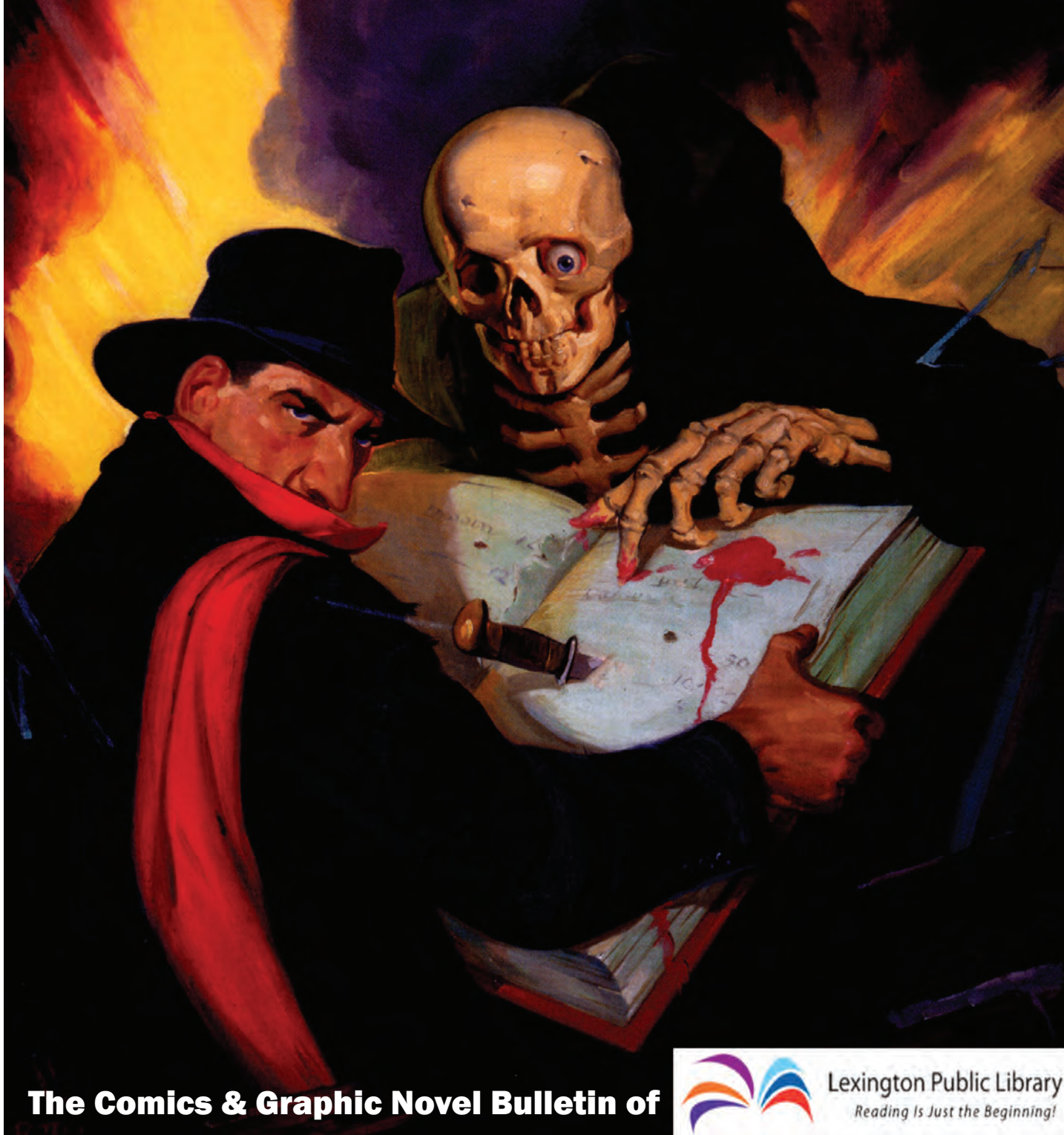


741.5

THRILLING DAYS OF YESTERYEAR

PULP POWER! SATURDAY MATINEE IDOLS!
SEVENTIES SCI-FI! CHARLTON COMICS!

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The Comics & Graphic Novel Bulletin of



Lexington Public Library
Reading Is Just the Beginning!



Heroes for a time of collapse and conflict, The Shadow and his fellow crimebusters set the standard for the legions of paperback titans, funnybook demigods and Saturday morning supermen who would follow. Street & Smith had been publishing since the days of the dime novel and nickel paper; in fact, one of their characters, detective Nick Carter, existed in one form or another from 1886 to 1990! Though creatures of text, the visuals helped sell the millions of monthly and bi-weekly magazines especially the sleek sinister surrealism of George Jerome Rosen (left) and the masculine glamor of Walter Baumhofer (above left). These artists and their successors such as Bob Powell, James Bama (above right) and Michael Kaluta (left) are showcased in a big, beautiful Oversize volume available at Central. From radio ads to paperbacks to comics, you will be awed and amazed by *Pulp Power!*



From the depths of the Depression to the savage Seventies, the mighty heroes of Street & Smith pulp magazines bestrode 20th Century pop culture from radio to comic books!



The serial format — that is, films created as a single story continuing over several chapters shown in weekly segments—is as old as cinema itself. But by the time covered by Christopher Irving, they had become seen as kiddie fare, part of Saturday matinee packages meant to separate children from their dimes and nickels. So it's little surprise that the studios behind the serials—Universal, Columbia, the great Republic—based much of their product on other properties beloved by the small fry. Characters from radio, pulps and comic strips were joined by the stars of the

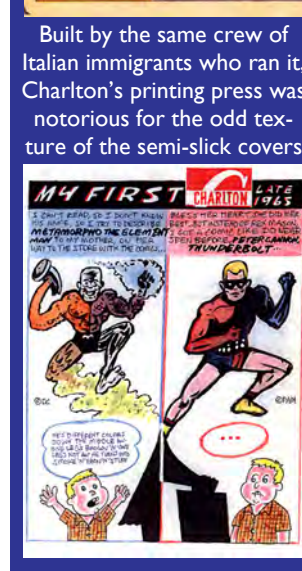
New Big Thing, comic books. From the big boys like Superman, Captain Marvel and Batman to lesser adventurers such as Congo Bill and urban cowboy, the Vigilante (below), funnybook stars slammed and banged across the silver screen. Sometimes the movies got it right—Spy Smasher (right). Sometimes they got it wrong—the shieldless Captain America (beneath). Gorgeously illustrated with a wealth of pin-ups, posters and lobby cards (below left), *Cliffhanger!* is a loving look at the *Cinematic Superheroes of the Serials: 1941-1952* (TwoMorrows), available at Central.



The perennial also-ran of the post-Code comics biz, CHARLTON COMICS provided casual comics readers with cheap thrills in war, westerns, sci-fi, mystery, romance, even race cars!



The original owners became partners while sharing a jail cell. So it's not surprising there was always something shifty about Charlton Comics. An undercard company that not only survived the post-Code purge but prospered, Charlton purveyed bargain basement aesthetics while supplying genre fans their kicks. Charlton had no pretensions toward art. But there were moments of true creativity, thanks to determined creators like Joe Gill, Steve Ditko, Pete Morisi, Tom Sutton and the young John Byrne. A typically in-depth history from TwoMorrows, *The Charlton Companion* is a fascinating look at one of the more unique publishers in America.

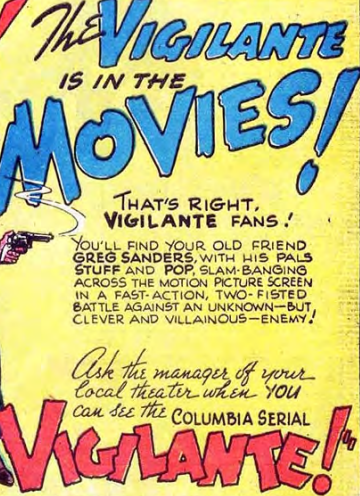


Worlds Beyond Time
Sci-Fi Art of the 1970s

After the New Wave, before *Star Wars*...relive the weird and wild era of adult science fiction in a beautiful compilation of cover and interior art by creators famous and obscure!



“TO BE CONTINUED!” Those were the words that brought youthful audiences back to movie theaters every week for another taste of thrills and chills as valiant heroes and daring damsels faced down danger and chased down mysteries during the glory days of the SATURDAY SERIALS!



Built by the same crew of Italian immigrants who ran it, Charlton's printing press was notorious for the odd texture of the semi-slick covers

it produced, as experienced by Your youthful Editor in "My First Charlton" (below, *Comics Funnies* #3, May 2014). And the cheap paper did smell bad!

Especially science fiction: Perry Rhodan reprints, pulp revivals, spin-offs of *Star Trek* and *Planet of the Apes*—all competed with the new breed of literary SF and the post-Tolkien wave of heroic fantasy. So 741.5

calls Adam Rowe's overview of *Sci-Fi Art of the 1970s* the "definitive visual history." Speaking as someone who was there, it barely scratches the surface. Books were everywhere back then, from newsstands to convenience stores, supermarkets and mall outlets.

jumped into the Time Tunnel and snagged some goodies Rowe didn't use, including a perfect example (above) of the post-psychedelic modernism that dominated SF covers during the era. Find further *Worlds Beyond Time* now at Beaumont and Central!



741.5 figured readers could use some good old-fashioned smashmouth action comics, in the tradition of Doc Savage and his pulp-pounding peers. And you got 'em...sorta. As discussed in #99, DC's *Power Girl* is a Kryptonian and thus a member of the increasingly extended Superman Family. She's a big, tough, sexy gal. And unfortunately, that's often rubbed certain segments of fandom the wrong way. Especially the sexy part. So every so often, somebody with a bee in their bonnet and a stick up their butt comes along and tries to "fix" Power Girl. That usually entails 1) messing with her already messy origin, 2) changing her powers in a way that always leaves her a less physical character, and 3) redesigning her iconic costume in a desperate attempt to desexualize her. Well, at least they kept the boob window this time. "Listen," says Kara to new partner Omen. "Don't underestimate the ventilation."



MEANWHILE

Omen, BTW, is Liliith, long-ignored junior member of the OG Teen Titans. She's working with Power Girl on using the new abilities granted by the latest !!!BIG DC EVENT!!!, *Lazarus Planet* (available via lexpublib.org.) And Power Girl isn't Karen or Kara, anymore, she's Paige! (Sigh.) Frankly, it's not a bad comic, just unnecessary. In a better world, Power Girl would be in a different book beating ass while wearing her real uniform and creators **Leah Williams**, **Marguerite Sauvage** and **Vasco Goergiev** would be using their prodigious talents to make modern adult romance comics, because, wow, do they draw pretty! As noted, family issues weigh heavily upon *Power Girl Returns*. And family issues come to an ugly head in the latest edition of *The Magic Order* (Image). Book Four of **Mark Millar's** mash-up of Harry Potter and *The Sopranos* finds said Order suffering a coup that leaves the surviving members of the Moonstones out of power and out of luck. Looking snazzy in her dominatrix mask, new leader Lady Albany seduces most of the Order into abandoning the old rules and living high on the hog thanks to the new system of sorcerous shakedowns. But this is a Millarverse series, so



even when the bad guys get away with it, they don't get away with it. As Cordelia, the last of the Moonstones, says, "We're going to give this %\$#@er a happy ending!" See how it all pays off at Central, Northside and Village. Beaumont and Central carry the compilation of **Geoff John's** *Junkyard Joe* (Image). A riff on the "G.I. Robot" trope, *Junkyard Joe* is also about how human beings use creativity to deal with the burdens of memory. *Junkyard Joe* was a popular comic strip, complete with paperback collections, Viewmaster reels, even a video game in the 1980s, that's ended after 47 years of publication. All that time, cartoonist Muddy Davis never told anyone, even his beloved wife, that his creation was inspired by what he'd seen during the waning days of the Vietnam War: the introduction of a robotic super-soldier into combat. Now the past has caught up with Davis as the mechanical man he'd figured was a delusion born of wartime trauma turns up on his doorstep, all too real. Now Joe's mess is Muddy's mess, and it's a bloody mess, indeed, as Joe's other creator comes looking for his killer robot. And when it comes to killer robots, there's few more feared than the Sentinels.



Those mammoth mechs with a mad-on for mutants are the chrome cherry atop a sundae made of suck for Tony Stark, the *Invincible Iron Man*. Having beggared himself trying to buy up all the loose Stark tech threatening the world, Tony finds himself helpless before the new owner of Stark Industries. Unlike previous usurpers, master schemer Feilong is a super-powered being able to go toe-to-toe with Iron Man in the field while stabbing him in the back in court and on Wall Street. *Demon in the Armor* is Iron Man's usual fun mix of politics and punch-em-ups worth reading for that badass cover alone. Another **Mark Millar** book, *Night Club* follows a trio of teenagers after one of them gets bitten by a vampire. He decides not only to share the fun with his pals, but to put on luchador masks and become superheroes. The original vampires don't dig that action, as you'll read in *Night Club*. Get it at [lexpublib.org!](http://lexpublib.org)



Back issues of 741.5 are available at www.lexpublib.org under the **READING SERVICES** tab!