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Critters

No. 8 Jan., 1987

L E T T E R S

Send to: CRITTERS, 4359 Cornell Road, Agoura, CA 91301

Small change in plans this time around. Due to circumstances beyond anyone's control, Mark Armstrong was unable to finish the "Firecracker Jack" story promised for this issue. But we've come up with a pretty decent substitute: we're re-printing the original "Jack Bunny" story (same character, different name) that appeared in **Charlton Bullseye** five years ago. It was my first exposure to Mark's work, and I think it's a story well worth preserving.

In the course of rummaging through his files looking for that tale, Mark also came up with a number of other stories, including a delightful 10-pager featuring his duck character Chuck, which we'll be using in our Christmas issue, and a short "History of Surfing" piece which should pop up in early 1987. And someday, the muses willing, Mark will finish off that second "Firecracker Jack" story and we'll slam it into print as fast as humanly possible.

I was going to talk a little about Ty Templeton's story in this issue, but why bother? It stands so perfectly well on its own, that would just be redundant. So let me just:

(1) welcome Tom Stazer back to the pages of **Critters**;

(2) mention that next issue will be an all-Hallowe'en issue of sorts, featuring "Gnuff," "Lionheart," and (in a **Critters** premiere) Steve Lafler's outrageous "Dog Boy";

(3) warn you that **Critters #11**, our special Christmas issue, is going to be **big**. Check out our subscription hype this issue for an idea of just how huge it will be;

and (4) mention that the Usagi story in **Doomsday Squad #3** turned out ghastly because of an inept color separator. My apologies to Stan Sakai and colorist Tom Luth—we'll reprint that story someday and make it come out right, guys!

That's all for now. Let's read some letters. —KIM THOMPSON

Dear **Critters**,

I've never written a letter to criticize or comment on a comic book before, but I think that this really needs to be said: **Critters** is one of the best comics on the market today! With stories by people like Stan Sakai, Freddy Milton, and Steven A. Gallacci, what else could it be?

I just picked up **Critters #5** today, and it's probably one of the best so far. The conclusion of the "Gnuff" story was filled with great surprises and action and I hope to see them back very soon! Stan Sakai's "Nilson Groundthumper" was really good. It's amazing how Sakai can fit a good, well-written, quality story into just four pages. And as always, Steven A. Gallacci proves that "funny animals" don't necessarily have to be funny to be good with another chapter of "Birthright." This dramatic story provides an interesting break from the more lighthearted stories like "Gnuff," "Captain Jack," and "Nilson Groundthumper" (not that there's anything wrong with them).

All in all, this is a great book and I hope it stays around for years to come! The only thing wrong with it is that it's not in color, but I'd rather have black-and-white critters than no critters at all! Keep up the good work!

Your devoted fan,
Aaron Huffman
Alexandria, VA

We're working on some color critters at this time, Aaron. I'll keep you posted. And be sure to pick up DOOMSDAY SQUAD #5, which features a spectacular "Captain Jack" story in blazing color.
—KT

Dear **Critters** people,

My congratulations on an excellent first five issues. I have

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 30]

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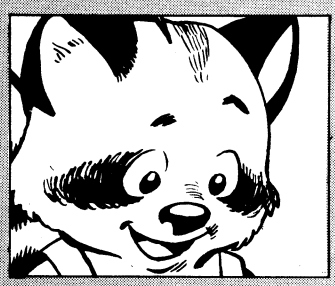
CONTENTS



Page 3
JACK BUNNY
"Rocket Rabbit"
by MARK ARMSTRONG
Jack Bunny (a.k.a. Firecracker Jack) takes a wild ride on a rocketship in this Demand Classic from 1980.



Page 11
LIONHEART in:
"Detour"
by TOM STAZER
A couple hundred miles from nowhere, Lionheart encounters some very strange fellow travelers...



Page 22
SPECIAL FEATURE:
"The Ol' Treasure Map Story"
by TY TEMPLETON
The instigator of STIG'S INFERNO brings us a tribute to one of the greatest comic strips of all time.



Page 32
RODNEY ROADHAWG in:
"Car Tunes"
by MARK ARMSTRONG

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ALEC STEVENS



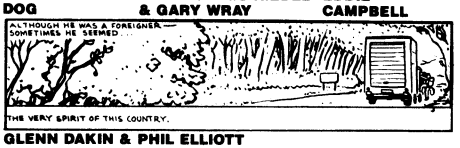
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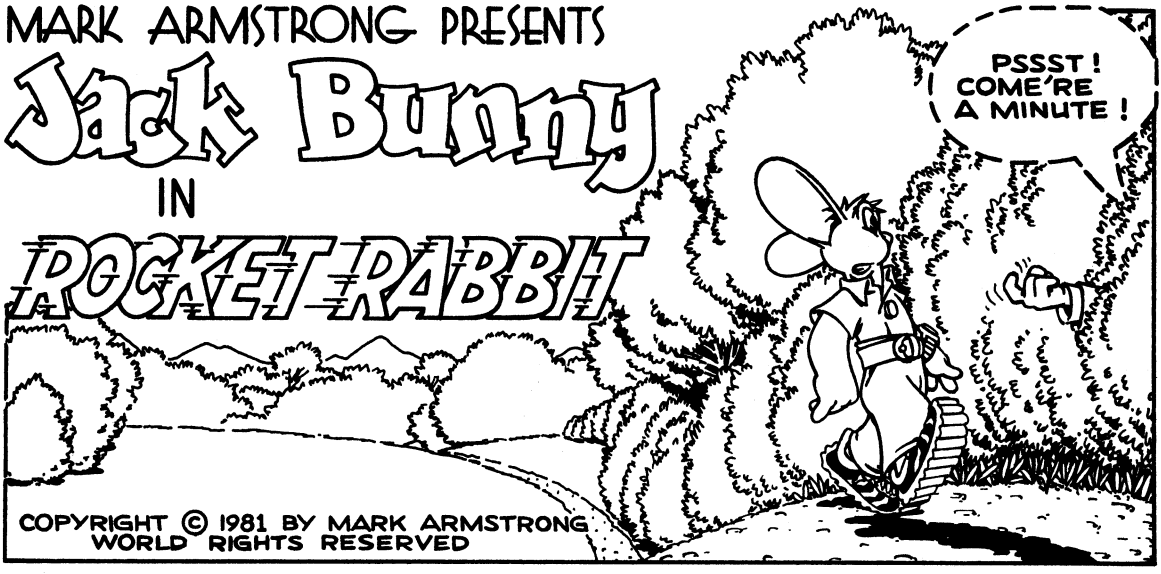
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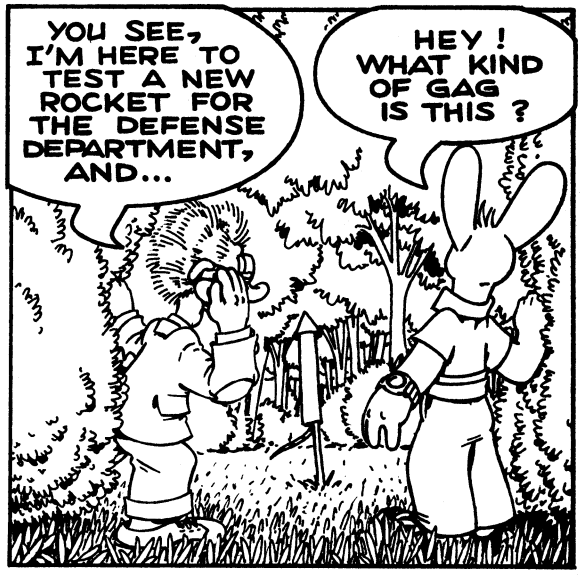
MARK ARMSTRONG PRESENTS

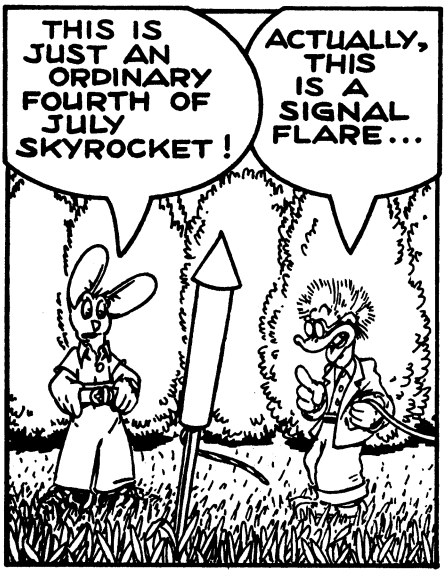
Jack Bunny IN ROCKET RABBIT

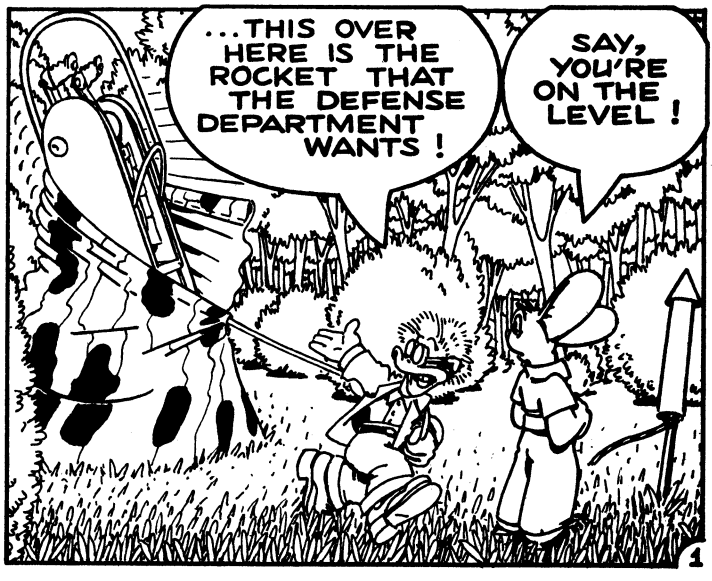


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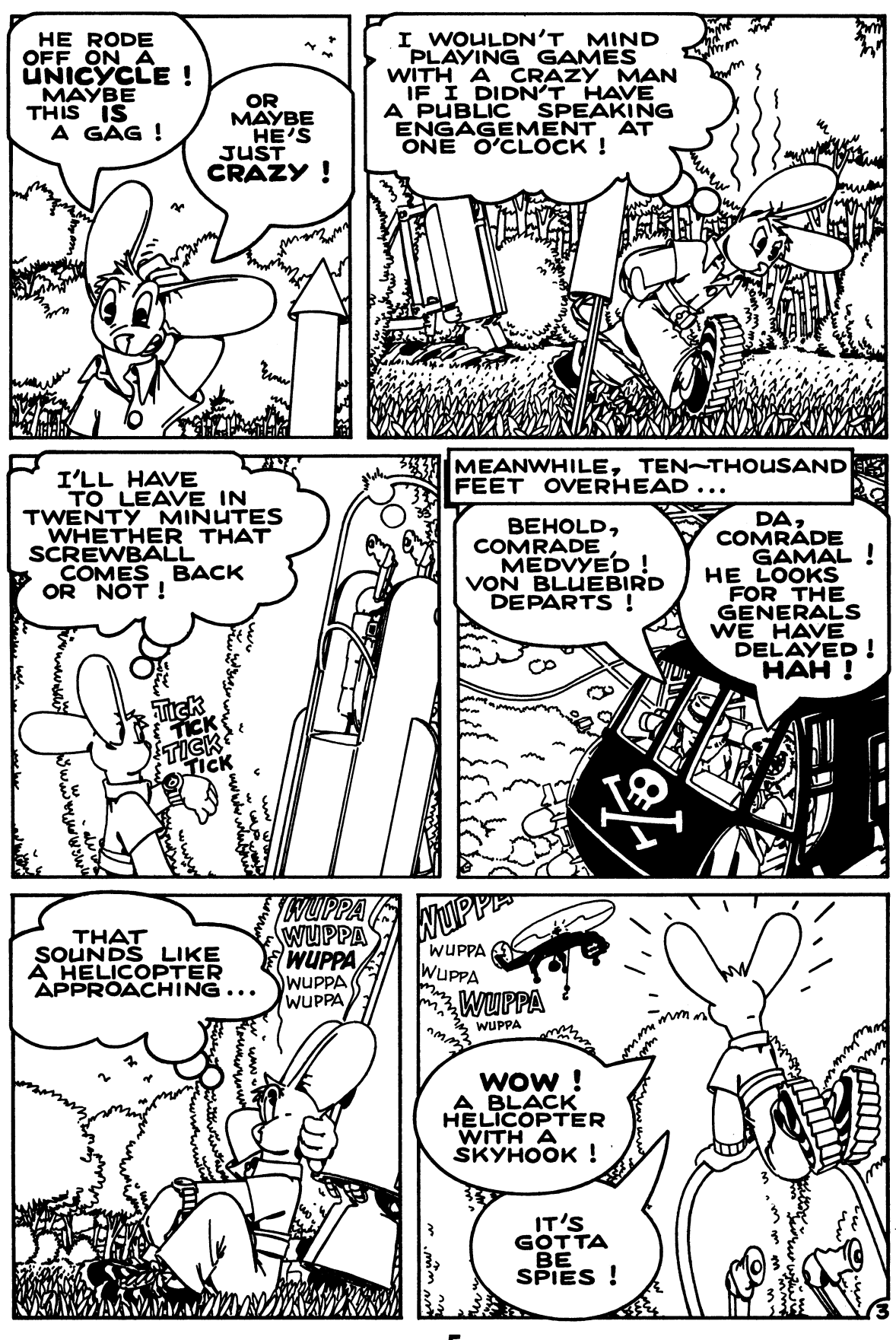




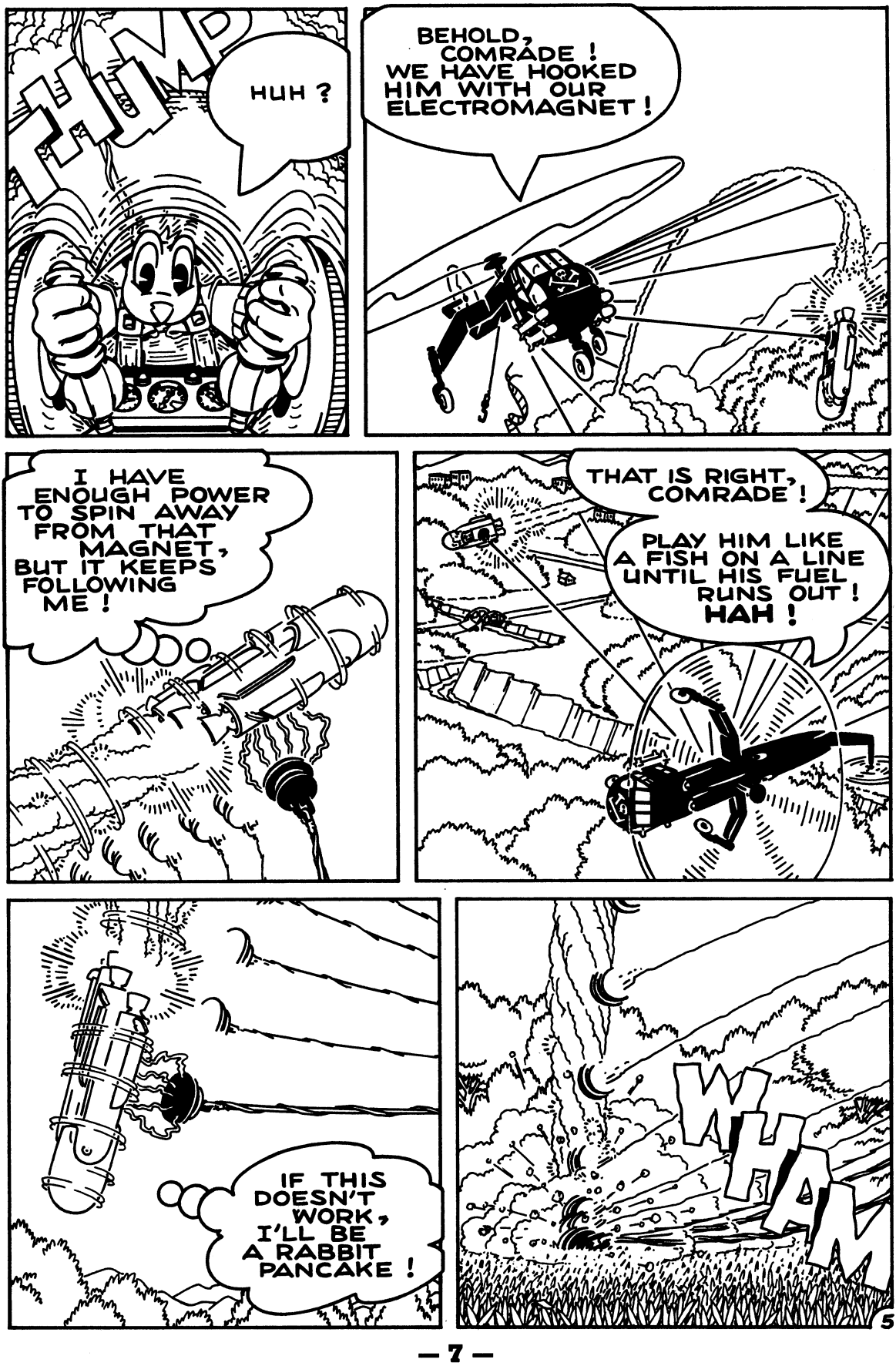


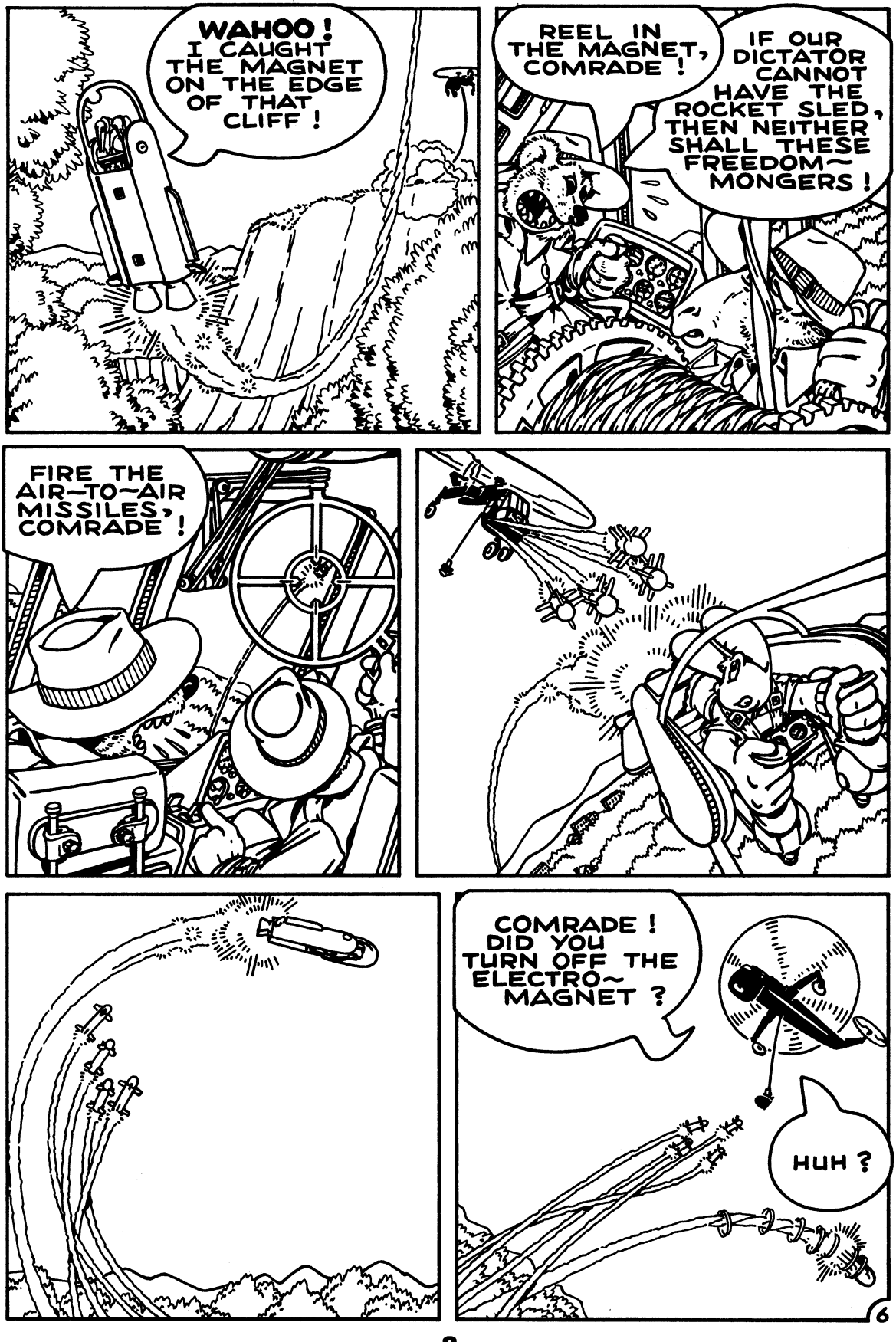
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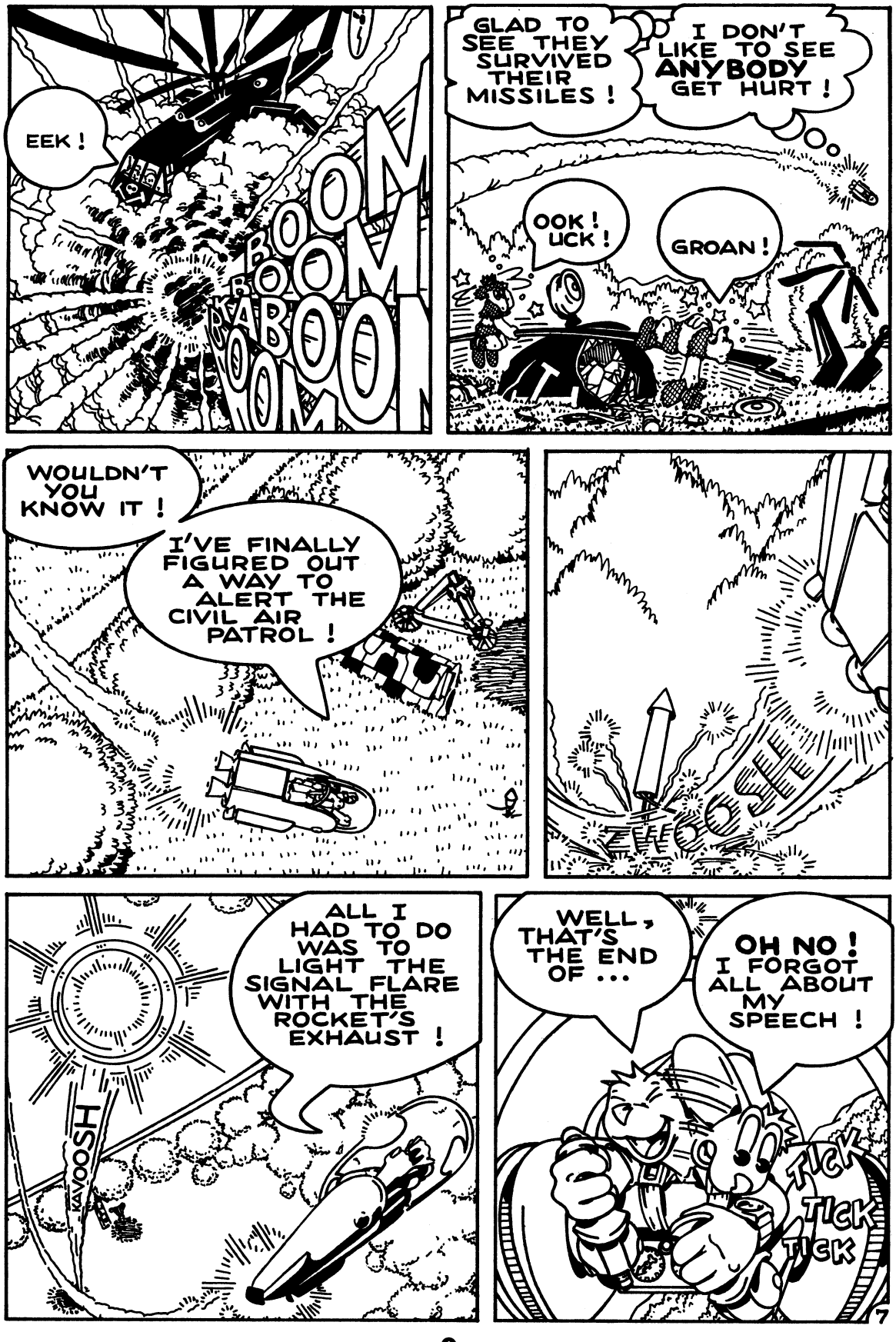

MY NAME'S WERNHER VON BLUEBIRD !
I'M JACK BUNNY !
PLEASED TO MEET YOU !
SAME HERE !
A GROUP OF GENERALS WAS SUPPOSED TO SHOW UP FOR THE TESTING OF THIS ROCKET TWO HOURS AGO !
AND THEY DIDN'T SHOW ?
THEY DIDN'T, AND I'M WORRIED !
FOREIGN SPIES HAVE BEEN AFTER MY EXPERIMENTAL ONE-MAN ROCKET SLED FOR MONTHS !
IS THERE ANYTHING I CAN DO TO HELP OUT ?
YOU CAN GUARD THE ROCKET WHILE I GO PHONE IN !
IN CASE OF TROUBLE, JUST LIGHT THE FLARE !
YOU CAN COUNT ON ME !
THE CIVIL AIR PATROL IS WATCHING FOR THE FLARE !
UNLESS THE SIGNAL FLARE IS LAUNCHED, ANYTHING THAT HAPPENS HERE WILL BE THOUGHT OF AS PART OF THE TEST !
GEE ! SOME ROCKET SLED !
A UNICYCLE ?!?
I'LL BE RIGHT BACK !
2

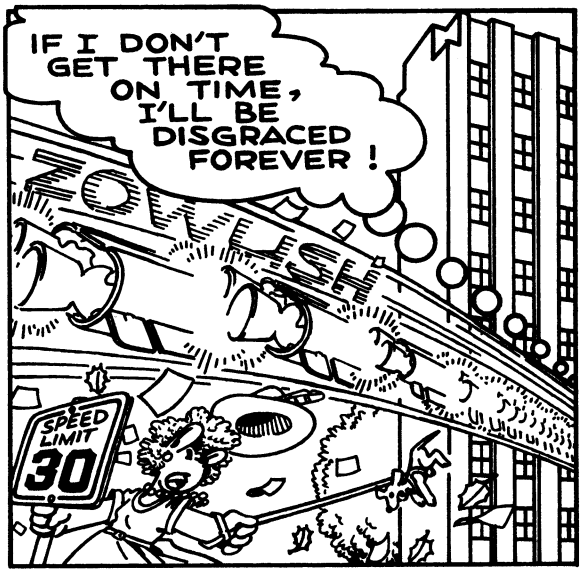

HE RODE OFF ON A UNICYCLE ! MAYBE THIS IS A GAG !
OR MAYBE HE'S JUST CRAZY !
I WOULDN'T MIND PLAYING GAMES WITH A CRAZY MAN IF I DIDN'T HAVE A PUBLIC SPEAKING ENGAGEMENT AT ONE O'CLOCK !
I'LL HAVE TO LEAVE IN TWENTY MINUTES WHETHER THAT SCREWBALL COMES BACK OR NOT !
TICK TICK TICK TICK
MEANWHILE, TEN-THOUSAND FEET OVERHEAD...
BEHOLD, COMRADE, MEDVYED ! VON BLUEBIRD DEPARTS !
DA, COMRADE GAMAL ! HE LOOKS FOR THE GENERALS WE HAVE DELAYED ! HAH !
THAT SOUNDS LIKE A HELICOPTER APPROACHING...
WUPPA WUPPA WUPPA WUPPA WUPPA
WUPPA WUPPA WUPPA WUPPA
WOW ! A BLACK HELICOPTER WITH A SKYHOOK !
IT'S GOTTA BE SPIES !
3

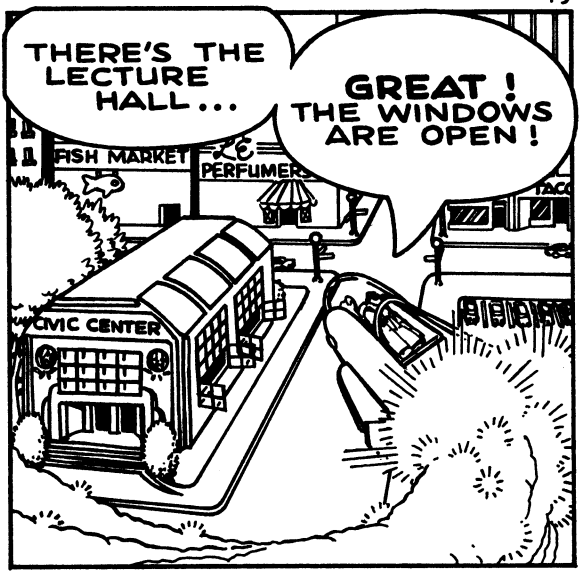

WERNHER'S ON THE LEVEL ALRIGHT !
I'VE GOT TO LIGHT THIS FLARE !
TIP TIPPY TIP
BUT HOW ? I DON'T CARRY MATCHES— I DON'T SMOKE !
TIP TIP TIP TUMP!
IF I DON'T DO SOMETHING, THOSE SPIES WILL GET THE ROCKET SLED...
BUT WHAT CAN I DO ?
WUPPA
IF VON BLUEBIRD LEFT ANY GUARDS BEHIND, YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO ! HEH !
BEHOLD MY WEAPONS ! THE ROCKET IS ALREADY OURS !
IZUMLYÁT !
BEHOLD !
I SURVIVED THE LIFT-OFF !
IF I CAN FIGURE OUT HOW TO WORK THIS THING, I MIGHT SURVIVE THE LANDING !
4

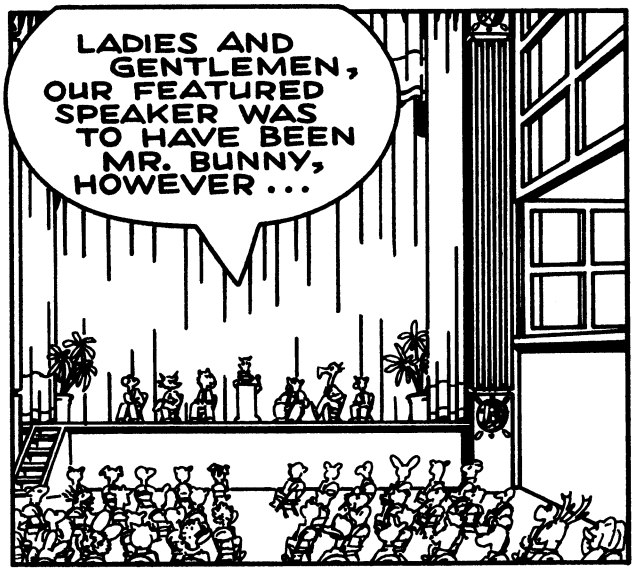

THMP
HUH ?
BEHOLD, COMRADE ! WE HAVE HOOKED HIM WITH OUR ELECTROMAGNET !
I HAVE ENOUGH POWER TO SPIN AWAY FROM THAT MAGNET, BUT IT KEEPS FOLLOWING ME !
THAT IS RIGHT, COMRADE !
PLAY HIM LIKE A FISH ON A LINE UNTIL HIS FUEL RUNS OUT ! HAH !
IF THIS DOESN'T WORK, I'LL BE A RABBIT PANCAKE !
WHAM
5

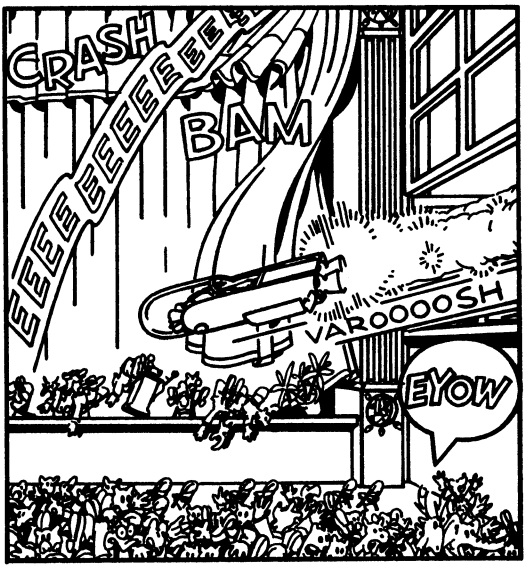

WAHOO! I CAUGHT THE MAGNET ON THE EDGE OF THAT CLIFF!
REEL IN THE MAGNET, COMRADE!
IF OUR DICTATOR CANNOT HAVE THE ROCKET SLED, THEN NEITHER SHALL THESE FREEDOM-MONGERS!
FIRE THE AIR-TO-AIR MISSILES, COMRADE!
COMRADE! DID YOU TURN OFF THE ELECTRO-MAGNET?
HUH?
6


EEK !
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
GLAD TO SEE THEY SURVIVED THEIR MISSILES !
I DON'T LIKE TO SEE ANYBODY GET HURT !
OOK ! UCK !
GROAN !
WOULDN'T YOU KNOW IT !
I'VE FINALLY FIGURED OUT A WAY TO ALERT THE CIVIL AIR PATROL !
WHOOSH
ALL I HAD TO DO WAS TO LIGHT THE SIGNAL FLARE WITH THE ROCKET'S EXHAUST !
KAVOOSH
WELL, THAT'S THE END OF ...
OH NO ! I FORGOT ALL ABOUT MY SPEECH !
TICK TICK TICK
7


IF I DON'T GET THERE ON TIME, I'LL BE DISGRACED FOREVER !
SPEED LIMIT 30


THERE'S THE LECTURE HALL...
GREAT ! THE WINDOWS ARE OPEN !
FISH MARKET
PERFUMES
CIVIC CENTER


LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, OUR FEATURED SPEAKER WAS TO HAVE BEEN MR. BUNNY, HOWEVER ...


CRASH
EEEEEEEEEEE
BAM
VAROOOOSH
EYOW


FELLOW MEMBERS OF THE SAFETY PROMOTION LEAGUE, I PRESENT MR. JACK BUNNY !


FELLOW SAFETY PROMOTERS, THE TITLE OF MY SPEECH IS "SLOW AND EASY FOR SAFER LIVING..."

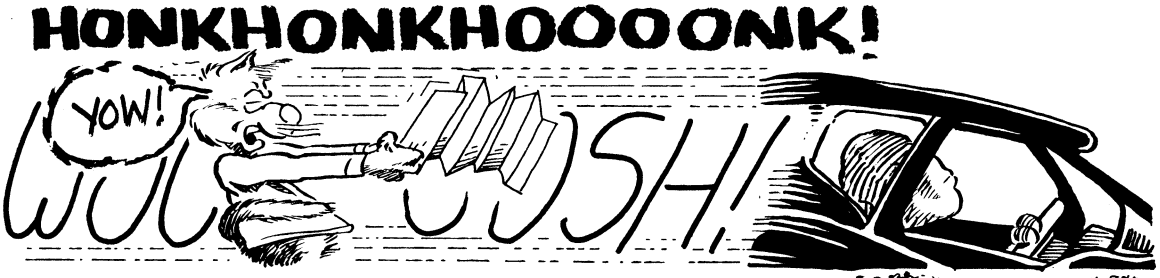

THE END

LIONHEART part one













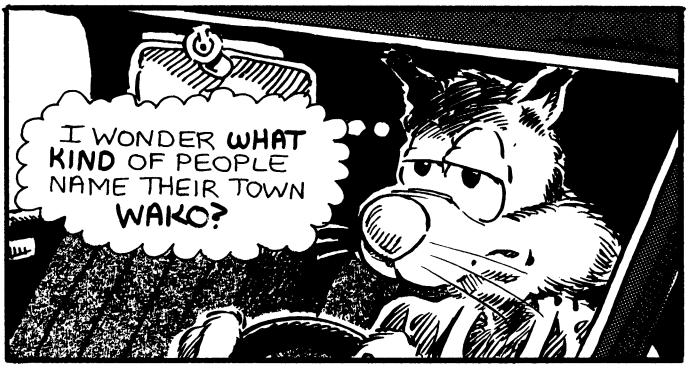


DETOUR

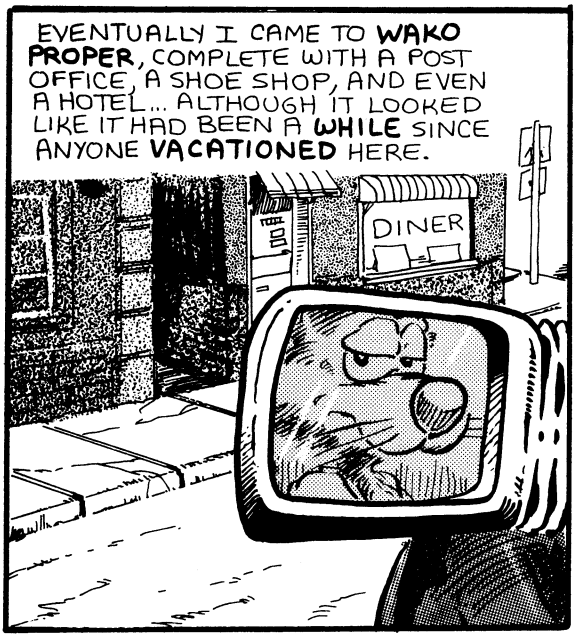
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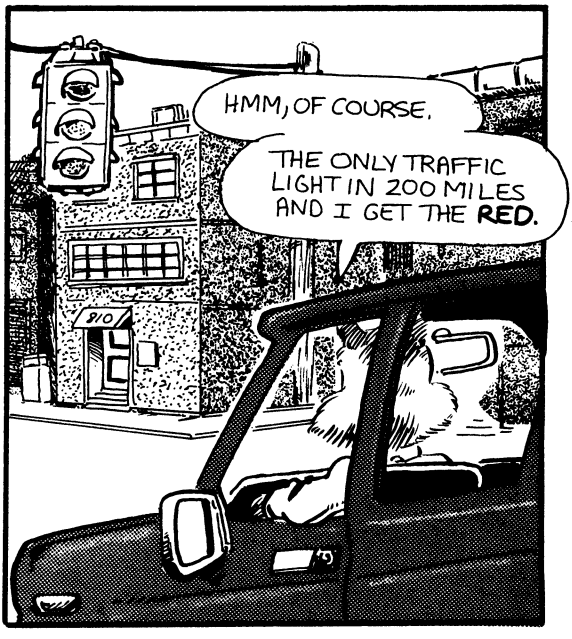

I HURLED A FEW CHOICE EXPLETIVES AT THE OFFENDING VEHICLE AND RETURNED TO MY CAR. I TURNED BACK IN THE DIRECTION I'D JUST COME.

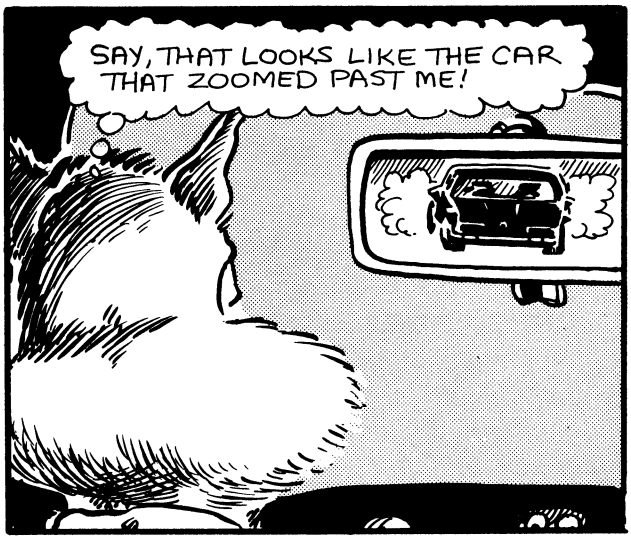

THERE WAS AN EXIT A FEW MILES BACK... I NEEDED TO BUY ANOTHER MAP, OR GET DIRECTIONS TO THE OKTOBERFEST.
3 MILES TO WAKO

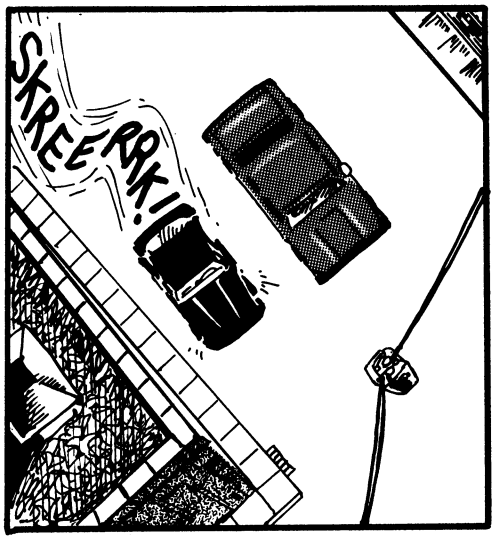

I WONDER WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE NAME THEIR TOWN WAKO?

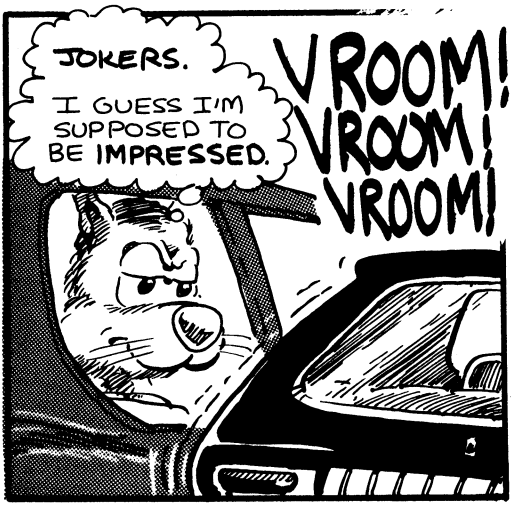

THE DRIVE TO WAKO WAS FAR FROM A SCENIC DELIGHT... THE ROADSIDE WAS DECORATED WITH RUSTING AUTO PARTS AND VACANT HOUSES.
CLAM ETTS BODY WORKS
FOR A MOMENT, I THOUGHT I WAS IN A GHOST TOWN.

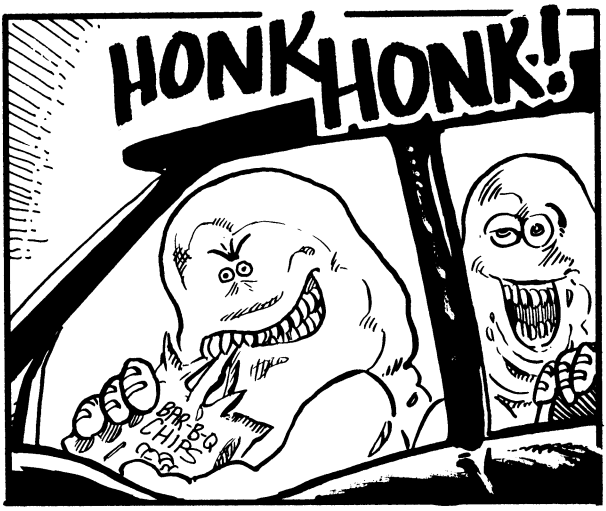

EVENTUALLY I CAME TO WAKO PROPER, COMPLETE WITH A POST OFFICE, A SHOE SHOP, AND EVEN A HOTEL... ALTHOUGH IT LOOKED LIKE IT HAD BEEN A WHILE SINCE ANYONE VACATIONED HERE.
DINER

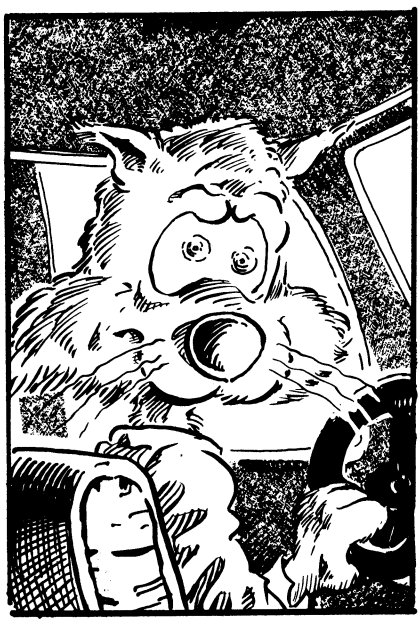

HMM, OF COURSE.
THE ONLY TRAFFIC LIGHT IN 200 MILES AND I GET THE RED.
910

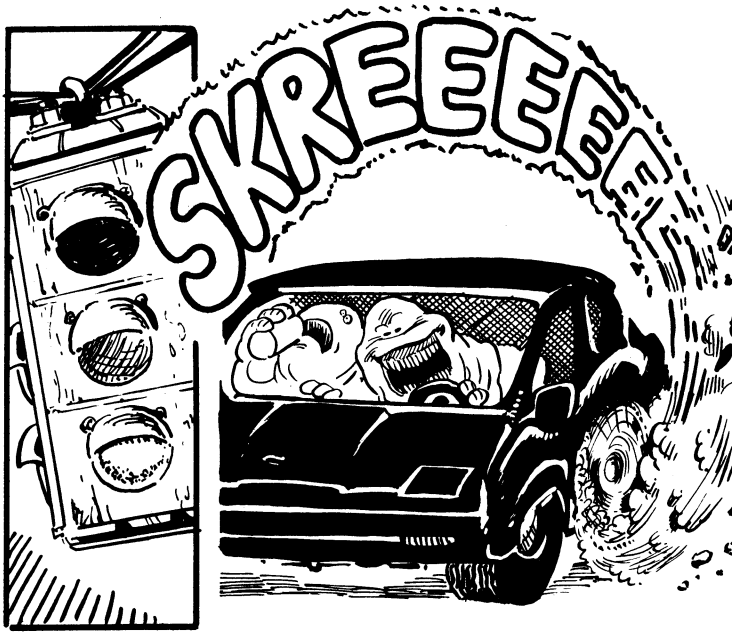

SAY, THAT LOOKS LIKE THE CAR THAT ZOOMED PAST ME!


SKREERRK!!


JOKERS.
I GUESS I'M SUPPOSED TO BE IMPRESSED.
VROOM! VROOM! VROOM!

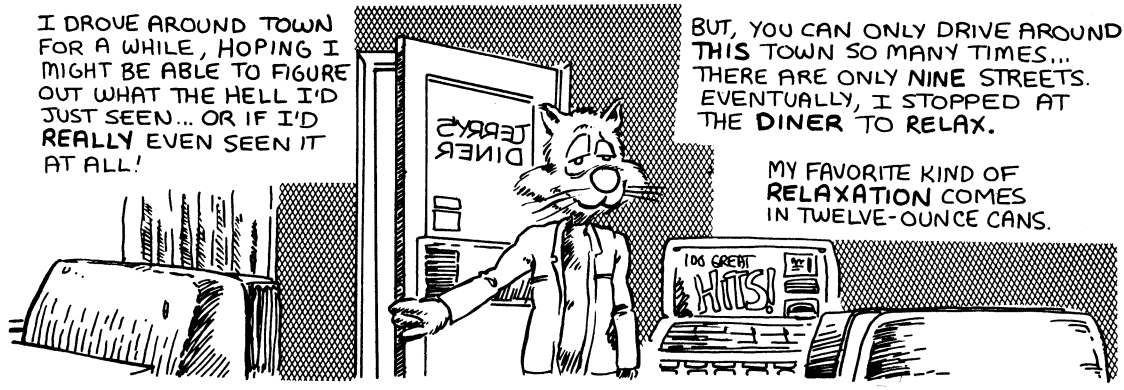

HONK HONK!!
BAR-B-Q CHIPS




SKREEEE!!


SWOOSH!
WHAT IN THE NAME OF GOD?
KLANK! KLANK!
GRIND RRRRR GRRRRR
I'VE GOT TO SEE THAT AGAIN!
SKRREEE
EEE!
EEE
EE-YOW!
WHEE-HAW!
AAAKK!
SKEEERK!


TONK!
TONK! TUNK!
MY GOD! THEY'RE FOR REAL!
HEY! COME BACK, I'M NOT ANGRY!
COME ON, GIVE ME A BREAK, GUYS! WHO ARE YOU? I'VE NEVER SEEN YOUR LIKE BEFORE!
GLOOP!
GLAGLOOP!
GLOOK!
SSPLURGSH!
GLOOP!


I DROVE AROUND TOWN FOR A WHILE, HOPING I MIGHT BE ABLE TO FIGURE OUT WHAT THE HELL I'D JUST SEEN... OR IF I'D REALLY EVEN SEEN IT AT ALL!
TERRY'S DINER
BUT, YOU CAN ONLY DRIVE AROUND THIS TOWN SO MANY TIMES... THERE ARE ONLY NINE STREETS. EVENTUALLY, I STOPPED AT THE DINER TO RELAX.
MY FAVORITE KIND OF RELAXATION COMES IN TWELVE-OUNCE CANS.
100 GREAT HITS!


YESSEH?
YEAH, I NEED A BEER. UH, MAKE THAT TWO.


URGERS
WELL...
SHOULD I OR SHOULDN'T I?
YUM!
59¢


Y'KNOW, I JUST SAW THE DAMNDEST THING...
THAT IS, UH... HAVE YOU EVER SEEN TWO... SORT OF... GREEN... PUFFY... GUYS...




AHEM!
NO, I GUESS YOU WOULDN'T HAVE...
...JUST WONDERING...


YOU'RE A STRANGER TO THESE PARTS, FELLA. YOU, UMM... LEAVING TOWN SOON?
FUNNY YOU SHOULD ASK. SOON AS I GET DIRECTIONS TO NORTH HEDGECLIFF I'LL BE ON MY WAY!
I THINK I'VE GOT A MAP IN BACK... I'LL GO LOOK. BACK INNA JIF.
THEN YOU CAN GET MOVING!
BOY, THEY SURE KNOW HOW TO MAKE STRANGERS FEEL WELCOME AROUND HERE.
LOUSY BEER, TOO.
HMM, A PHONE... I WONDER IF I SHOULD CALL THE OFFICE AND TELL THEM I'M LOST IN WAKO.
HEY...
THAT PHOTOGRAPH ON THE BACK WALL.
IS THAT?...
IT IS!
IT'S THEM! THOSE ARE THE GUYS I SAW, ON THAT PHOTO!
WHAT ARE THOSE GUYS!!











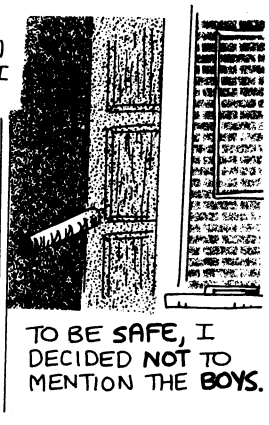
I FELT LIKE I HAD JUST DRIVEN ONTO THE SET OF **THE TWILIGHT ZONE**. THAT BEAVER WAS THE **WORST** LIAR I'D EVER MET, AND I'VE **MET** A **FEW**. I **PROBABLY** SHOULD HAVE GOTTEN **OUT** OF WAKO, AS HE IMPLIED, BUT THE SUN HAD BEGUN TO SET AND I WAS **NOT** PARTICULARLY **KEEN** TO DRIVE AROUND **THIS** AREA AFTER **DARK**... EVEN **WITH** THE 1962 EDITION OF "MONROE'S **HIGHWAY HO!** TRAVEL MAP GUIDE"!



IT WAS A **NICE** RATIONALIZATION, BUT I **KNEW** THE **REAL** REASON I DECIDED TO STAY WAS THE HOPE THAT I MIGHT FIND MORE **EVIDENCE** OF MY TWO IMPOSSIBLE FRIENDS.

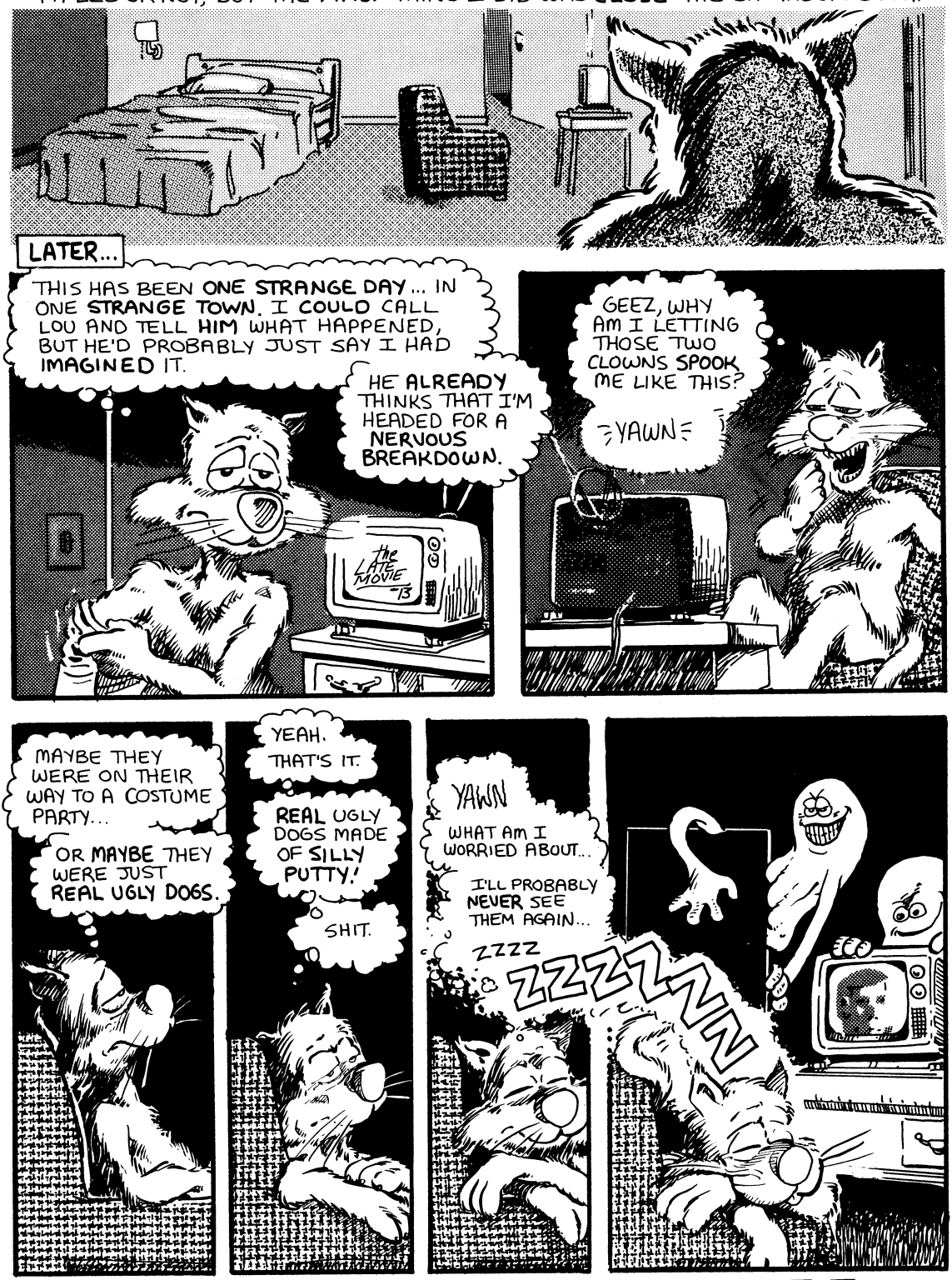
I HOPED I'D GET A **WARMER** RECEPTION AT THE HOTEL THAN I DID AT THE DINER.





TO BE **SAFE**, I DECIDED **NOT** TO MENTION THE **BOYS**.


THET'LL BE TWENNY DOLLERS. YER ROOM'S NUMBER SIX, UPSTAIRS.
HOPE YEH SLEEP GOOD.
THANKS.
OH, UH... SAY.
YUR NOT SCARED OF SPIDERS, ARE YEH?
SPIDERS?
HIGHWAY
BIG, HAIRY SPIDERS.
WITH RED STRIPES. THEY BOTHER YEH?
I DON'T LIKE THE WAY THIS CONVERSATION IS GOING. ... ARE YOU TRYING TO TELL ME THAT MY ROOM HAS SPIDERS?
OH, GOSH, NO, HAHAHAHAHA! NO SPIDERS IN OUR ROOMS! NO, SIR!
THEY GET IN THE TOILETS SOMETIMES, THOUGH... BUT DON'T WORRY, THE COLD WATER MAKES THEM SLUGGISH.
THAT'S OKAY. I NEVER GO TO THE BATHROOM ANYWAY.



NEXT: A HAUNTING!

PARTICLE Dreams

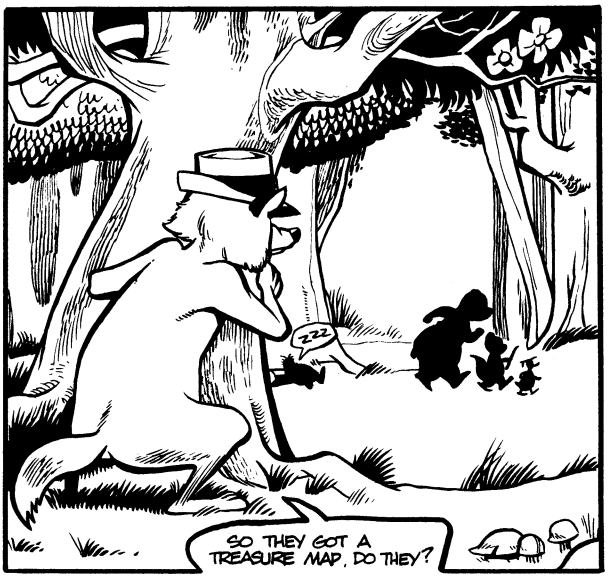


Some things are dangerous, y'know?

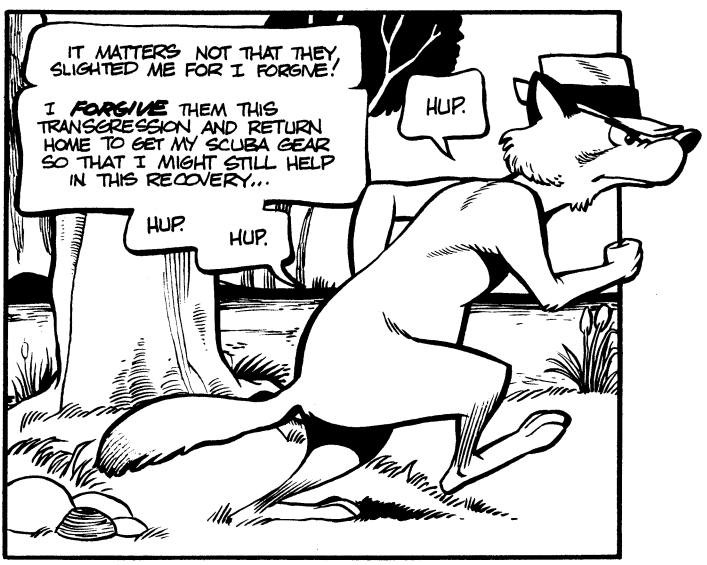

THE OL'
TREASURE
MAP STORY
RICHES!!
FAME!!
FORTUNE!! PINCH ME...I'M DREAMING!!
WELL, YER MAKING ENOUGH NOISE TO ENSURE NO ONE ELSE COULD BE...
WHAT D'YA GOT THERE, STEEPLES?
ZZZZZ
© 1986 TY TEMPLETON
A TREASURE MAP..
HMPF? TREASURE MAP?
YEP.
PHOO. IS THAT ALL?
HAH! BUT THIS IS NO ORDINARY TREASURE MAP. I WAS FLIPPING THROUGH A COPY OF EMMA ROTWEILER'S GUIDE TO JAMS AND JELLIES, VOLUME III THAT MY COUSIN LEFT HERE LAST MONTH...
IT FELL OUT FROM BETWEEN THE PAGES OF THE PRESERVES CHAPTER.
AN AUTHENTIC MAP!

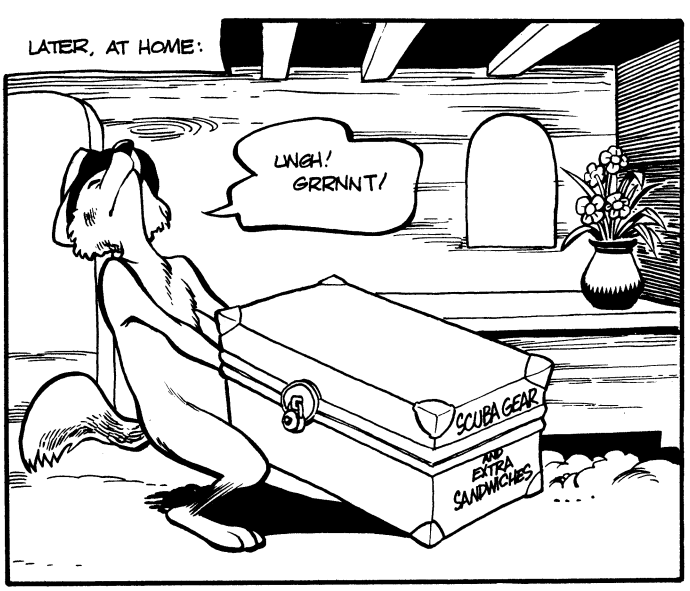

THAT SOUNDS PRETTY CONVINCING, OL' STEEP. YOU'D BEST LET A SCHOLARLY FRIEND EXAMINE IT FOR YOU.
COULD WE GET BACK TO THE BIT ABOUT THE PRESERVES?
THERE'S HARDLY A MOMENT TO LOSE! QUICKLY, GATHER UP ALL THE EXCAVATING TOOLS YOU CAN FIND. WE LEAVE IMMEDIATELY ON A SECRET EXPEDITION.
TO WHERE?
THERE'S NOTHING ON THIS MAP BUT A DOTTED LINE AND AN "X" THAT COULD EASILY BE A JAM STAIN.
AWFULLY FEATURELESS, ISN'T IT?
QUITE WITHOUT THE SORT OF THINGS ONE GENERALLY FINDS ON TREASURE MAPS... NO DIABLO CANYONS OR TREES OR ANYTHING.
NICE LOOKING "X" THOUGH. I'M HAVING NO TROUBLE READING IT.
HEY! A LAKE!!
NOPE. NO LAKES NEITHER.
NO! NO! DON'T YOU SEE? A LAKE WOULDN'T HAVE ANY FEATURES, NO DIABLO CANYONS, NO TREES...
THIS IS A DRAWING OF THE MIDDLE OF A LARGE BODY OF WATER.
I MEAN, OTHER THAN WAVES, IT'S PRETTY DARN FEATURELESS OUT IN A LAKE.
LOOKS LIKE A SUNKEN TREASURE!


SURE LOOKS LIKE A LAKE...
A MASTERPIECE OF DELINEATION ...TO THE LAKE!

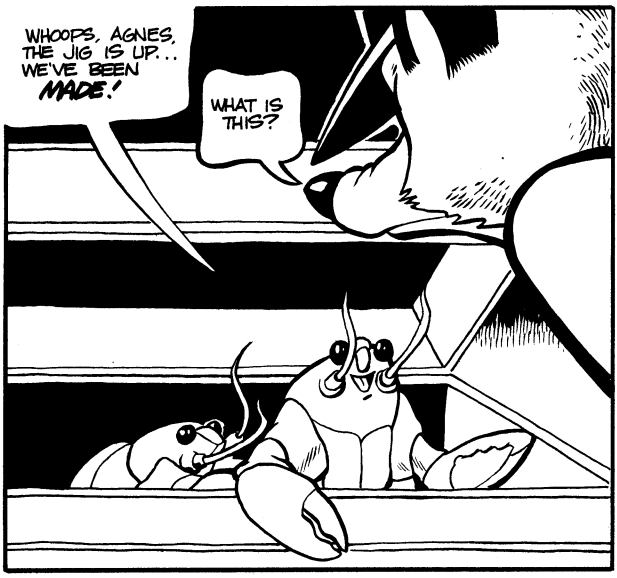

ZZZ
SO THEY GOT A TREASURE MAP, DO THEY?


I HEARD PRECIOUS LITTLE OF MY SHARE OF THE FINDINGS MENTIONED...
...BUT THE NOBLE HEART WHICH BEATS WITHIN ME IS WILLING TO GIVE THEM THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT AND ASSUME THEY SIMPLY FORGOT ME IN THE HEAT OF THE MOMENT.

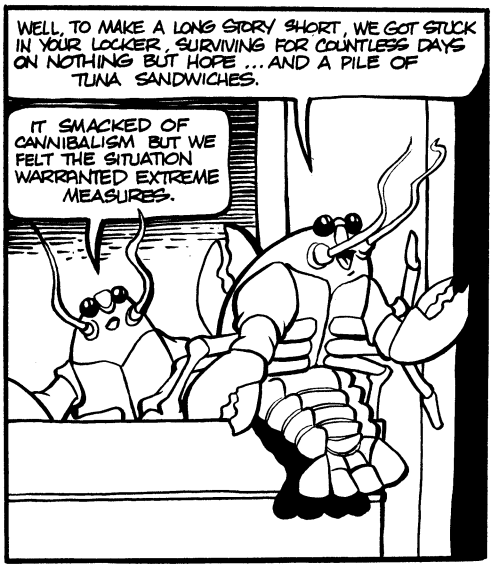

IT MATTERS NOT THAT THEY SLIGHTED ME FOR I FORGIVE!
I FORGIVE THEM THIS TRANSGRESSION AND RETURN HOME TO GET MY SCUBA GEAR SO THAT I MIGHT STILL HELP IN THIS RECOVERY...
HUP.
HUP.
HUP.


LATER, AT HOME:
UNGH! GRRNNT!
SCUBA GEAR
AND EXTRA SANDWICHES


HULLO..?
HI.

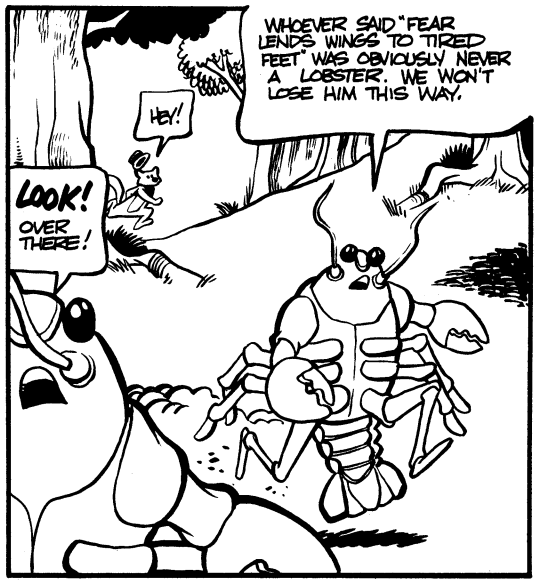

WHOOPS, AGNES, THE JIG IS UP... WE'VE BEEN MADE!
WHAT IS THIS?

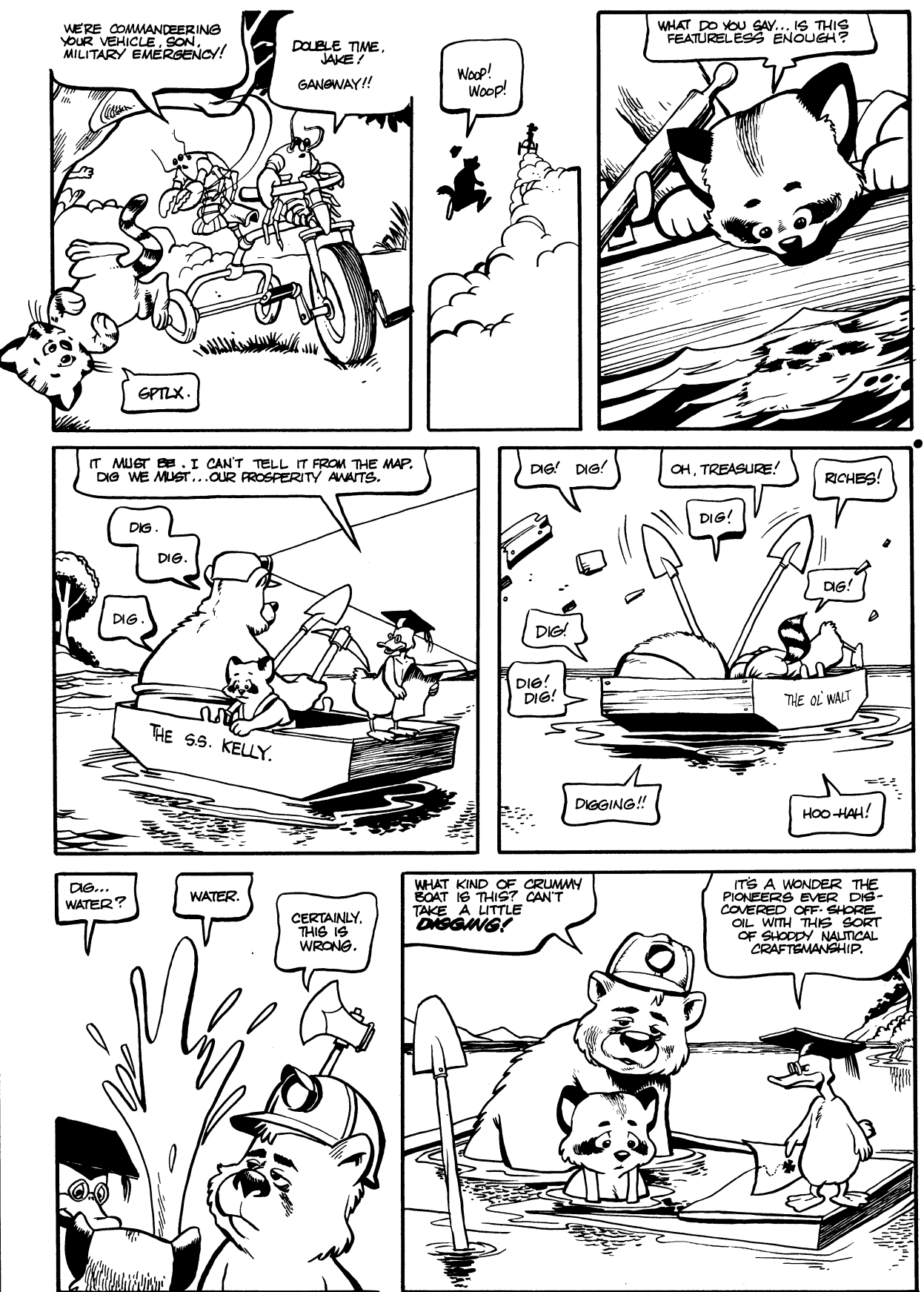

HOW'D YOU GET INTO MY FOOT LOCKER?
WE FOLLOWED YOU HOME FROM THE SURF 'N' TURF A FEW WEEKS BACK.
YOU LOOKED SO PERSONABLE AND ALL.


WELL, TO MAKE A LONG STORY SHORT, WE GOT STUCK IN YOUR LOCKER, SURVIVING FOR COUNTLESS DAYS ON NOTHING BUT HOPE ... AND A PILE OF TUNA SANDWICHES.
IT SMACKED OF CANNIBALISM BUT WE FELT THE SITUATION WARRANTED EXTREME MEASURES.


WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO MY GEAR? MY DIVING HELMET? MY VIDEOS OF SEA HUNT!?!
I KNEW THIS WAS GOING TO COME UP. IT'S REALLY QUITE AMUSING ACTUALLY...


DON'T BOTHER, JAKE. LET'S LAM ON OUTTA HERE!
OOOH! HE'S GOT A NASTY LOOK IN HIS EYE.
AWP! GET BACK HERE YOU THIEVING CRUSTACEANS!!


WHOEVER SAID "FEAR LENDS WINGS TO TIRED FEET" WAS OBVIOUSLY NEVER A LOBSTER. WE WON'T LOSE HIM THIS WAY.
HEY!
LOOK! OVER THERE!

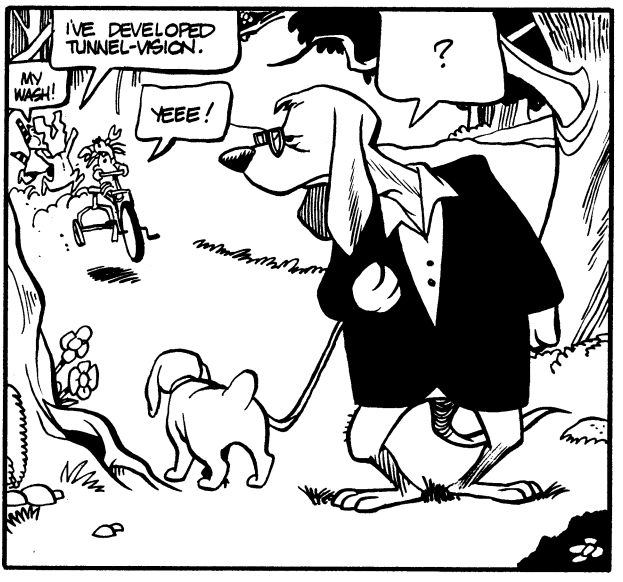

WE'RE COMMANDEERING YOUR VEHICLE, SON. MILITARY EMERGENCY!
DOUBLE TIME, JAKE!
GANGWAY!!
GPTLX.
WOOP! WOOP!
WHAT DO YOU SAY... IS THIS FEATURELESS ENOUGH?
IT MUST BE. I CAN'T TELL IT FROM THE MAP. DIG WE MUST... OUR PROSPERITY AWAITS.
DIG.
DIG.
DIG.
THE S.S. KELLY.
DIG! DIG!
OH, TREASURE!
RICHES!
DIG!
DIG!
DIG!
DIG! DIG!
THE OL' WALT
DIGGING!!
HOO-HAH!
DIG... WATER?
WATER.
CERTAINLY. THIS IS WRONG.
WHAT KIND OF CRUMMY BOAT IS THIS? CAN'T TAKE A LITTLE DIGGING!
IT'S A WONDER THE PIONEERS EVER DISCOVERED OFF-SHORE OIL WITH THIS SORT OF SHODDY NAUTICAL CRAFTSMANSHIP.


IT'S A GOOD TIME TO ELECT OL' REDWOOD BEAR THE CAPTAIN OF THIS VESSEL... WITH THE SHIP GOING DOWN WE COULD SIT ON YOUR HEAD.
WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM?!? YOU'RE A DUCK!!
WATCH WHAT YOU SAY ABOUT MY MOTHER!!
I CAN'T BELIEVE ONE LITTLE LEAK COULD LET IN THIS MUCH WATER....

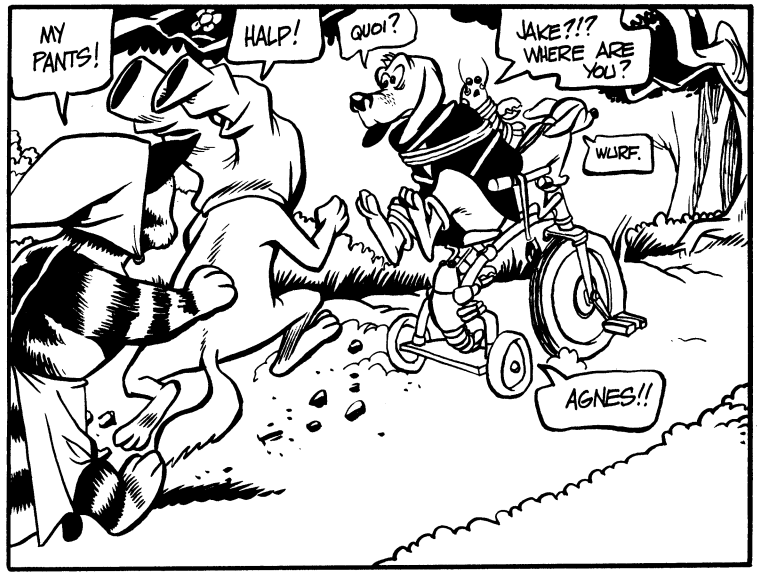

WE SHOULD SEND OUT A SIGNAL FLARE
GET OFF, YOU...
IK!

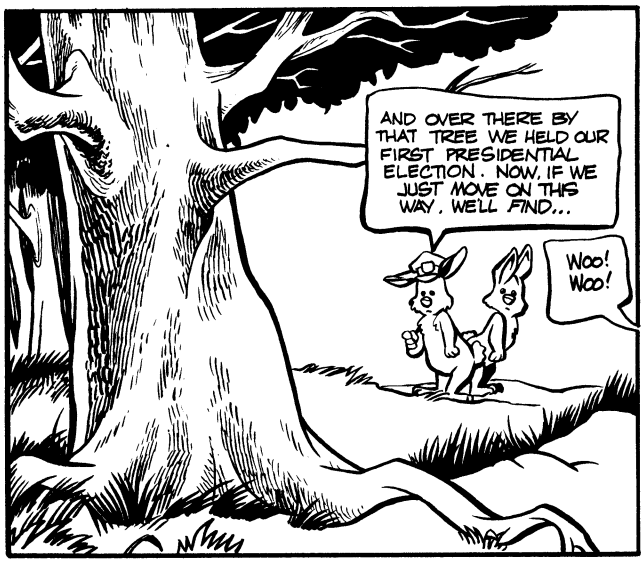

WHOA!
GANG WAY!
TWIRL! TWIRL! TWINKLE BETWEEN! THE TWEEZERS ARE TWIST IN THE TWITTERING TWAIN. TWIRL! TWIRL! ENTWININGLY TWIRL! 'TWIXT...
...HMM?

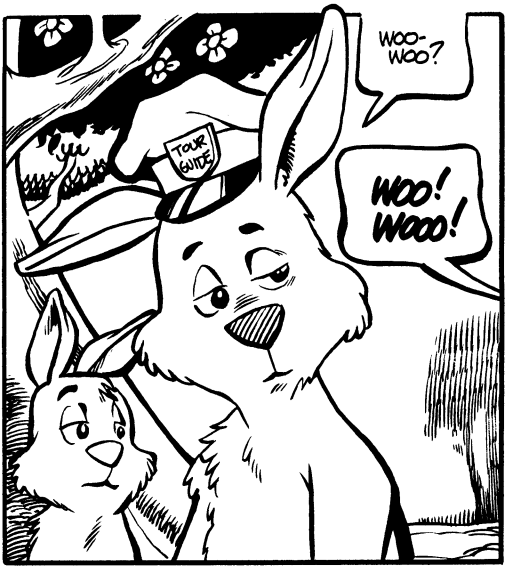

WHOO! THEM'S MY CLIFFORD'S SUNDAY-GO-TO-MEETIN' PANTS!!


I'VE DEVELOPED TUNNEL-VISION.
MY WASH!
YEEE!
?


OOOH!
BING!!
FNORD!
BASH!
SMEK
HURT!
WHACK!
HIT!
INJURY!
POW!

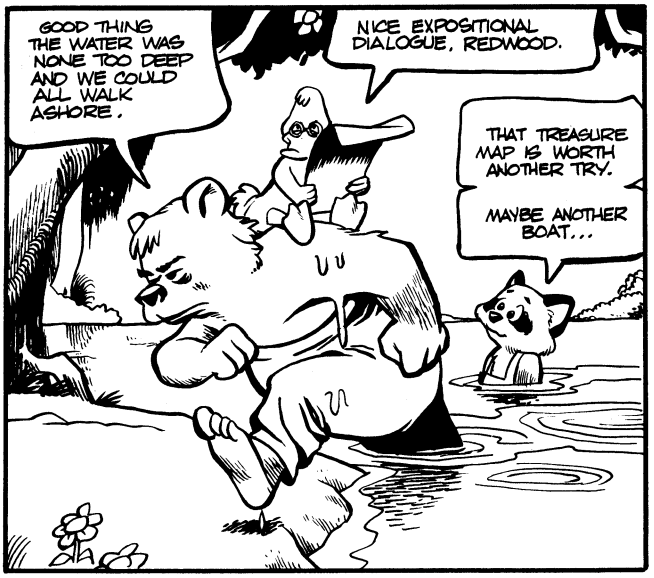

MY PANTS!
HALP!
QUOI?
JAKE?!? WHERE ARE YOU?
WURF.
AGNES!!

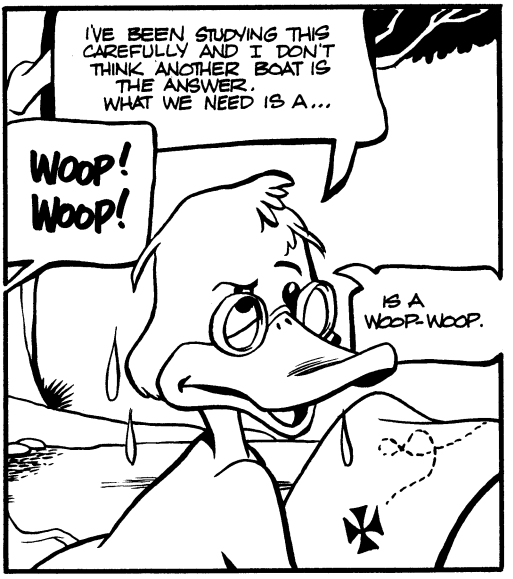

AND OVER THERE BY THAT TREE WE HELD OUR FIRST PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION. NOW, IF WE JUST MOVE ON THIS WAY, WE'LL FIND...
WOO! WOO!


WOO-WOO?
TOUR GUIDE
WOO! WOOO!

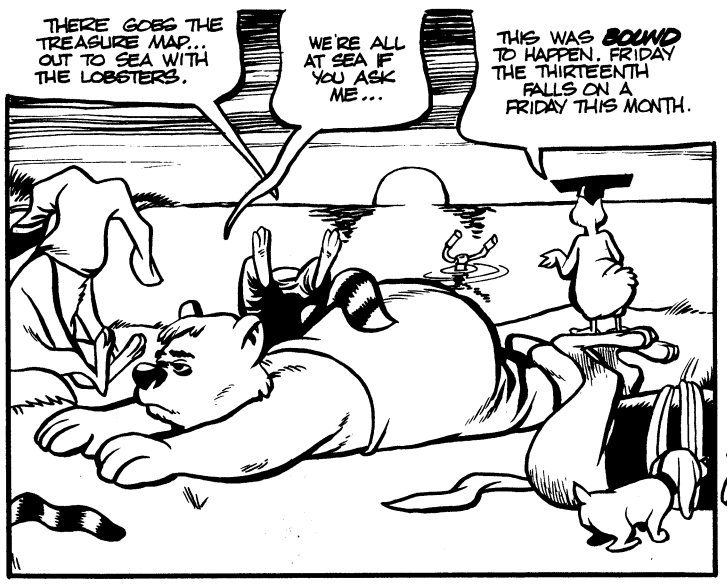

GO! GO!
WOOP. WOO!
GIMMIE THEM PANTS!
AWP!
WURF!
SIGH!


I HAVEN'T SEEN ONE OF THOSE SINCE '73. IT'S NICE TO KNOW SOME THINGS NEVER CHANGE.
I'M ALL AGLOW.
TOUR GUIDE











FOR KLAUS AND WALT- WHO TAUGHT ME TO DRAW-

[CONT'D FROM INSIDE FRONT COVER] totally enjoyed the fine stories and art and eagerly await many fine issues to come.

I picked up **Critters #2** because of the Steve Gallacci cover and story and found I enjoyed everything about the book. I haven't missed an issue yet and don't intend to in the future. Steve is one of my favorite author-artists because of his interesting and thought-provoking stories in **Albedo**. He hasn't let me down one bit with "Birthright." It has an action and attitude that makes you take notice and think about what's happening and what could happen. I'll hate to see it end, even for four issues, but everything must come to an end, especially Tosiu tyranny.

I have enjoyed the "Gnuff" story and the social commentary it has contained. My guess as to why Dragons have to keep their wings hidden is that others are jealous of their ability to fly and so they hide them to try and fit in. I also like Councilman Siegel. He's such a stereotypical politician that I can't help but sympathize with him. I wish him luck.

Stan Sakai's stuff is always entertaining and interesting. His art is just great but his style changes so much between "Groundthumper" and "Yojimbo" that it's hard to think of him as one person. I like his lizards, though; they stay the same.

"Captain Jack" was funny and entertaining but it's not my style so I'll just take his appearance in **Critters** and leave it at that. I do like Beezlebub, however.

In closing, I'd like to say that I don't mind your editorials. I find them informative and fun, and I for one, don't mind if you take up a little letter space to tell your views and other types of information, but only a little.

Mark Anderson
Sandy, UT

How's this? —KT

Dear Kim,

Since five issues of **Critters** have now been published (a number that most "indies" never reach), I felt it was about time to drop a letter.

Before I give my views I think you should be praised for getting **Critters** out on a monthly basis. Since most of the stories in any given issue are part of a serial, it would be very annoying to have to wait longer between chapters. With some books published by other publishers, it has become a joke with the long delays between issues. (All of Neal Adams's comics come to mind, for instance.) I also like the large letter section. It beats the hell out of a house ad anytime.

As for the stories in **#5**, well, first the bad news. I have waited four issues to pass judgment, hoping the strip would grow on me, but I still have yet to enjoy "Gnuff." While Freddy Milton may be compared to Carl Barks, one quick read through a Gladstone Comic makes it evident that his "Gnuff" is lacking. The characters are simply not as likeable and interesting as the Disney World of Barks. Kim, you seem to enjoy his work a lot. You have seen more of it. How about printing a non-Gnuff piece of Milton's to compare? I don't want to knock him down without giving him another chance to get up.

How about "Nilson Groundthumper and Hermy"? Well, if I had the choice between "Usagi Yojimbo" and "Groundthumper," I would definitely take Usagi. "Groundthumper" was cute, but too predictable. But, if there are no options, bring it on. Any Stan Sakai is better than none.

On to "Birthright." It has constantly been one of the highlights of **Critters**. This issue was no exception. I, for one, will miss it when it is concluded. When it is over, I wish you would collect the saga into a graphic novel form.

"Birthright" is an example of why I do not care at all that **Critters** is in black-and-white. The fine shading that distinguishes "Birthright" would be obliterated by any coloring. Let **Critters** remain in black-and-white and maybe produce color reprints of certain features, or a color annual of other features. But keep Steven A. Gallacci's work in black-and-white.

While the poem was amusing and I wouldn't mind seeing more in the future, I'd rather have a full story from the hands of Lela Dowling. That brings me to what I would like to see in **Critters** in the future. I echo E.E. Dinkins's request to convince Michael T. Gilbert to do a new Wraith story. Tell him that if he doesn't Usagi might take his sword to Mr. Monster. (Hmm. An interesting idea for a crossover.) I also suggest the inclusion of Scott Shaw! and Ken Macklin and Reed Waller within these pages.

One last thing. In response to Brent Winter's letter knocking the use of non-funny animals, I have to disagree. I support what Robin Reed wrote in his/her letter, but have to add that the marketplace, in recent months, has been flooded with "funny" (sic) funny animal books that feature the adventures of mutated animals. Mr. Winter can go get his fill from the latest Monsterized Mutilated Midget Manlike Moronic Mammals. **Critters** is different and should be. Let drama and humor share these pages. It makes a good balance.

J. Alexander Hall
Santa Clara, CA

We're working on a project to get some of Freddy's much-praised "Woody Woodpecker" work in print over here. (It seems silly, for one thing, to have some of the best work featuring a classic American character unavailable to American audiences, doesn't it?) Sorry the first "Gnuff" story didn't grow on you—I hope the second one, which started last issue and resumes next issue, is more to your liking.

We will eventually reprint "Birthright" as a graphic album, I promise—probably next summer. Ken Macklin will provide another cover to CRITTERS in the near future (#11, to be exact). And I wouldn't be surprised to see Scott Shaw! pop up in the new USAGI YOJIMBO bi-monthly next spring. —KT

To the staff:

I am happy to find out that Mr. Gallacci's characters from "Birthright" will be back in **Critters #11**. I still think that it would make a great animated film. Mr. Gallacci should call the people at Disney, and if they are too busy, then call Don Bluth Productions. It's what kids of today need, rather than My Little Pony, Go Bots, and the Transformers movies, which are TRASH.

Zack Mays
Griffin, GA

Thanks for the feedback, Zack, but do you read anything in CRITTERS beside "Birthright"? Just curious. —KT

Dear Kim,

A little note to those jerks who are saying that "Birthright" is the right story, but in the wrong format—**Put a sock in it!!!**

One never says that an artist/writer has to conform to what others think he should—he/she must go with what he wants himself, or he fails to be what he is! **[Huh? —KT]** I know from experience! An artist must be free to express himself or he dies a proverbial death! A perfect example is Wendy Pini's **Elfquest**. She was told it would never go anywhere by some of the same weak-minded nose-pickers that are so heavily criticizing Gallacci! But just look what happened!

Bravo Steve!

Mike Higgs, President
Fantasy Studios Unltd.

So there. This is great . . . I used to insult people in letters columns. Now I can sit back and have others do it for me. This is what being an executive means, I guess.

This next letter comes from Daan Jippes, a fine Dutch cartoonist whose work you've seen on the covers to most of the Gladstone comics. He's also an old friend (and collaborator) of Freddy Milton's. . . . —KT

The other week I bought **Critters #5** on one of my monthly

excursions to the two nearest comic book stores, experiencing the conclusion of the first Gnuff story. I like the **pace** of that story very much, something you rarely find in comics nowadays. It's all intended to **grab** the reader, either by ever-contrasting graphics from one panel to the other, or jerky points-of-view. There is the constant "unrest" that permeates the reading experience.

One thing that let me down in that particular episode was in the plot: All those devices in the cellar of the apartment house that were to make us and the dragons believe were the cause of those so-called supernatural occurrences. That points in the direction of a carefully planned scheme by the badger to get rid of the dragons. It's very implausible to "marry" that with what we learn in the epilogue about him; that he is a bewildered guy, on medication, and believes he is possessed by the doings of poltergeists. Then why all the make-believe?

Daan Jippes
Tarzana, CA

I did, in fact, study the phenomena around poltergeists before writing the story, and it seems there is always a hypersensitive person present. Psychologically, that person is a schizophrenic-type of the more complicated kind, longing for attention and care from his surroundings, but not getting it in the natural way. The poltergeists are than "arranged" by this person to achieve the attention, and it works: He gets it—all that mystery! But (and here's the point): The "normal" identity does not, of course, approve of all these arrangements (the normal identity being that of an overly polite, nice and obedient personality) so he has to EXPEL the disobedient personality from his mind by willfully "forgetting" about it—and he actually succeeds in doing so. . . And if you don't believe zis, zen please kunzult any tcherman xpeaking zychologist in your neighborhoot. He vill most zurely kunfirm zis annalizis!

—FRED MILTON

Hello **Critters:**

I enjoyed #2 completely. "Birthright" is great. (I also collect **Albedo** and if Steve Gallacci did 100 comics a month I would collect them all.) I hope "Gnuff" stays this good because I know it can't get any better. But (yes, there's always a but) "Captain Jack" was a disappointment. Not that I didn't like "Captain Jack," because I do, it's just his own comic came out this month and I would have preferred a "Usagi Yojimbo" story.

I will collect **Critters** as long as you publish it.

Chris Brumfield
Baton Rouge, LA

Okay. Got anything else planned for the next decade and a half?

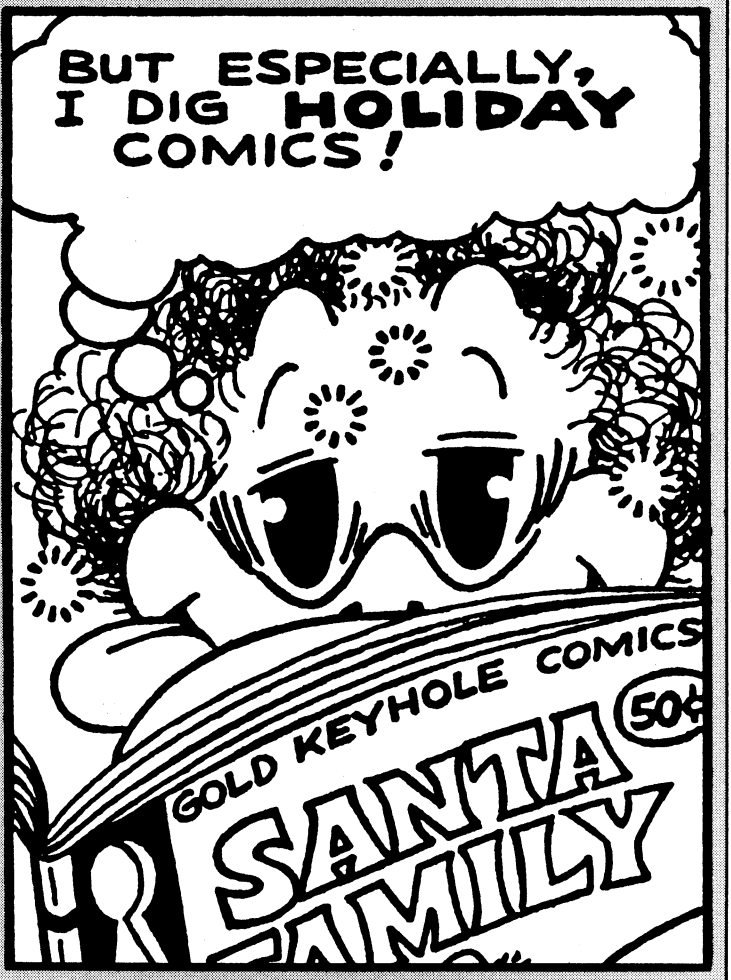
Here's another tidbit of news: The ubiquitous Stan Sakai will be contributing a short piece to the upcoming TURTLE SOUP from Mirage Studios. And has everyone got his copy of COMMAND REVIEW, Steve Gallacci's handsome reprinting of early ALBEDO material?

See you in 30 days! —KT

CREDITS: "Jack Bunny" and "Rodney Roadhawg" were written and drawn by **Mark Armstrong**. "Lionheart" was written and drawn by **Tom Stazer**. "The Ol' Treasure Map Story" was written and drawn by **Ty Templeton**. The cover was executed by **Mark Armstrong**. Color separations by **Impact Productions**. Production by: **Tom Mason**, art director, and **Teresa Moore**, production assistant. Typesetting by **Inez M. Gorell. CRITTERS** is edited by **Kim Thompson** for **FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS** and is printed at **Port Publications**.

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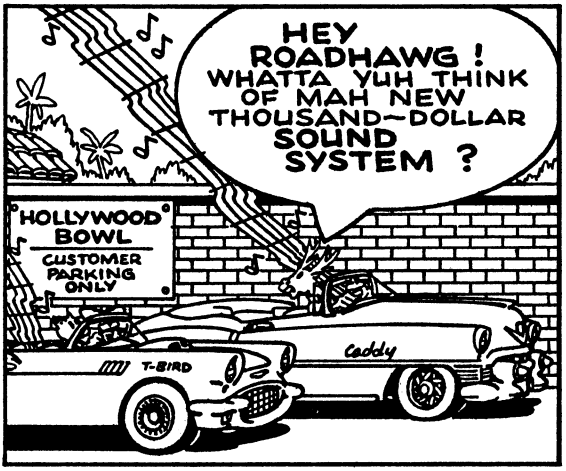
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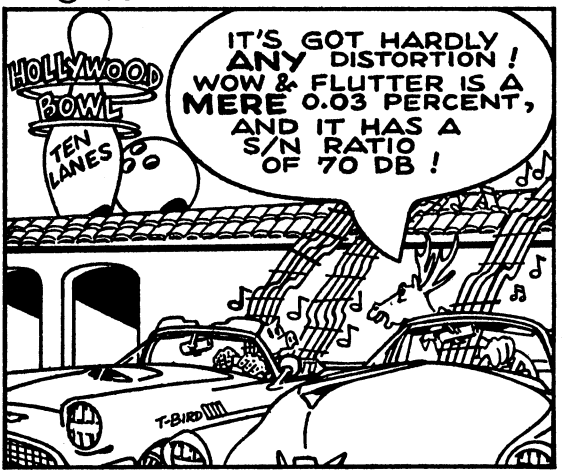
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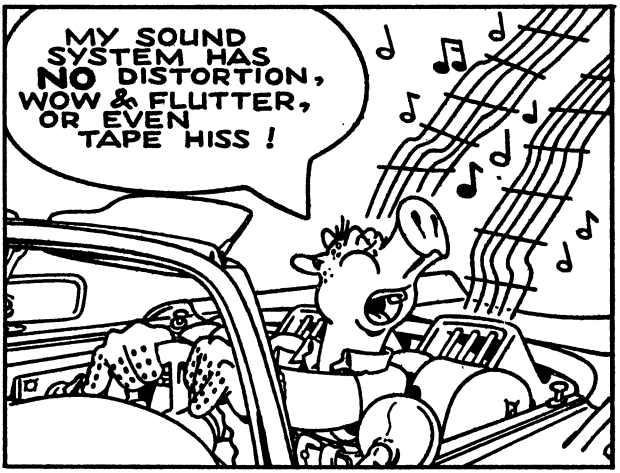
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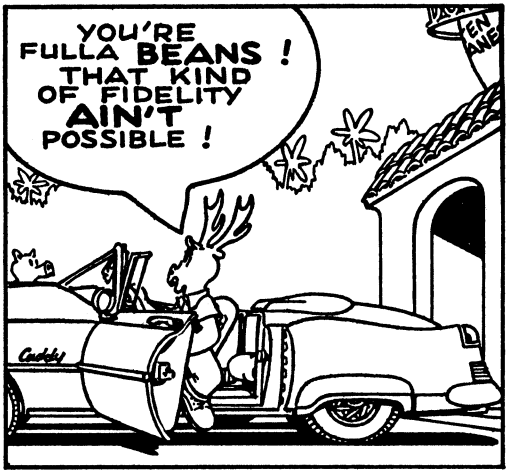
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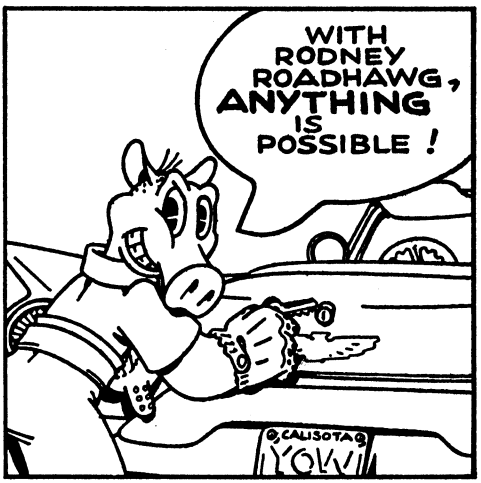
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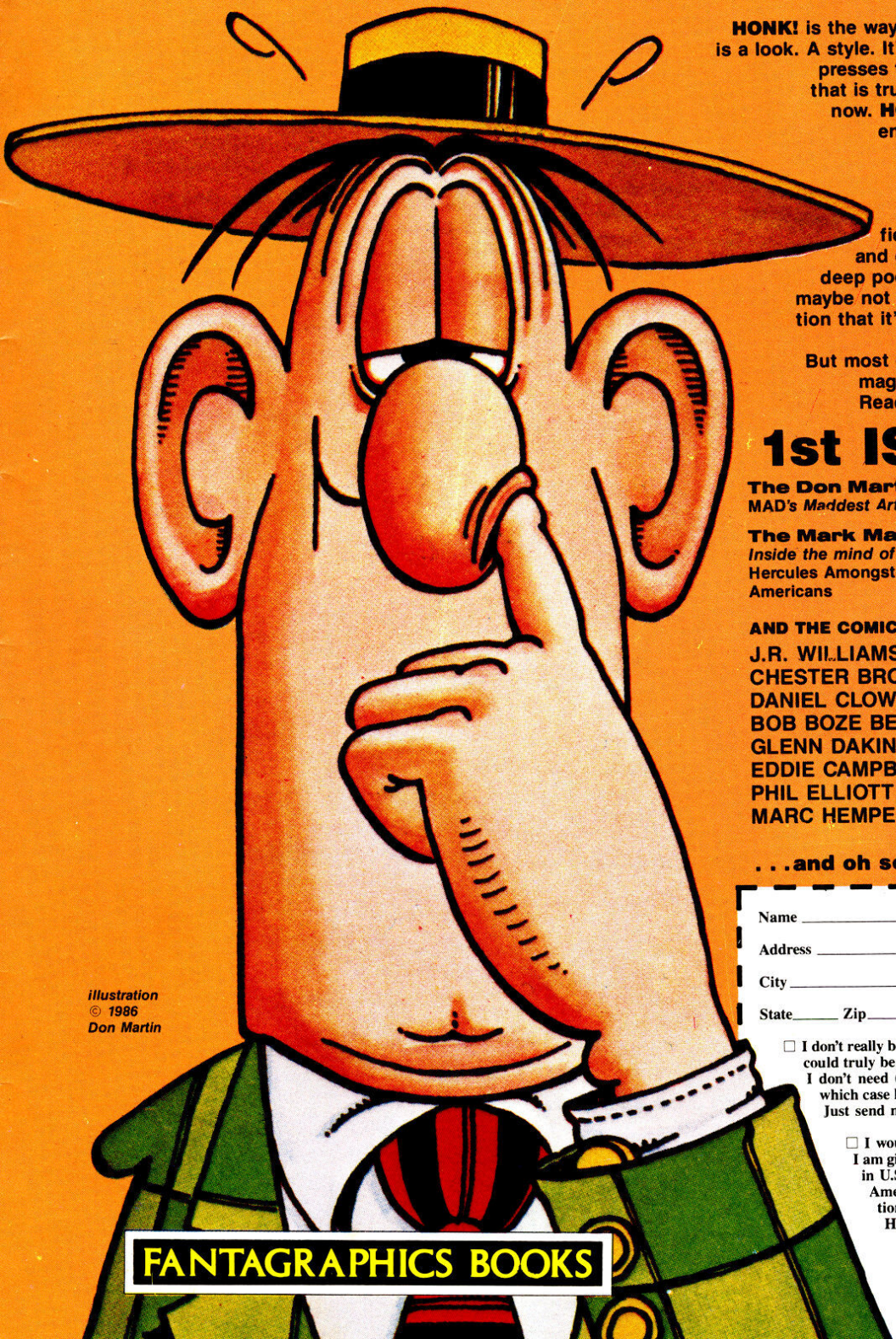


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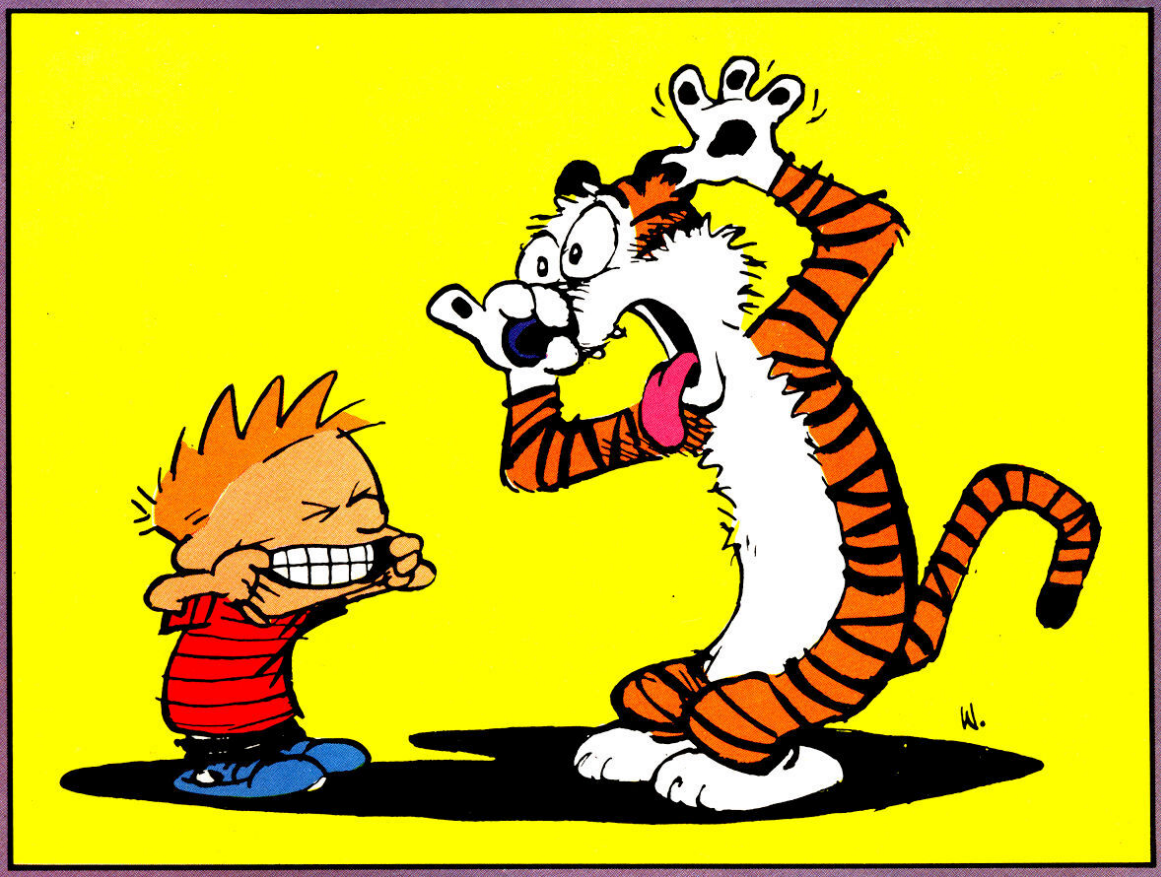
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