

741.5

AMERICA'S BEST COMICS

**ALAN MOORE'S
ABCs**

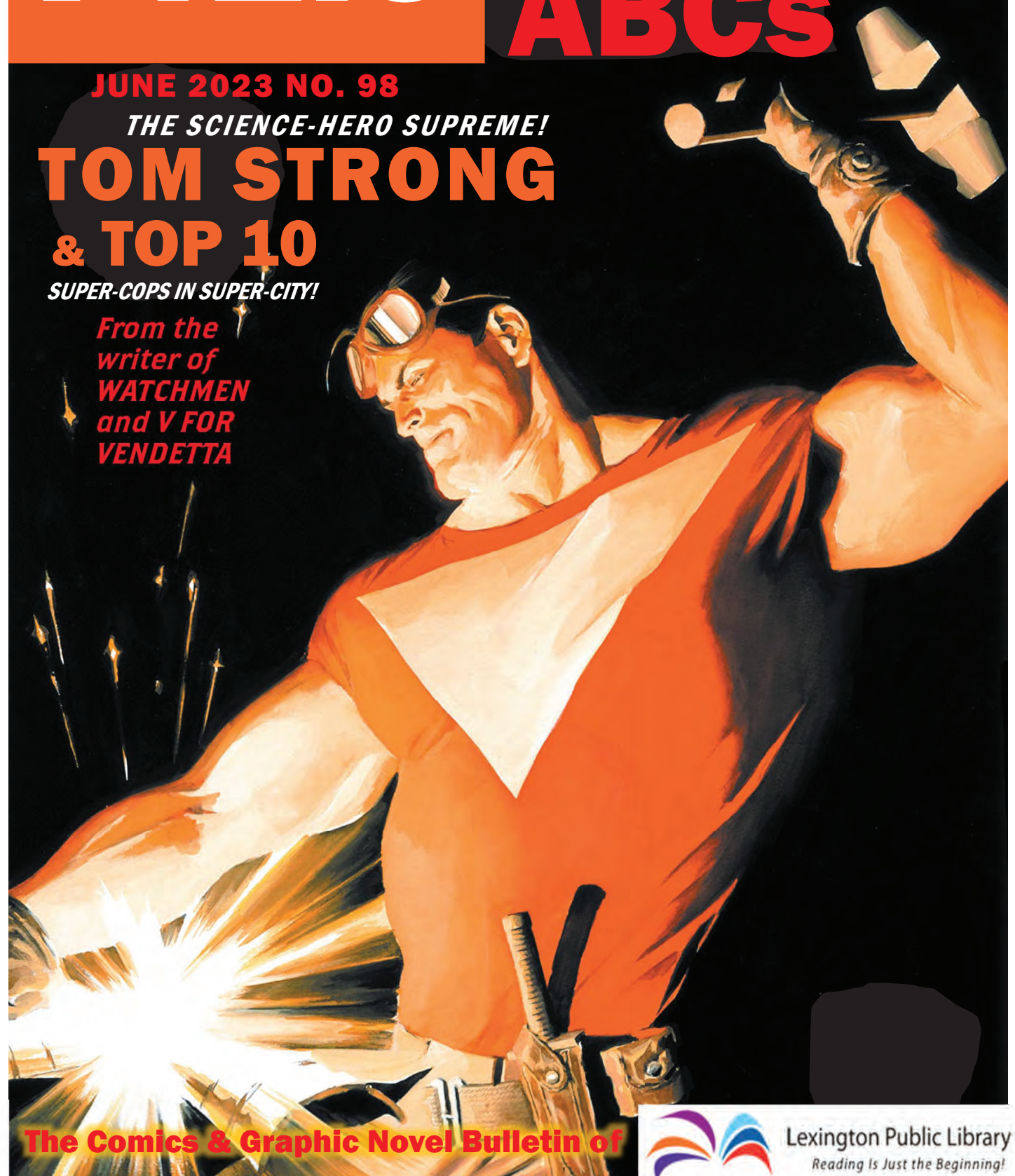
JUNE 2023 NO. 98

THE SCIENCE-HERO SUPREME!

**TOM STRONG
& TOP 10**

SUPER-COPS IN SUPER-CITY!

*From the
writer of
WATCHMEN
and V FOR
VENDETTA*



The Comics & Graphic Novel Bulletin of



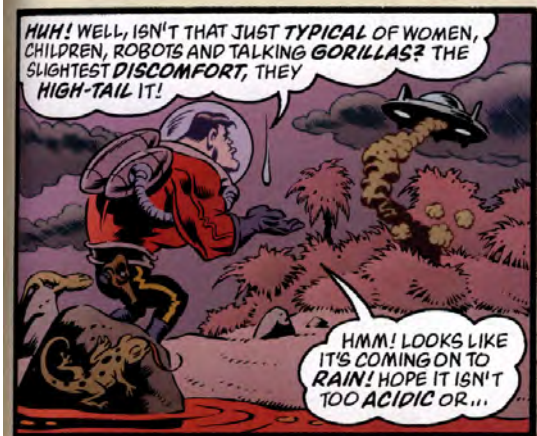
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Reading Is Just the Beginning!



TOM STRONG—THE SCIENCE HERO SUPREME! Raised in a technological nursery on the uncharted isle of Attabar Teru, TOM STRONG came to the high towers of Millenium City during the Depression and now defends that metropolis alongside his wife Dhalua, daughter Tesla, robot valet Pneu-man and assistant King Solomon the talking gorilla!



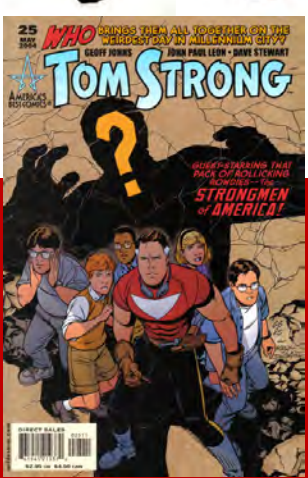
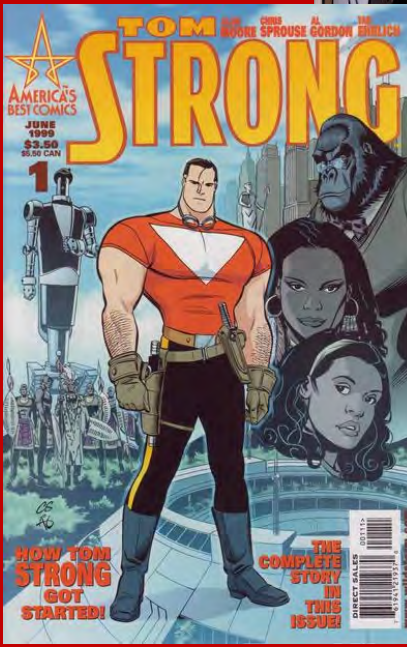
Tom Strong isn't a superhero, but a *science hero*. That's Moore's term for enhanced adventurers, harkening back to pulp magazines and dime novels. A mental and physical marvel, Tom is cast from the same mold as Doc Savage, the Man of Bronze, with a bit of OG Captain Marvel thrown in, as he is aided by his own family.



The other ABC series grew more complex as they went along. But *Tom Strong* stayed true to Moore's initial intent to remember what made funnybooks fun. From outright *MAD*-ness (above by Hilary Barta) to interstellar epics, with rumbles with hot Nazi chicks, lava people and alternate history Aztecs in between, the *Tom Strong Compendium* is a thick hunk of America's Best Comics available at Central!



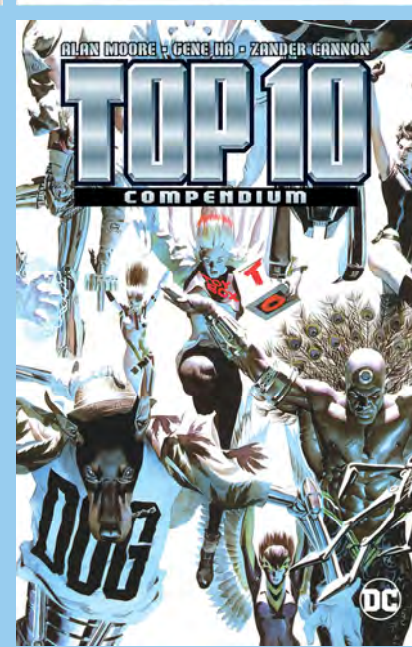
Image left: Warren Strong, Tom Strong, Tesla Strong and Young Tom Strong as drawn by Kyle Baker, who joined main artist Chris Sprouse, Duncan Fegredo, even he-man Russ Heath and many others on *Tom Strong*. Below: parody covers riffing on Silver Age Marvel, Fawcett's *Marvel Family*, Kirby's *Jimmy Olsen* of the 70s, DC's classic SF title *Strange Adventures* and Herge's *Tintin*.



The concept was simple but brilliant: a police procedural set in a city populated by characters from all of fantasy, sci-fi and comic books: *Hill Street Blues* with superheroes. Built to contain the huge population of superdupers spawned by WW2, Neopolis is a city like no other. *Top 10* is the precinct from which super-cops like big, blue common citizenry. The issues common to the Big City—race, sex, class—exist in Neopolis, but in funnybook drag: the Mafia are vampires, robots endure the persecution common to marginalized communities (below top) and even Fairyland is a mess (below bottom). DC's *Top 10 Compendium* includes the two series and the historical *49ers* exquisitely drawn by Gene Ha with two other *Top 10* sagas, now at Central and Village!



Top: the cast of TOP 10, with main characters Toybox in the lower left corner and Smax in the upper right corner. Below: the precinct house, with its mural of the original members of Precinct 10. Above: a typical scene of Neopolis crowded with easter eggs and in-jokes like the carload of stretchy heroes like Plastic Man and Mr. Fantastic literally rubbernecking at an accident.



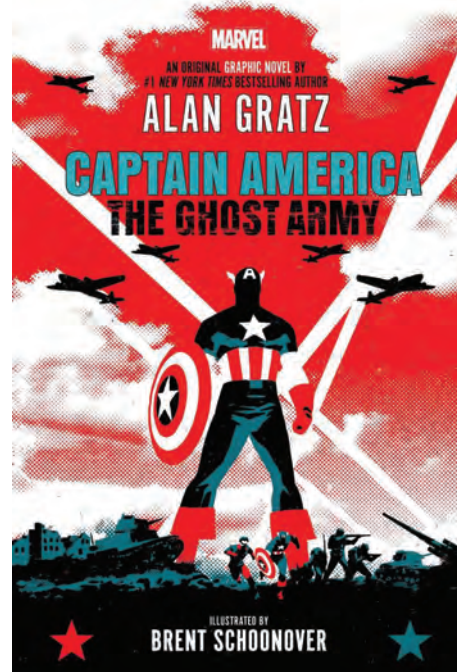


At the same time **Alan Moore** was launching his slate of America's Best Comics, a latecomer to the British Invasion led by **Moore** was using the platform provided by the Wildstorm label to rewrite the rules of superhero comics. **Warren Ellis** was the mind behind both *Planetary* (see 741.5 #41) and *The Authority*. The latter built on the mythology behind Wildstorm's *Stormwatch* series, but bent it sideways. Instead of *Stormwatch*'s militarized force of global super-cops, the Authority were a free-standing, freebooting superteam made up of archetypes: the Engineer, the Doctor, the winged wonder and the urban avatar, the literal mating of night and day in that romantic couple, Apollo and the Midnighter, all led by Jenny Sparks, the Spirit of the 20th Century. **Ellis** and his initial collaborator, the smooth and sleek **Bryan Hitch**, sought to create what they called "decompressed" comics, in which the story and



MEANWHILE

action are given room to stretch out and fill the page with cinematic grandeur. *Book One* begins with the Authority facing down a man who seeks to play God; it ends with the Authority confronting the return of what could be God. A huge influence on the superhero comics of the last twenty years, *The Authority: Book One* (DC) is available at Central. Coming up in the shadow of big names like **Moore** and **Ellis** and big concepts like ABC and *The Authority*, **Matt Kindt** carved out his own niche of psychologically complex and narratively mysterious comics. Though not a head-scratcher like his *Mind Mgmt* or as bizarre as *Sweet Tooth* or *The Ether* (both available at lexpublib.org), *Mister Mammoth* is still a mystery. A detective story, in fact, starring the current World's Greatest Detective. A huge wall of man who refuses to use his awesome physical power to do violence,



Mammoth is hired to follow those following his client. But clues turn into lies turn into more clues, until the reader wonders who is the pursued, and who is the pursuer. Featuring the American debut of French cartoonist **Jean-Denis Pendaux**, *Mister Mammoth* is the first release of Kindt's curated imprint, Flux House, "which features crime, SF, horror and humor stories, all told in startling and untraditional ways." Find it at Beaumont and Eastside. The TEEN section of all LPL locations is home to a new hardback starring the Sentinel of Liberty, Captain America. Set during World War II, *The Ghost Army* is about the actual "Ghost Army", the little-known psyops group that faked out the Nazis with Hollywood effects and vaudeville aplomb, and a fictional ghost army, the spectral German dead roused from their eternal sleep by the young but ambitious Baron Mordo. It's real magic vs. movie magic (including cameos by Marvel horror heroes Simon Garth, Manphibian and the Living Colossus!) in this fun adventure showcasing the bright and lively art of **Brent Schoonover**. Speaking of which, I love love LUV the new costume



design for Triplicate Girl of the Legion of Superheroes! That mob of super-powered youth from 1000 years in the future meet their legendary predecessors, the Justice League, when a big black blot starts throwing both Legion and League up and down the timeline. With kickass cameos by **Kirby** creations OMAC (see 741.5 #76) and Kamandi the Last Boy on Earth (#94), *Justice League vs. the Legion of Super-Heroes* is another fun read carried along by the slick but expressive art of **Scott Godlewski**. Go to Beaumont, Central and Tates Creek. All LPL locations carry *The Blue Flame* (Vault). The Blue Flame and his friends in the Night Brigade fought crime in the seedy streets of Milwaukee until that night when the kid with the AR came to the meet'n'greet. Now a physical and emotional wreck, Sam Brausman must reclaim his life while defending that of Earth in an intense saga both cosmic and quotidian.



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