

741.5

DECADES IN THE MAKING
BUSIEK & ANDERSON'S
ASTRO CITY

SETH'S 20 YEAR OPUS *CLYDE FANS*
PLUS...JAMES STURM'S OFF SEASON

JULY 2019 - NO. 31



The Comics & Graphic Novel Bulletin of



Lexington Public Library
Reading Is Just the Beginning!



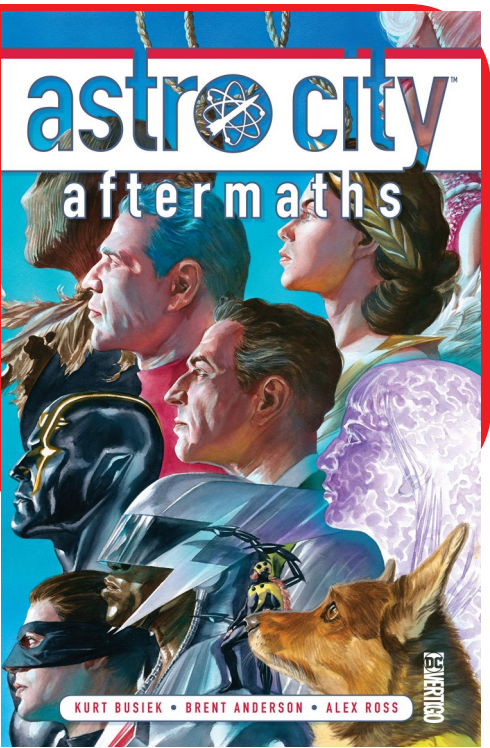
Two brothers, the hustler and the dreamer, confront each other and their own pasts in **CLYDE FANS**. This graphic opus by Canadian cartoonist Seth spans decades and took twenty years to complete. The wait was worth it.

Abe is the hustler, forced to become the boss of the company when the founder, his father, ran off. Simon is the dreamer, whose attempt to please his disgracing sibling ends in a spiritual revelation. Abe confronts life, Simon avoids it, but both end up the same, isolated and bitter. "A Picture-Novel in Five Parts", *Clyde Fans* was serialized in Seth's alt-comic *Palookaville* from issue 10 (April 1997) to 24 (July 2017). Even as Seth worked on other projects, like the "sketchbook"

novel *Great Northern Brotherhood of Canadian Cartoonists* (available at Central along with recent editions of *Palookaville*), he plugged away at the tragicomic tale of the Matchcard brothers. It's fascinating to watch his art change from the thin-line drawing and cinematic story-telling of the early chapters to the robust brushwork and often symbolic imagery of the later. A family drama doubling as a elegy for the independent businessman, *Clyde Fans* is available at Beaumont.

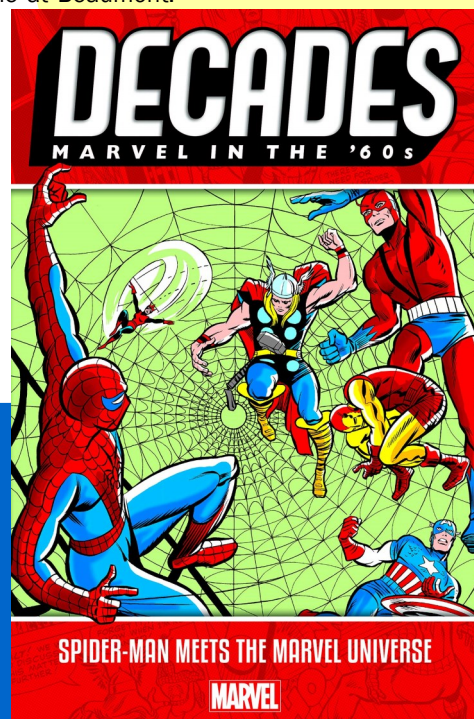
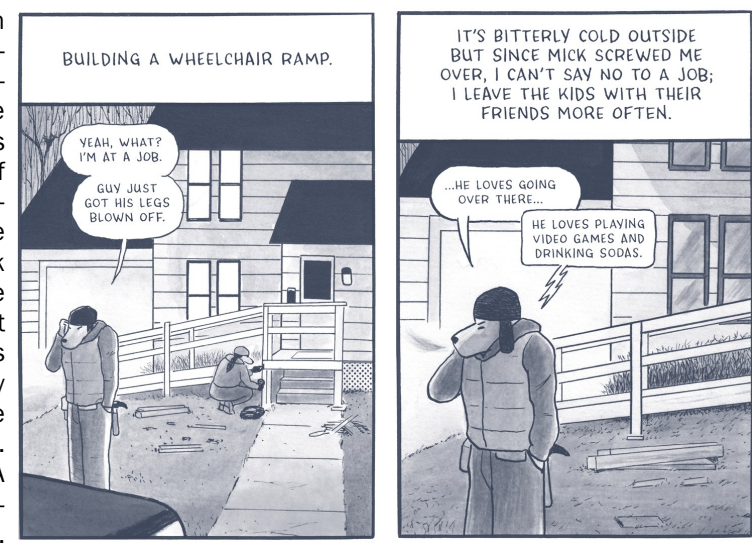


Discerning fans got one less reason to hit the comic shop on Wednesdays when the creators of *Astro City* announced the end of regular issues in favor of graphic novels. The trio of writer **Kurt Busiek**, artist **Brent Anderson** and character designer/cover artist **Alex Ross** have spearheaded the title since its debut in 1995. A superhero comic in which the bystanders are the stars, *Astro City* expanded on the street level viewpoint of Busiek's heralded miniseries *Marvels*. The seventeenth and final collection of *Astro City* the magazine, *Aftermaths* is a fitting farewell to the monthly. A low life thief becomes a superman and a better man when he's merged with his corgi into the canine crimefighter, G-Dog. Resistor is the new viral hero— and a reporter thinks her father is the reason why. A man who lost his soulmate in a cosmic conflict runs group therapy for other citizens traumatized by life in a four-color world. Keeping a fine balance between the fantastic and the naturalistic, this and other *Astro City* books are among the best comics of the 21st century.



Off Season is the latest work from the creator of such award-winning graphic novels as *The Golem's Mighty Swing*. This Drawn & Quarterly release compiles strips originally serialized on the website Slate. It's set in the months just before and after the presidential campaign of 2016. Mark is a working stiff trying his best to deal with work, family and politics. But his boss is a self-centered shmuck who says one thing to Mark's face and posts another on Facebook. His estranged wife can only carp and cavil about their daughter's issues and their son's desire to live like

any other American boy. And politics is just one heartbreak, letdown and rip-off after another. Something as simple as a red hat becomes another splash of gas on the fire burning away the foundations of Mark's life. In the manner of *Maus*, Sturm renders his characters as animals, which softens the emotional intensity of the work while reminding the reader of the base instincts hiding behind all that Midwestern stoicism. Sturm's art is grandly bland, drawn with a homely simplicity but given heft and grace with a masterful use of ink washes. The car crash is especially lovely. A true-to-life *tour de force*, *Off Season* is a moving record of our times.



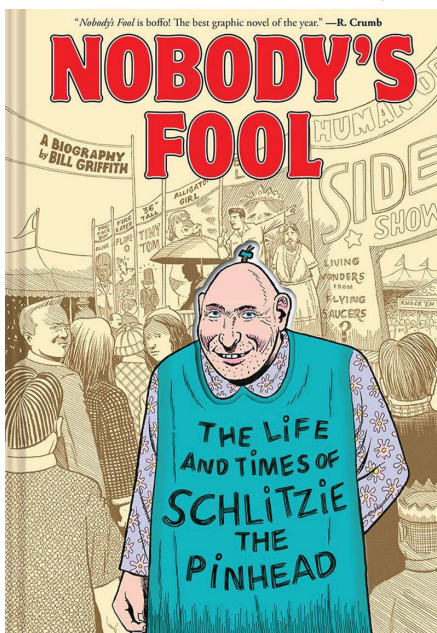
The Marvel Universe has taken the world by storm. The cumulative box office of films based on its characters currently stands at 21.409 billion dollars. Although not the first shared universe in popular culture, it is the most complex and far-reaching. Now the first stirrings of that continuity colossus can be seen in the series of collections entitled *Decades*. From the apocalyptic donnybrook between Golden Age greats Sub-Mariner and the original Torch to the McCarthyite misfire of the 50s Cap to the superhero jamboree of the Sixties, these handy little paperbacks provide the bombastic background to our ongoing Marvel Age. Find them in all our TEEN sections!

A journeyman carpenter living in the Midwest deals with the unraveling of both his marriage and his country as the election of 2016 reveals the widening rifts between city and country, boss and worker, man and woman in James Sturm's **OFF SEASON**.



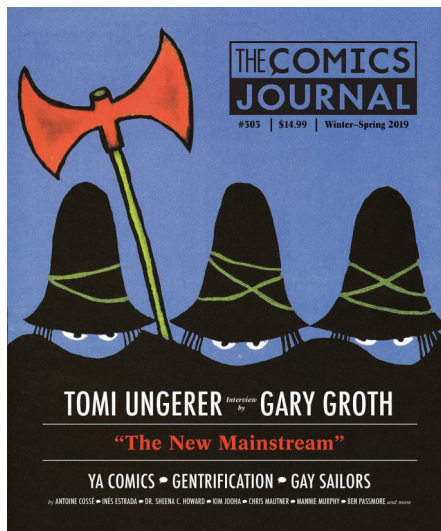


Urban fantasy is goin' to the country in the first collection of the Image series *Middlewest*. Written by **Skottie Young** and drawn by Venezuelan visionary **Jorge Corona**, *Middlewest* follows in the footsteps of *Paper Girls*, *Oblivion Song* and *The Ether* with its mix of the everyday and the exotic. *Middlewest* concerns adolescent Abel, just another kid living in a trailer in just another town. A town where globes full of glowing pink goo hover over every house, where the trains are haunted by crow-skulled cannibals, where the anger of an abusive father transforms into the fury of nature unleashed. Good thing Abel has friends like the talking fox Fox and Jeb the junkyard wizard to watch his back. Look to our TEEN sections for this wild and winsome steam-punk fairy tale. The real world can be pretty freaky, too. Especially if you're one of the freaks. **Bill Griffith**, the creator of Zippy the

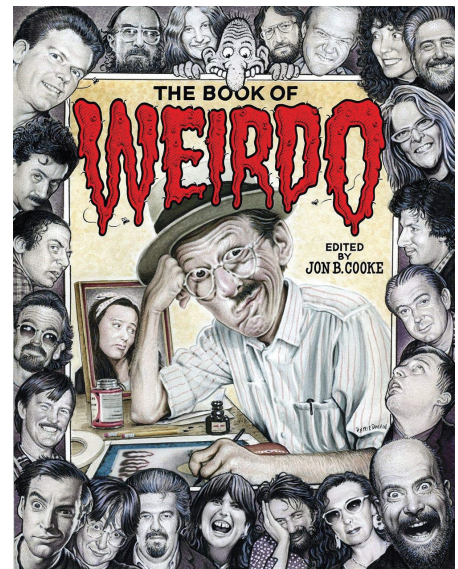


MEANWHILE

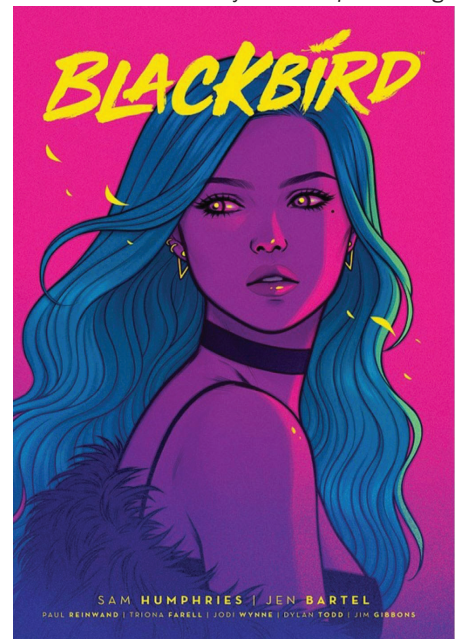
Pinhead, delves into the murky history of the sideshow performer who inspired said alternative icon. *Nobody's Fool* (Abrams Comic Arts) is the graphic biography of Schlitzie the Pinhead. Most famous for his appearance in the cult film *Freaks*, **Schlitzie Surtees** spent his life working midways around the world under a variety of stage names. But he took his surname from the man who became his main exhibitor and adoptive father. That combination of exploitation and affection was common in that shadowy corner of show biz, as revealed by **Griffith's** respectful but clear-eyed script. His art could never be called slick, but it has evolved. **Griffith's** compulsive cross-hatching and love for the lumpiness of plain humanity have mellowed. His pictures are more pleasing to the eye, his story-telling more confident, his layouts less crowded. An accomplished combination of show biz tell-all, social commentary and comics history, *Nobody's Fool* is available at Beaumont and Central. Meanwhile, the magazine that became the standard-bearer for comics as art is back to being a magazine. The



legendary *Comics Journal* is again a periodical after spending the last several years as a yearly book-sized publication. Once the snotty kid with the big mouth, the flagship of the mighty Fantagraphics fleet has matured. The new *Journal* promises to put the spotlight back on the creators, as well as issues behind the scenes of a culture industry that's gone global. And what better way to kick off the New Direction than head honcho **Gary Groth** interviewing an illustrator most comics fans don't know from Adam? The long, lively—and oft licentious—career of **Tomi Ungerer** gets the deep-dive treatment for which the *Journal* is famous. With reborn conviction and a classy, fresh design, the *Comics Journal* is once more a must-read for true aficionados of the Ninth Art. Find issue #303 at Beaumont, Central and Eastside. A contemporary of the *Journal* finally gets the tribute it richly deserves with *The Book of WEIRDO* (Last Gasp). An anthology created and curated by underground godhead **Robert Crumb**, *WEIRDO* meant to change the comics landscape, just like the *Journal*. But **Groth** and his gang wanted to uplift comics. **Crumb** and his mob of oddballs



and street crazies wanted to drag them back into the gutter. That mission continued under **Crumb's** successors, punk wise-ass **Peter Bagge** and R.'s old lady **Aline Kominsky-Crumb**. She sought out female contributors, introducing the likes of **Julie Doucet** and **Carol Tyler** to a gob-smacked public. *The Book of WEIRDO* provides a history accompanied by entries on the cartoonists, wildly talented or simply tormented, who found a home in the mag's perverse pages. Get *The Book of WEIRDO* at Central. Go to any of our locations to find *Blackbird*. This gorgeous Image series is the saga of Nina Rodriguez. She sees the invisible world of magic and monsters behind the glitz and grime of Los Angeles. Nina's got beaucoup powers, but nobody wants to hear it, not her family, not her new rivals in the LA sorcery scene. Then her sister is snatched by a beast from beyond, and Nina starts throwing mystic fists. **Jen Bartel's** smooth, realistic art is given an otherworldly shimmer by the coloring of **Triona Farrell**. Order it and these other fine comic books today at lexpublib.org/



Back issues of 741.5 are available at lexpublib.org under the COLLECTIONS tab!