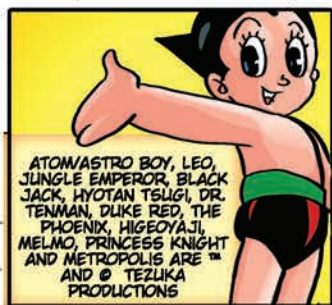
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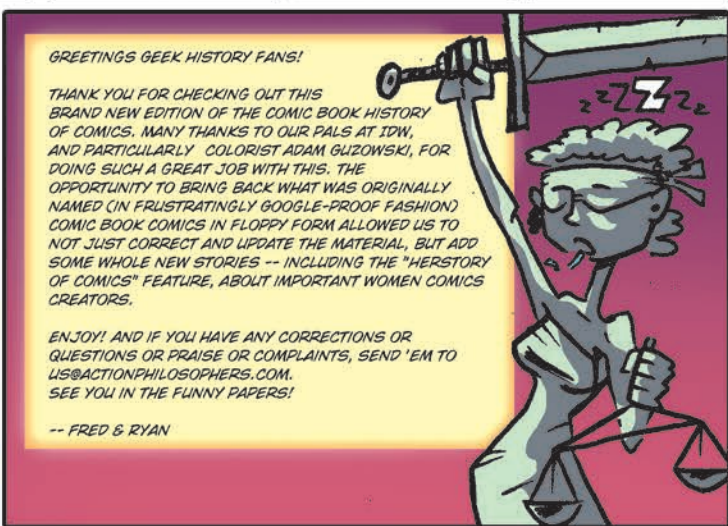
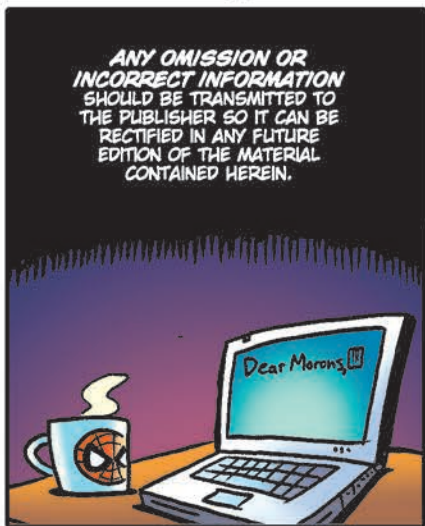
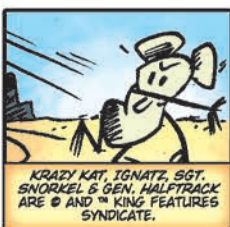


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# IT RHYMES WITH TRAFFIC HOVEL



WILL EISNER IS OFTEN CREDITED WITH FATHERING THE GRAPHIC NOVEL, AND FOR THIS REASON, AMONG HIS MANY OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS TO COMICS, THE AMERICAN INDUSTRY'S HIGHEST AWARD IS NAMED FOR HIM.

MANY BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT THE HONOR OF THE GRAPHIC NOVEL'S CREATION -- INDEED, OF CREATING THE COMIC STRIP ITSELF -- BELONGS MORE RIGHTLY TO SWITZERLAND'S RODOLPHE TÖPFFER (1799-1846).

BAH! AMERICANS-- ALWAYS HOGGING CREDIT FOR EVERYTHING!







Töpffer's father was a professional painter and served as "drawing master" to Empress Joséphine of France, but he took his art much less seriously. As headmaster of a private school and later a professor of literature, Rodolphe doodled his satiric "picture-stories" solely for the amusement of himself and his friends. Töpffer's "novels" -- pages like this one you're reading now, up to six panels with accompanying narrative captions (but no word balloons) -- poked fun at 19th century religion, education, and high society.



But it wouldn't be until his science satire "Le Docteur Festus" reached "Faust" author Johann Wolfgang von Goethe that Töpffer was inspired to publish for a mass audience. The father of modern German literature praised Töpffer as "the most fertile inventor of combinations ... (with) innate, gay and ever-ready talent." Thus emboldened, Töpffer allowed his works to be published across Europe to great success.



His "Histoire de M. Vieux Bois," about a dunderhead's romantic misadventures, was translated into English as "The Adventures of Obadiah Oldbuck" and published in its entirety as a newspaper supplement in New York in 1842 -- making it the first American comic book! strip/graphic novel/what-have-you, beating out the Yellow Kid by more than a half-century.