

# SPARTACUS

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## There is much to discuss.

FIRST and most wonderfully, Rosy and I had our trip to Paris, London and Edinburgh. By and large it was a life-topping experience – if hurried, if crowded, if exhausting, if occasionally painful, if potentially humiliating. I'm writing one of my *Route* reports about those three weeks in April, which will show on eFanzine.com in due course. For now, a few snapshots.



***The Louvre and Mona Lisa.*** Standing before the *Mona Lisa* – the actual, 518-year-old painting, not just a reproduction – has been item #1 on my Bucket List for decades. We would be in Paris, the Louvre would be accessible – but the video I saw of the museum was not promising. The huge gallery in which *La Gioconda* lives was crammed shoulder to shoulder, belly to belly with tourists. You couldn't spend more than a few seconds within ten yards of the painting, which seemed to live up to the common slander, that it's surprisingly small.

I sniffed out a way around the crush of dumb Americans and their cellphones. A tour is offered which takes you to the *Mona Lisa* gallery near the Louvre's closing time. We took it. There weren't many more than 20 people in the room. We could linger within short feet of her smile, effectively for as long as we wished. From that perspective *Mona Lisa* isn't small, by the way. At 2'6" by 1'9", I'd call her normal size for a portrait.

I'd call her more than that. I'd call her the greatest revelation of human existence ever set to poplar wood. (Mib, shown above with Clem Kadiddlehopper, agrees.) I'll say more in the *Route*.

Seeing her was a life's satisfaction. Biggest thrill of the tour, though, came when we were led into a long, long gallery of Greek statuary – and 'way, 'way down at the end stood the unmistakable figure of the *Venus de Milo*.

***Stonehenge.*** Item #2 on my List of Things to See Before I Croak was the mystic cathedral of mystic rocks on Salisbury Plain. I've been fascinated with Stonehenge for decades, with the centuries it took for its construction, with the genius it took for its design – and with its abiding mystery. I even made the holy place *unholy* for a story I wrote a couple of years ago. Of course it had to figure in this journey.

Again, I finagled us a special tour – one which allows you not simply to walk *around* the rocks, but to go *within* the circle. Simply spotting the monument as our bus brought us up the hill brought a rush of joy to our tour group; going in, and dancing about the stones – even in the light rain – was an exaltation.

***Linda and the Thames.*** Living near London for the past 40 years has been good for **Linda Krawecke**, who has created a successful life there, and who joined us for one of our favorite days of the trip – a river ride down the Thames to Greenwich. The guide on the taxi boat was informative and funny, the sights were magnificent, ranging from the inn where Captain Kidd was captured to the place where Daniel Radcliffe went to acting school, and it was joy to the nth to see Linda again. We've known each other since 1975; I comped her for her first convention.

We went as far as Greenwich, walked around the Royal Naval College, stood over the meridian, and of course, talked over old friends and old times.

**Edinburgh ... The *Britannia*.** Our final stop, Edinburgh, was hard on my gut, my feet, and my body temperature – *damn*, it was cold, and everything was *uphill* – both ways! One matter, however, was not cold, but *cool* – the formerly Royal yacht *Britannia*, moored at Blackness Bay just off the Firth of Forth. Touring it was a terrific trip. Ships are cool anyway, and this one, on which the Queen and her krewe sailed the world ... well, you can imagine. The private quarters, surprisingly and gratifyingly, weren't lavish, only about as luxurious as a decent hotel suite. But the Rolls Royce and elegant launch toted aboard – well, keep imagining.

And there were the Towers – Eiffel and Of London – and the Crown Jewels, and the frigid beaches of Normandy, and the cemetery there, and the Ripper tour, and Hampton Court, and “Bucks” (from the outside), and Westminster Abbey, and mobbed, impossible Versailles, and finally, the gorgeous, cloud-dappled Atlantic, hemmed on the west by our own Space Coast. I'm working on *The Iconic Route* now. Where you'll read more about *all* of it.



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SECOND, there is this: shortly before we left, I saw a neurologist about a quaking left hand, was tested for Parkinson's Disease, and came back positive. We caught it early, and the impediment to our trip was minor – I needed help getting in and out of those high-doored British taxis, for instance – and it won't kill me, but obviously, this is a serious condition that will only worsen over time. **I would appreciate hearing from anyone with experience in Parkinson's.** In the meantime, I must adapt to a new reality: I am a 72-year-old man who can no longer do a lot of things I could before. I'll *try* not to be a pain in the ass about it. (I've also been diagnosed with seriously *flat feet*. No wonder I hated walking around Edinburgh's steep cobblestone streets.)

THIRD, I have two issues of *Challenger* on the burner, and I call for assistance with both. Realizing the volume of reading I must do to publish a proper tribute to Theodore Sturgeon, I've abandoned my ambition to do such a zine in 2022. I'm doing a general, probably themeless issue now, and grovel for contributions of articles and art. The Parkinson's diagnosis urges me to focus and act, and I ask all trufans to lend assistance. Loose deadline July 20, my 73<sup>rd</sup>.

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Note: My first page illo notwithstanding, we didn't see any van Goghs on our trip. But Kirk Douglas *did* play him in *Lust for Life* ... and is known for another role, *Spartacus* by name.





Outside my window ... why I don't go swimming in our canal. That ain't no log in the center of the picture.

In the front yard, a new avocado tree – fed by the ashes of a son and a grandson of the Greenhouse ... a living memorial to Merritt Green, Rosy's brother, and Carey Green, her nephew, two fine men lost much too soon and missed greatly. Across the lawn a tree above the cremains of Patty Green and her mother, Helen.

*Vale* **Fred Ward**, whose role in *The Right Stuff* taught a new generation what the real issue was for Gus Grissom and the Mercury 7, the men with brass *cujones* who first took America into outer space. He also played Henry Miller in *Henry & June*, "Blackjack" Bouvier, one of the escapees in *Escape from Alcatraz*, and lots of other roles in lots of other films – including *Tremors*. But it's his gruff, put-upon Gus Grissom, of *Liberty Bell 7* and the *Molly Brown* and alas, *Apollo 1* that SFers should remember. What was and wasn't the issue again, Gus?



And how about **Rich Strike**, an 80-1 shot in the Kentucky Derby, schmoozing and banging his way through the crowd of exhausted colts in front of him to win the race, going away. Here's to all 80-1 shots who come through ... and those who can't, but *try*, damn it!

A pretty **SpaceX launch** on May 14 precedes another on the 18<sup>th</sup> – one of those beautiful dawn launches that spreads a multicolored plume of glowing gas across the sky. But I have begun to look upon the SpaceX rockets with concern – because they're carrying literally *thousands* of Elon Musk's satellites into orbit.

Musk says that his satellites are designed to provide easy internet access around the globe, but hey, I saw *Moonraker*, an inferior James Bond film (except for the terrific intro), and I can't help but note ... *Musk* isn't that dissimilar a name from *Drax*. Hugo Drax was launching scads of satellites with poison aboard, hoping to destroy humanity and replace us with genetically superior beings, or somesuch bullshit. What's Elon Musk *really* up to? And where do I sign up?

# What do A, B, G, H, L and I have in common? They're **LETTERS!**

Lloyd & Yvonne Penney [penneys@bell.net](mailto:penneys@bell.net)

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Vladimir Putin has always been a dangerous man to watch, hidden behind his bland visage. His government has been pestering Ukraine for the past 8 years, but now, I think something snapped upstairs, and now, the attacks have been steady and increasing in force, and a formal declaration of war may be coming in a day or so. Putin is using a Trump card, an avalanche of misinformation and outright lies. They've also made it illegal to cover any stories outside the government line, and that single line of government BS gives the Russian public no other facts than what the government provides. They are confused and angry, especially with the idea that speaking out will get you disappeared.

Ukraine wants world involvement in this conflict, but most world leaders recognize that should they send soldiers, it's a short step to World War III, and the possibility of nuclear conflict. The shining light in all of this is Volodymyr Zelenskyy. He started as a comedian in Ukraine, in a series called (in English) *Servant of the People*, where an unassuming school teacher actually becomes the President of Ukraine. He turned his fame into a real drive for the presidency, and he won. His fictional role became his real one, and he's gone beyond that to be a paragon of will and bravery in an unthinkable situation. Would our leaders don khakis and flak jackets to defend our borders? Zelenskyy truly is Spartacus, and we should all aspire to be Zelenskyy. Who knows who can come forward to shine like he has? We get a lot of this here, for Etobicoke has a huge Ukrainian and Eastern European population.

Putin has made some real mistakes, but he is far from stupid. He is carefully watching the West to see how it reacts, see if we react in a military fashion. Yes, he threatens us, but we put in a mountain of sanctions, which is much more than the press is able to report. Those sanctions have made the ruble nearly worthless, and Russia cannot bank outside of its borders. Putin's cronies and family are all suffering financially. It is hardship, but Putin will not stop. What we truly need is one Russian general and a well-aimed bullet; that may be the only solution here. The West is not weak, but there are other ways to combat Putin. Just yesterday, the European Union announced the gradual banning of Russian oil. There's another hard cross to bear. Russia has made itself the ultimate world pariah, and once this is done, I can't see anything here going back to a pre-invasion normal.

The Chinese Worldcon...Rob Sawyer is an old friend, and he has regaled many of us many times about his many trips to Chengdu as a GoH at the various literary conventions held there. I know their hospitality has been something to brag about, and he has said that he was asked to be their Pro GoH after he started plugging that bid. I think the fact that he was supporting a bid against Winnipeg has made him few friends, and may have lost him a few, too. I hope Rob will do the right thing. I recently heard that a slate of North American fans, many

familiar names have been brought on board the Chinese Worldcon committee, so I am thinking that the Worldcon will happen, and happen well. I am afraid, though, that like others, I am thinking that the Chengdu Worldcon will be popular, so that other cities in Asia will keep bidding for it, and keep it for themselves. I'd hope we'd get it back. That may be the problem with a worldwide audience for a Worldcon...there may be a part of the world you don't want to give it to.

Recently, the IOC announced, with Kamila Valieva in mind, a minimum age of 17 for Olympic competitors. I do not blame this young woman for what happened, but I do blame the thuggish coach that bullied her, and others who got her to take performance enhancing drugs. Her career is unfortunately done already, and she's not even out of her teens. Not fair. I suspect her country also forced her to try to go past excelling for love of Mother Russia. National pride can overcome you.

It is good to see Ketanji Brown Jackson on the SCOTUS, but she must have been surprised and horrified about the leak from the court about an impending overturn of *Roe v. Wade*. I guess we shouldn't have been surprised about that, but I think someone is going to lose a career through this leak...they may think it a small price to pay for a woman's freedom to control her own body. Then comes the January 6 investigations...many of us outside your borders are patiently waiting for the investigators to reveal airtight conclusions, and give the Trump crime family and organization a matching set of orange jumpsuits. ...

**Rich Lynch [rw\\_lynch@yahoo.com](mailto:rw_lynch@yahoo.com)**

Just a brief comment this time on a very fine issue of *Spar*. You mention that Vladimir Putin "has dead eyes" and you go on to say that: "I suppose that's a Slavic trait." I don't agree. I've been to Russia and other Slavic countries and I can assure you that Putin's chilling stare-down look has nothing to do with his heritage. I've met lots of Slavic people and none of them had that kind of facial appearance. *[Of course you're right.]* Let's just go with a much more likely scenario: Putin's facial expression is easily explainable if you assume that he is a sociopath and a psychopath. If you're doubtful, just Google "sociopath stare" and "psychopath eyes" and see what you think.

*Remember my story of Joel Durham, the "Mickey D killer" in New Orleans? He had such a look, just sitting in the courtroom, the coldest meanest glare I've ever seen.*

**Gary Brown [garyfbrown@bellsouth.net](mailto:garyfbrown@bellsouth.net)**

I didn't watch the Rittenhouse trial from start to finish and won't quibble with your and Jesse Singal's interpretation of the many facts and non-facts that showed up at the trial. Nor will I give my own opinion on what the state and defense lawyers did in the courtroom. I am, however, concerned with the message(s) sent by the incredible verdict. It only gives rise to gun-toting people wandering the streets (protest or no protest) and determined to serve their own form of justice – killing people who disagreed with them.

I'm sure you're familiar with the Florida (of course) case in which two men had an argument in a movie theater that led to one of them tossing some popcorn on the other. The other guy pulled a pistol he was carrying in a movie theater and killed the other guy. Shot him

dead over some popcorn. He also was allowed to walk free because it was perceived he was being threatened.

What the fuck? Do all of us have to arm up and react with deadly force to each and every public slight? I was in the lottery line of six people at Publix [grocery] a few months ago when a woman tried to step in front of the elderly lady in front of me. The elderly woman told her she was in line, but the pushy woman said she was “in a hurry” and needed to get her tickets now. I piped up and said “To the end of the line lady.” She turned to me and said “Don’t you talk to me like that.” I replied “End of the line.” No curse words. No threats. No overt motions. So, under your interpretation of the world, she could have pulled out a gun and shot me. Killed me. Because she was threatened? Whew!

*Of course no one would feel that the woman was being **reasonably** threatened or had a **reasonable** belief that she was under threat of death or great bodily harm. The law – even Florida’s idiotic “Stand your ground” statute – does not protect anyone who is simply p.o.ed. Besides, **you** had the ground in that situation. **You** had the right. Based on the facts you relate, I would not have acquitted the popcorn killer. He didn’t behave **reasonably**. Notice the word I’ve used thrice? That’s the standard for self-defense.*

**Rich Dengrove, [richd22426@aol.com](mailto:richd22426@aol.com)**

Of course, Sir Thomas More was right: laws are made by men for an imperfect world. They’re sometimes the best we can do.

My opinion of the Rittenhouse case before your analysis here was that the letter of the law said he was defending himself and deserved to be exonerated. A law written by gun nuts. That is what I heard a lawyer say on one of the radio news shows. However, from your account, Rittenhouse’s antagonists that day were actually out to get him and that justified him under common sense as well as law.

I’m wondering if the prosecution purposely failed to make a good case against Rittenhouse. They usually prosecute the rabble who tried to injure Rittenhouse, aren’t they?

In the case of politics, a lot of people see what they want to see. I wouldn’t have expected anything else since, at some point, the left’s view of the world is as distorted as Trump’s. The same is true to a lesser extent for the Ahmaud Arbery case. I gather Travis and Gregory McMichael were out to kill a ‘nigger’ that night, claim to be doing citizen’s justice, and be applauded by their Georgia community. I hear the cops tried to avoid arresting them. However, finally, the pressure of public opinion forced them to. The McMichaels tried to defend themselves in court and got themselves deeper and deeper in doo-doo. On the other hand, it’s harder to know what William ‘Rodney’ Bryan’s role in this was. Was he an upright citizen accidentally associated with two people out to lynch a ‘nigger’? Or was he as much of a Klansman as they are?

Maybe like you said, he deserved a sentence but a lesser one. Maybe not Felony Murder. I gather he did provide the phone videos that convicted the McMichaels. I don’t know how voluntarily he handed them over, though.

Keep on truckin’, Guy, giving us a whiff of what the law, and fairness, are really about.

*Okay. Let’s hear it from the Billy GoAT’s mouth ...*

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**Read this:** The SCOTUS Justice writing it was William O. Douglas, appointed to the Supreme Court by Franklin Roosevelt. He served on the SCOTUS for almost 37 years. This is part of Douglas' concurring decision in *Roe v. Wade*. Those interested can read the entire decision on line. I've deleted the case citations and the paragraphing is mostly mine.

While I join the opinion of the Court, I add a few words. The questions presented ... involve the right of privacy, one aspect of which we considered in *Griswold v. Connecticut*, when we held that various guarantees in the Bill of Rights create zones of privacy.

The Griswold case involved a law forbidding the use of contraceptives. We held that law as applied to married people unconstitutional: "We deal with a right of privacy older than the Bill of Rights - older than our political parties, older than our school system. Marriage is a coming together for better or for worse, hopefully enduring, and intimate to the degree of being sacred." *Id.*, at 486. The District Court in Doe held that Griswold and related cases "establish a Constitutional right to privacy broad enough to encompass the right of a woman to terminate an unwanted pregnancy in its early stages, by obtaining an abortion."

The Ninth Amendment obviously does not create federally enforceable rights. It merely says, "The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people." But a catalogue of these rights includes customary, traditional, and time-honored rights, amenities, privileges, and immunities that come within the sweep of "the Blessings of Liberty" mentioned in the preamble to the Constitution.

Many of them, in my view, come within the meaning of the term "liberty" as used in the Fourteenth Amendment. *First is the autonomous control over the development and expression of one's intellect, interests, tastes, and personality.* These are rights protected by the First Amendment and, in my view, they are absolute, permitting of no exceptions. The Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment is one facet of this constitutional right. The right to remain silent as respects one's own beliefs, *Watkins v. United States*, is protected by the First and the Fifth. The First Amendment grants the privacy of first-class mail, *United States v. Van Leeuwen*. All of these aspects of the right of privacy are rights "retained by the people" in the meaning of the Ninth Amendment.

Second is freedom of choice in *the basic decisions of one's life respecting marriage, divorce, procreation, contraception, and the education and upbringing of children.* These rights, unlike those protected by the



First Amendment, are subject to some control by the police power. Thus, the Fourth Amendment speaks only of "unreasonable searches and seizures" and of "probable cause." These rights are "fundamental," and we have held that in order to support legislative action the statute must be narrowly and precisely drawn and that a "compelling state interest" must be shown in support of the limitation. The liberty to marry a person of one's own choosing, *Loving v. Virginia*; the right of procreation, *Skinner v. Oklahoma*, the liberty to direct the education of one's children, *Pierce v. Society of Sisters*, and the privacy of the marital relation, *Griswold v. Connecticut*, *supra*, are in this category.

Only last Term in *Eisenstadt v. Baird*, another contraceptive case, we expanded the concept of *Griswold* by saying: "It is true that in *Griswold* the right of privacy in question inhered in the marital relationship. Yet the marital couple is not an independent entity with a mind and heart



of its own, but an association of two individuals each with a separate intellectual and emotional makeup. If the right of privacy means anything, it is the right of the individual, married or single, to be free from unwarranted governmental intrusion into matters so fundamentally affecting a person as the decision whether to bear or beget a child."

This right of privacy was called by Mr. Justice Brandeis the right "to be let alone." *Olmstead v. United States* (dissenting opinion). That right includes the privilege of an individual to plan his own affairs, for, "outside areas of plainly harmful conduct, every American is left to shape his own life as he thinks best, do what he pleases, go where he pleases." *Kent v. Dulles*.

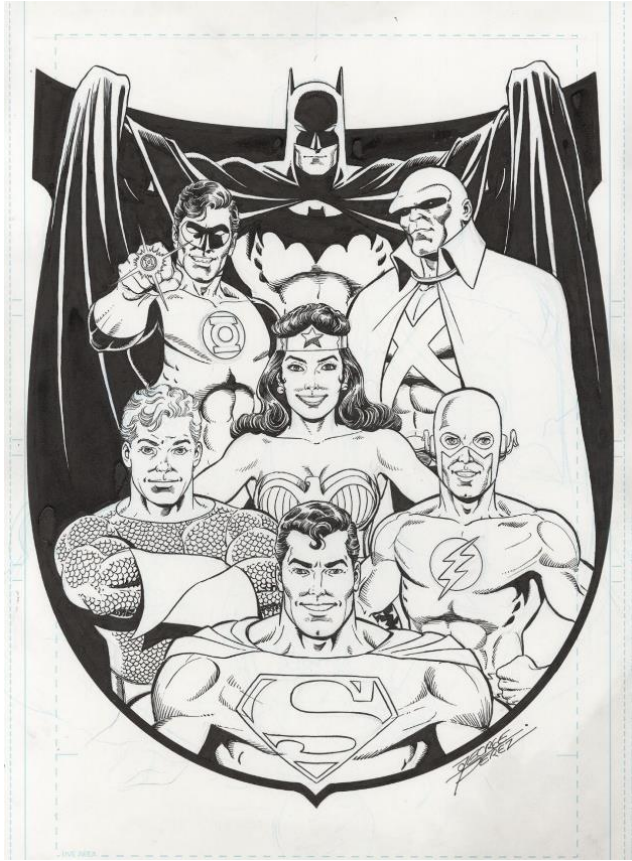
Third is the freedom *to care for one's health and person, freedom from bodily restraint or compulsion, freedom to walk, stroll, or loaf*. These rights, though fundamental, are likewise subject to regulation on a showing of "compelling state interest." We stated in *Papachristou v. City of Jacksonville*, that walking, strolling, and wandering "are historically part of the amenities of life as we have known them." As stated in *Jacobson v. Massachusetts*: "There is, of course, a sphere within which the individual may assert the supremacy of his own will and rightfully dispute the authority of any human government, especially of any free government existing under a written constitution, to interfere with the exercise of that will." In *Union Pacific R. Co. v. Botsford*, the Court said, "The inviolability of the person is as much invaded by a compulsory stripping and exposure as by a blow." In *Terry v. Ohio*, the Court, in speaking of the Fourth Amendment stated, "This inestimable right of personal security belongs as much to the citizen on the streets of our cities as to the homeowner closeted in his study to dispose of his secret affairs." *Katz v. United States*, emphasizes that the Fourth Amendment "protects individual privacy against certain kinds of governmental intrusion." In *Meyer v. Nebraska*, the Court said: "Without doubt, [liberty] denotes not merely freedom from bodily restraint but also the right of the individual to contract, to engage in any of the common occupations of life, to acquire useful knowledge, to marry, establish a home and bring up children, to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience, and generally to enjoy those privileges long recognized at common law as essential to the orderly pursuit of happiness by free men."



The Georgia statute is at war with the clear message of these cases - that a woman is free to make the basic decision whether to bear an unwanted child. Elaborate argument is hardly necessary to demonstrate that childbirth may deprive a woman of her preferred lifestyle and force upon her a radically different and undesired future. For example, rejected applicants under the Georgia statute are required to endure the discomforts of pregnancy; to incur the pain, higher mortality rate, and aftereffects of childbirth; to abandon educational plans; to sustain loss of income; to forgo the satisfactions of careers; to tax further mental and physical health in providing child care; and, in some cases, to bear the lifelong stigma of unwed motherhood, a badge which may haunt, if not deter, later legitimate family relationships.

These are the principles behind *Roe*, staked in the same soil as the fundamental nature of all American liberty. **This idea – the right of privacy -- is what is in ultimate danger if the present Supreme Court overturns *Roe*.**

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comics in the early seventies with the “relevant” issues of *Green Lantern/Green Arrow*, which took the medium into contemporary politics, social awareness, and satire that ranged from touching to savage.

Much has been made of Neal’s efforts to gain creative artists credit and rights for their work in the field. He merits this praise, but his art is what survives. And his artwork was great – dramatic, evocative, and most of all, *influential*.

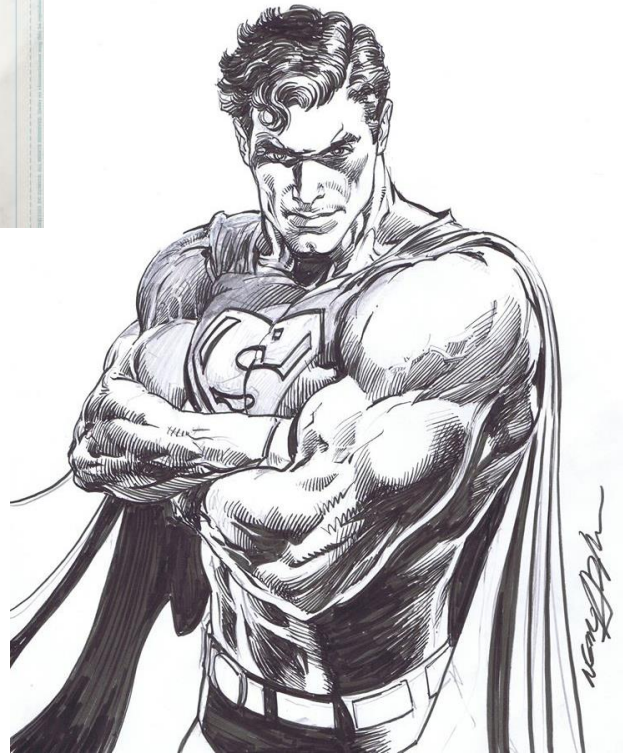
Their art survives; the joy and imagination they inspired survives.

There are a lot of different ways to assume the mantle of Spartacus.

**Neal Adams and George Perez died.**

I didn’t know Perez, just his work. Like Curt Swan and Kurt Schaffenberger and dozens of other comic book artists, he kept ’em flying with grace, professionalism, competence, and vivid style. Such pros kept the industry going for decades and played an estimable role in stoking the imagination and joy of generations of kids.

Neal I did know, slightly. When I worked at DC Comics in 1974 he was *persona non grata*, but he still visited, and I remember gratefully that he knew my letters of comment and called me by name. He and Denny O’Neil, under the watchful eye of my great friend Julie Schwartz, revolutionized



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