

Critters

No. 22

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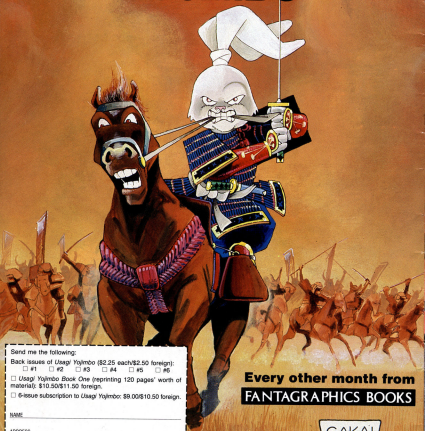


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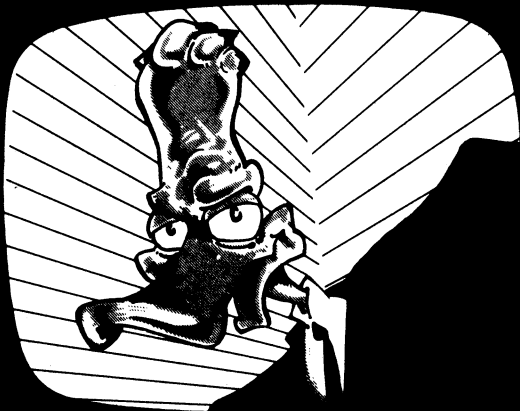
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SAKAI
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Critters



... So this pharmacist says, "Here's your chap stick, will this be cash?" An' the duck says, "No, put it on my bill."

NUMBER 22

MARCH 1988

C O N T E N T S

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Critters #21, February, 1988. Editor, Kim Thompson. Art Director, Coco Shinomiya. Critters is published monthly by Fantagraphics Books, Inc., and is copyright © 1987 Fantagraphics Books, Inc. All characters, stories, and art © 1987 their respective creators: Tim Fuller, Freddy Milton, J.P. Morgan, and William Van Horn. Cover separations by S*M Graphics. No part of this magazine may be reproduced without written permission from Fantagraphics Books and the creators. No similarity between the any of the names, characters, persons, animals, and institutions in Critters and those of any living or dead persons or beasts is intended, and any such similarity that may exist is purely coincidental. Letters to Critters become the property of the magazine and are assumed intended for publication in whole or in part, and may therefore be used for those purposes. First printing: November, 1987. Available directly from the publisher for \$2.00 + 75¢ postage and handling: Fantagraphics Books, 1800 Bridgegate Street Suite #101, Westlake Village, CA 91361.

EDITORIAL

Alas, due to circumstances beyond anyone's control, no "SpeakingStone" this time around, and probably not for a while to come. We apologize, but there was no way around it: various Acts of God have eaten deep into Reed Waller's and Kate Worley's schedule, and their first allegiance has to be their Omaha the Cat Dancer (it's what pays their rent)—so the story begun two issues ago will remain in suspense for a little while.

But what we do have! Aside from the conclusion to the fourth "Gnuff" saga, there's Tim Fuller's great new "Blue Beagle" story, heralded with two, count 'em two, covers. Originally, when I came up with this here sleazy-merchandising idea of running two different covers, I was gonna print two completely different editions, forcing completists to buy one of each. Ha ha haah (sound effect of greedy publisher hands rubbing together.) But then I thought it would be a bit extortionary—forcing loyal readers to shell out twice as much money for the same book. So I compromised by printing the "other" cover as the inside back cover. If you bought the "Watchmen" parody cover (and dealers are betting on 60% of you doing so), the "straight" cover is on the i.b.c.; if you bought the "straight" cover, turn to the i.b.c. for the "Watchmen" deal. I can't wait to see how Bob Overstreet covers this, so to speak! (And I've got a special treat for ol' Bob next issue....)

The "SpeakingStone" defection also allowed me to slot in a couple of short inventory pieces that might otherwise have taken several months to see print—including the very first "Fission Chicken," which was originally supposed to run before the "Marketing Experts" sequence. By the way, it was the pun in the title that instantly sold me on J.P.'s work, I'm ashamed to say.

Also a short "Ambrose the Frog" piece from William Van Horn, who promises to become a regular contributor to Critters with both his "Ambrose" and "Angst" series—if he can find envelopes big enough to contain his giant-size original art boards. And I thought Milton Knight drew big!

For a sneak peek of next issue's Christmas goodies, check out page 32. See you then.

—KIM THOMPSON

MAILBAG

DARREN RYDER

Chaumont, N.Y.

To Kim and Company:

I am a person who doesn't go around writing letters as a rule, but I feel a letter is in order. Critters, I feel, is one of the best comics in the "funny animal" field (along with Capt. Jack and Omaha) that dares to try new formats/concepts. Also, the reason I got hooked on Critters in the first place was seeing a few strips (clips?) of Steve Gallacci's "Birthright" (still haven't been able to find



back issues #2 and #3, hint, hint).

I found "Birthright" riveting and entertaining, in the forefront of a revolutionary concept—that "funny animals" can be mature/serious when they want to be and still be entertaining. A final word on this so-called controversy about what is and what's not a "funny animal" comic—huzzah to Gallacci!!! This is a person who dares to be different, who has taken an entirely different category of comics—and I love it!! I can't sing enough praise to the man for taking "funny animals" to a new level.

Those "critics" who can't handle such new ideas should just shut their mouths and go back to reading their "Donalds Ducks" and other such juvenile shit and let the rest of us enjoy a good thing when we know it. A final word before I finish—Steve, don't leave us hanging!!! We want to see more of "Birthright"; I know I do! We need to know what happens next (and maybe I'm just a sucker for cute vixens). At any rate, would you at least reconsider please???? A question: what is the title difference between "Birthright" and "Birthright II?"

● Huh? Same as the difference between Rocky and Rocky II, I guess. (Sometimes these questions just baffle the hell out of me.)

While I appreciate your enthusiasm, I'm afraid your toes are now tickling your tonsils after your "juvenile Donald Duck shit" remark. Because, Darren, there's about 20 years' worth of Donald Duck stories that are among the most brilliant, mature (in the sense that an adult can read it with no embarrassment), and flat-out entertaining comic-book work ever done. Does the name Carl Barks ring a bell? I suggest you pick up an issue of any new Gladstone comic with Barks work in it and in a few months, I'll print your groveling apology for your heinous misstatement. Deal?

—KT

JEFF S. ROGERS
Tustin, CA.

To our fearless editor:

Thank you for publishing my last letter in

Critters #17. I bought the copy (even though I get a subscription) while I was in Washington D.C. and practically missed my name there!

I can honestly say the magazine has grown on me. When I originally purchased Critters #2 it was for Steven Gallacci and none other. Now that Steve's "Birthright II" has drawn its curtain, I am still interested in the magazine, notably for the artwork of Jim Engel and Tom Stazer. The former, premiering in #18, was love at first reading and the latter's storyline ("Lionheart") borders up there with Gallacci's (almost, mind you, almost). I am a serious reader of science fiction and view Gallacci's creations as the closest to the subject than any other contributing artist. The other reason is that technically, Gallacci attempts (and succeeds) to be scientifically accurate; hats off to you, my man!!!

All right, everybody has heard a lot of people to the nth power of how much they like Gallacci's work and don't credit the people who put the magazine together. You people have impressed me with your ability to keep a magazine like Critters going as strong as it has for as long as it has. I have had a history of subscribing to poorly published magazines and feared this one would become one on my list when I initially subscribed. You people have made me eat my words, and such words are always a pleasure to consume! Thanks to all of you who make Critters possible: Kim, Doug, Audu, Inez and the rest of you whose names could not be found printed in the magazine; you deserve the best!

I seriously hope you would clarify exactly what you meant in your opening column in issue #18? When I read it, I was a little puzzled even though you justified yourself in the second paragraph. All readers have their likes and dislikes (and those who say they don't are blatantly lying) pulling the Yojimbo story from Critters to its own book was an excellent idea. Now, would this happen for Mr. Gallacci too? Steve can't have that many negative critics, could he? Refer-

ing to my previous letter, how about a special "Birthright" graphic novel with a conglomeration of all the "Birthright" stories. Would you also elaborate on the actual possibility of this happening?

In closing, I would like to know if there are any copies of Critter #1 floating around out there. I'm desperate to get hold of one that is still in mint condition and I am willing to negotiate a price for it. Since the issue has "officially" been sold out, pleading to the publisher apparently is futile. So if you are willing to sell it, I'm dying to buy it. If Kim would be so obliged so print my phone number also, I probably might hear from somebody: (714) 731-8072. Thank you all Fantagraphics!

● Rule number one for getting a letter printed: Tell the editor what a great job he's doing.

There's plenty of copies of Critters #1 floating around out there, as far as I know (about 14,000, in fact). Good hunting. As for my remarks in #18, I was just being facetious (an occupational hazard). To put it less flippantly, I print what I like: although I appreciate readers' comments, I'm not going to use them as a gauge to dictate my future decisions. Mostly because I have a hunch that if I really dig something, everyone will catch up with me sooner or later (as seems to be happening with "Fission Chicken"—witness the next couple of letters).

—KT

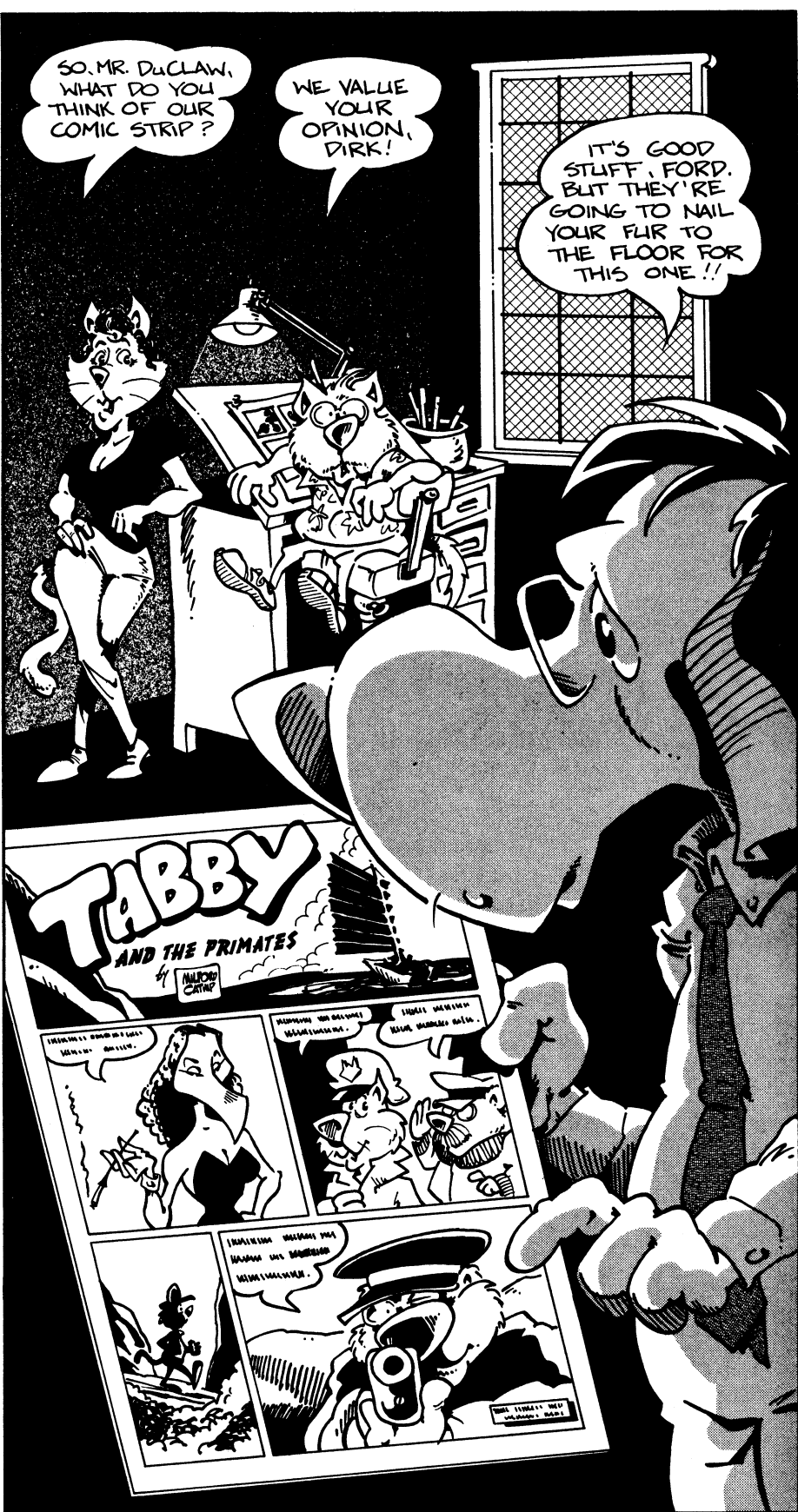
DAVID P. CANNON
F.P.O., New York, N.Y.

Dear Kim,

After a long, hard day of custom ventilating unsuspecting enemy aircraft pilots, or just jumping on them with my radar to give them a scare, I like to sit down in front of a cheerily glowing CRT display with a cup of coffee and read Critters. I would like to thank you folks over there at Fantagraphics for helping me to keep my already tenuous grip upon reality. I would say that what kept my interest in the book so much was not just the funny-animal genre of the characters, (although I prefer these) or the high-quality art, but the stories, and development of the characters themselves, such as what I see in "Gnuff," "Birthright," and "Lizards." Keep the good stuff coming.

Now as for the real reason that I'm writing, is that I'd like to comment on something brought to my attention by Jeffrey Alexander's L.O.C. in issue #17. I'd have to say that I agree with Mr. Alexander on his opinion that artists should work with the medium they are best able to express themselves with. To embellish on this, I would like to state that the choice of medium is also heavily dependent upon what tools the artist feels most at ease with, along with the desired visual effect of the finished work. I like to spend a good bit of my free time dabbling in comic illustration, and find pencil [LETTERS CONTINUED ON PAGE 17]

WATCH DOGS



YOU KNOW THE POLITICAL CLIMATE. CATS IN LEADERSHIP ROLES ARE TABOO. YOU'RE PUTTING A GOOD REPUTATION ON THE LINE!



LET'S ROLL, DOGS. I JUST GOT A REPORT OF A CARTOONIST PRODUCING SUBVERSIVE MATERIAL.



KASSIE WROTE THIS. I'M TIRED OF DRAWING STEVE CANINE. I WANT TO DO SOMETHING MEANINGFUL.

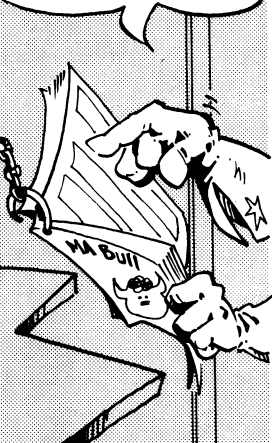
CATS CAN NO LONGER BE TREATED AS SECOND-CLASS CITIZENS!!



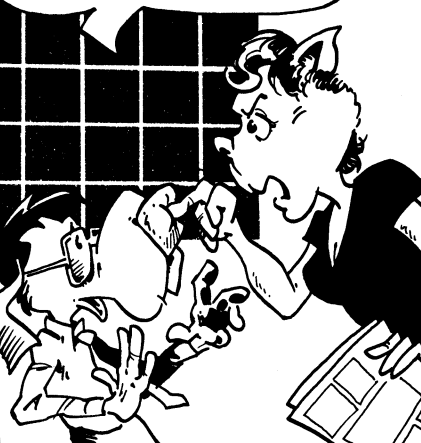
LOOK, I'M A BROAD-MINDED RUP, BUT THESE ARE REPRESSIVE TIMES. REMEMBER ALL THE TROUBLE THAT GOT STIRRED UP IN THE '50'S BY THAT DR. WORTHLESS? COMICS DON'T NEED ANOTHER WITCH HUNT!



AH, HERE IT IS! "MILFORD CATNIP, APARTMENT 21-A CENTRAL BARK-WEST."



WE ARE NOT AFRAID OF WITCH HUNTS! DOGS HAVE SEIZED THE LEASH OF CONTROL, AND WE'RE LEFT OUT IN THE COLD.



NOW, NOW! KASSIE HAS A TENDENCY TO BE OUTSPOKEN. THAT'S WHY SHE BECAME A FELINEIST WRITER.



LOOK, I AGREE WITH YOU, BUT THE ODDS ARE AGAINST YOU.

EXPECTING TROUBLE?

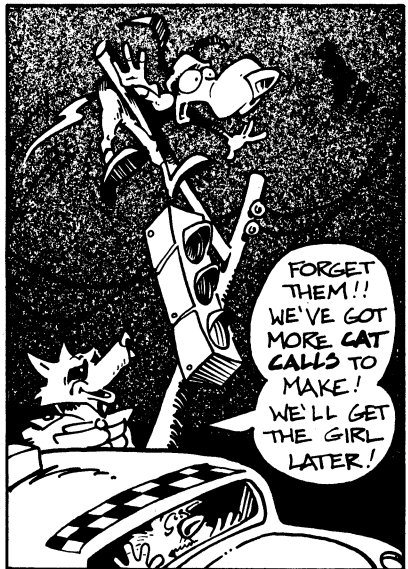
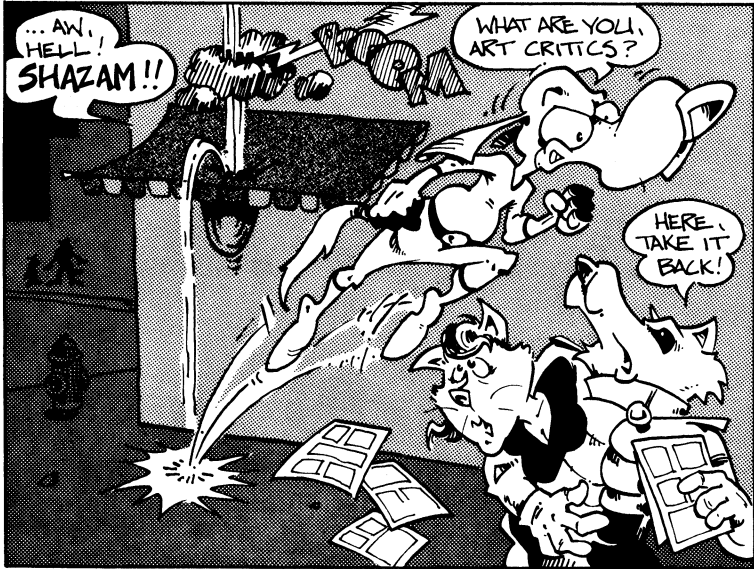


...COUNTING ON IT!

THIS IS A LOSING BATTLE, BUT IF THERE'S ANYTHING I CAN DO TO GET THIS PUBLISHED, YOU CAN COUNT ON M...



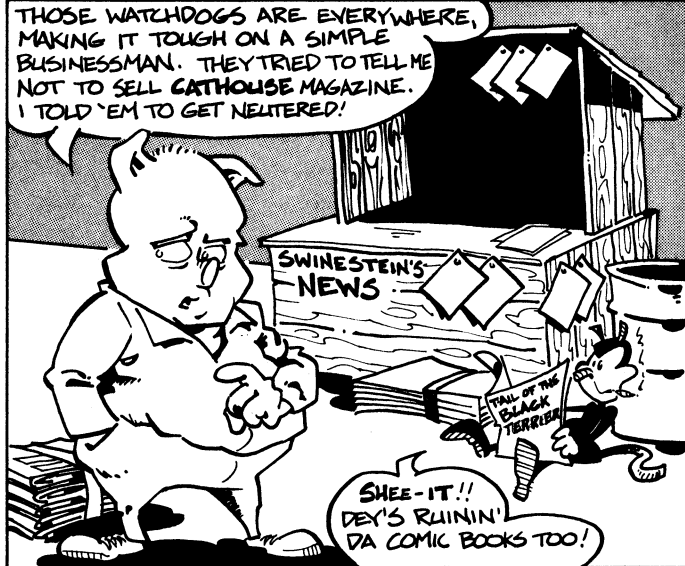
-YOU EXPECTING COMPANY?





DIRK?! ARE YOU OK? THOSE THUGS SNATCHED DAD, BUT I BROKE LOOSE!

HO-KAY, MR. FANCY-SMANCY SUPERGUY, WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO ABOUT IT, HUH?!



THOSE WATCHDOGS ARE EVERYWHERE, MAKING IT TOUGH ON A SIMPLE BUSINESSMAN. THEY TRIED TO TELL ME NOT TO SELL CATHOUSE MAGAZINE. I TOLD 'EM TO GET NEUTERED!

SHEE-IT!! DEY'S RUININ' DA COMIC BOOKS TOO!



KEEP THIS TO YOURSELF, BUT FOLKS ARE DISAPPEARING IN THE NIGHT AND NEVER RETURNING!

I NOTICED IT WAS A LITTLE VACANT AROUND HERE!

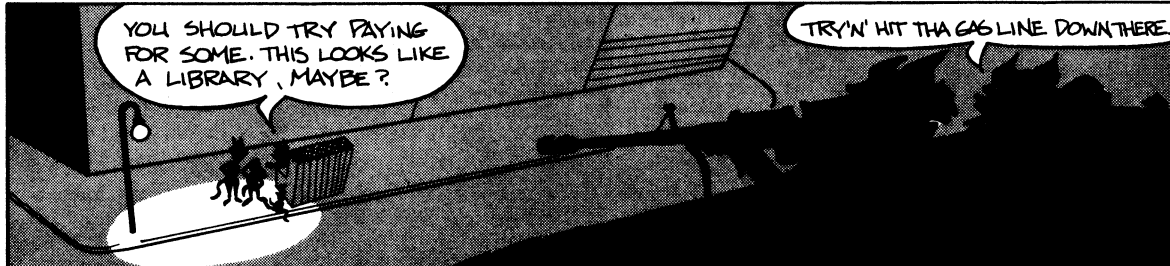


THERE USE TO BE LOTS OF CATS LIVING HERE, BUT THEY GOT HAULED OFF! IT'S BAD FOR MY BUSINESS!!

NO WON'ER BIZZ-NESS SO BAD! DESE HERE FUNNIES AIN'T WORE READIN'!!



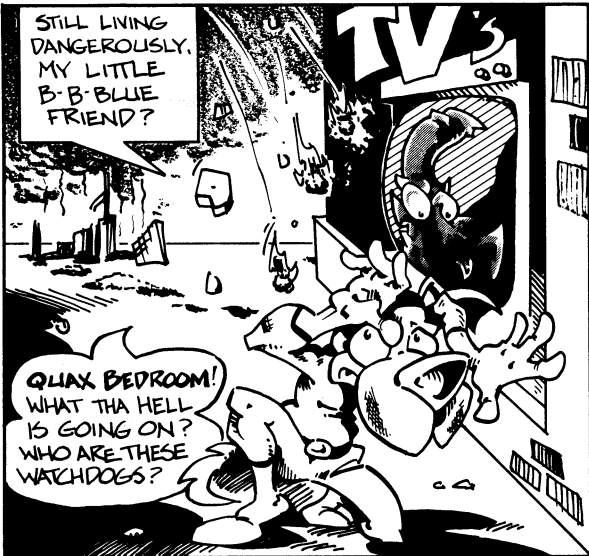
ALLS YO GOT LEF' IS DESE DAAAMN WIMPY COMICS. IT REALLY IS DA MARTYR AGE O' COMICS. AINT DAT A KICK INNA TAIL?



YOU SHOULD TRY PAYING FOR SOME. THIS LOOKS LIKE A LIBRARY, MAYBE?

TRY'N' HIT THA GAS LINE DOWN THERE

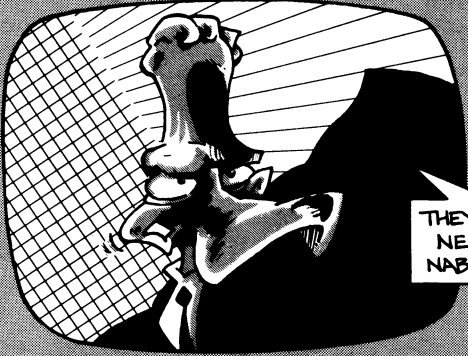
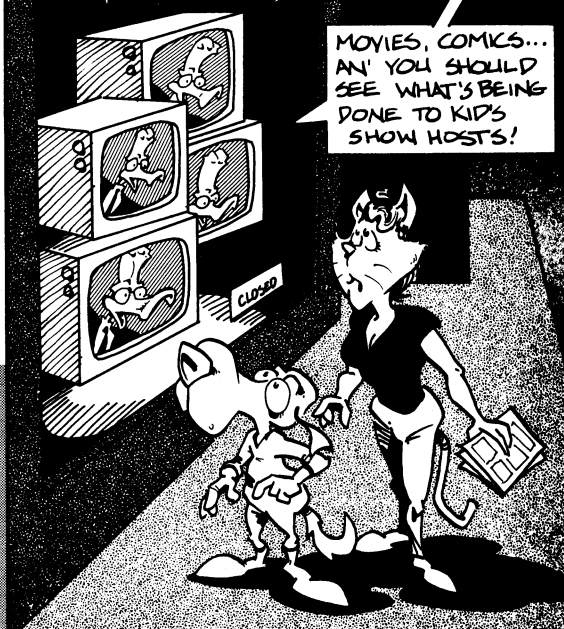




THEY ARE GOVERNMENT APPOINTED AGENTS FOR THE MICKEY MEESE COMMISSION.

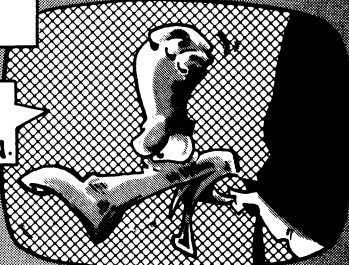
IT'S A CRACKDOWN ON ALL FORMS OF POPULAR ENTERTAINMENT; ANYTHING REMOTELY LEFTIST.

MOVIES, COMICS... AN' YOU SHOULD SEE WHAT'S BEING DONE TO KIDS SHOW HOSTS!



THEY NAPALMED MR. ROBIN'S NEIGHBORHOOD AND NABBED SQUIRY SNAIL.

JUST CHECK OUT WHAT HAPPENED TO TWEE TEE HERMAN.

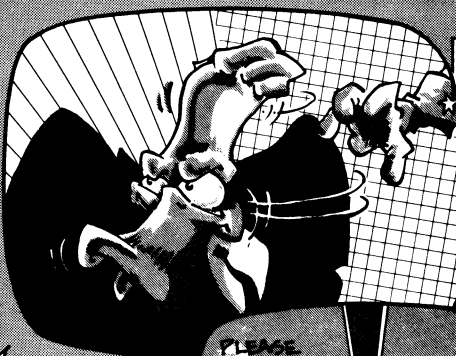


...YES, MISS YVETTE THE SECRET WORD IS CENSORSHIP. IF YOU HEAR ANYONE EVEN WHISPER IT, KIDS, SCREAM LIKE CRAZY!

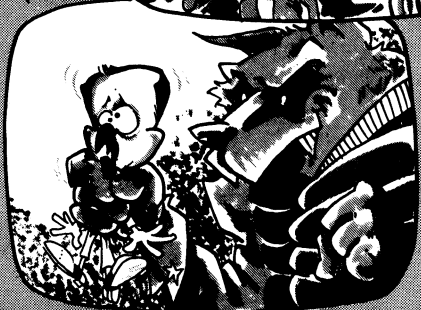


YOU'RE UNDER ARREST, FELLA!

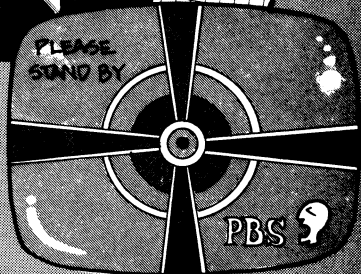
I KNOW YOU ARE BUT WHAT AM I?

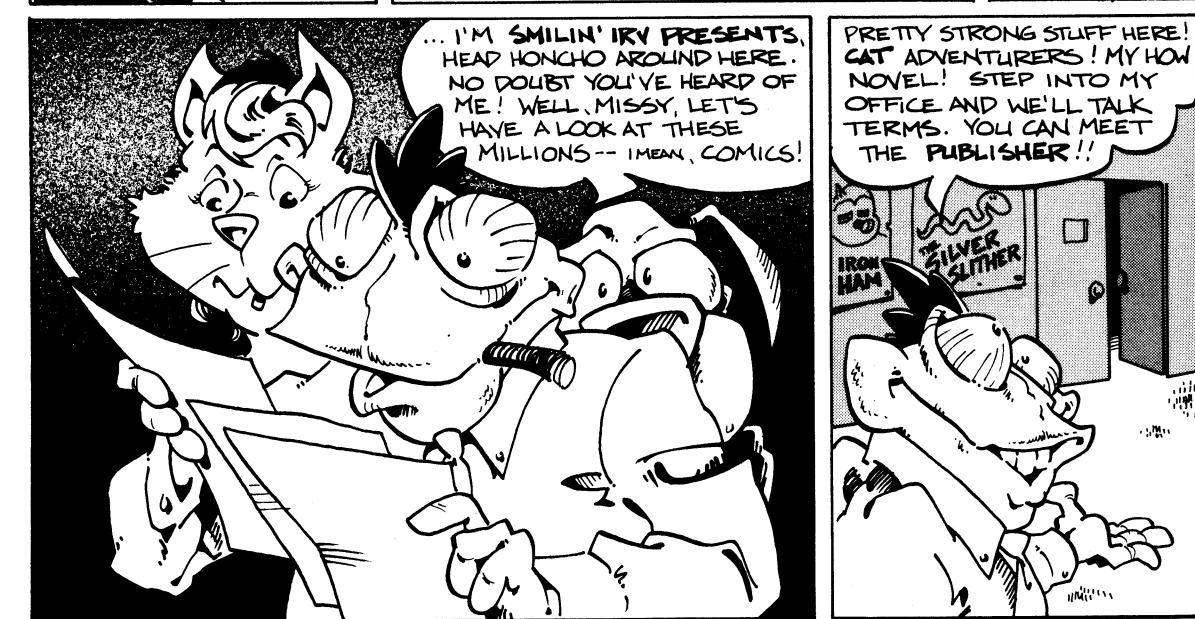
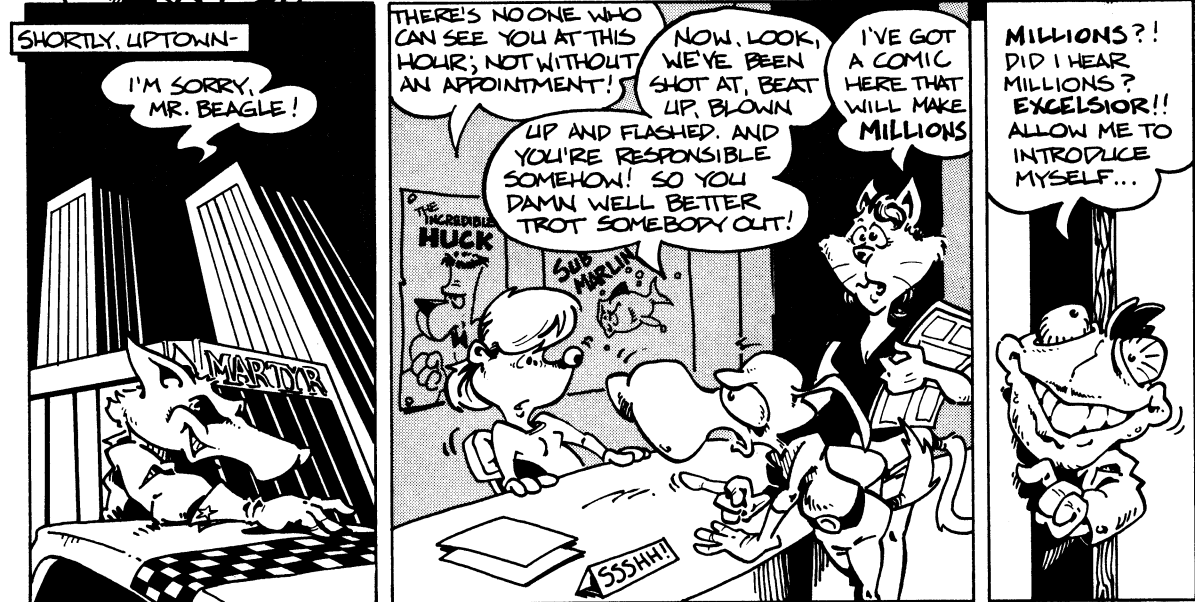
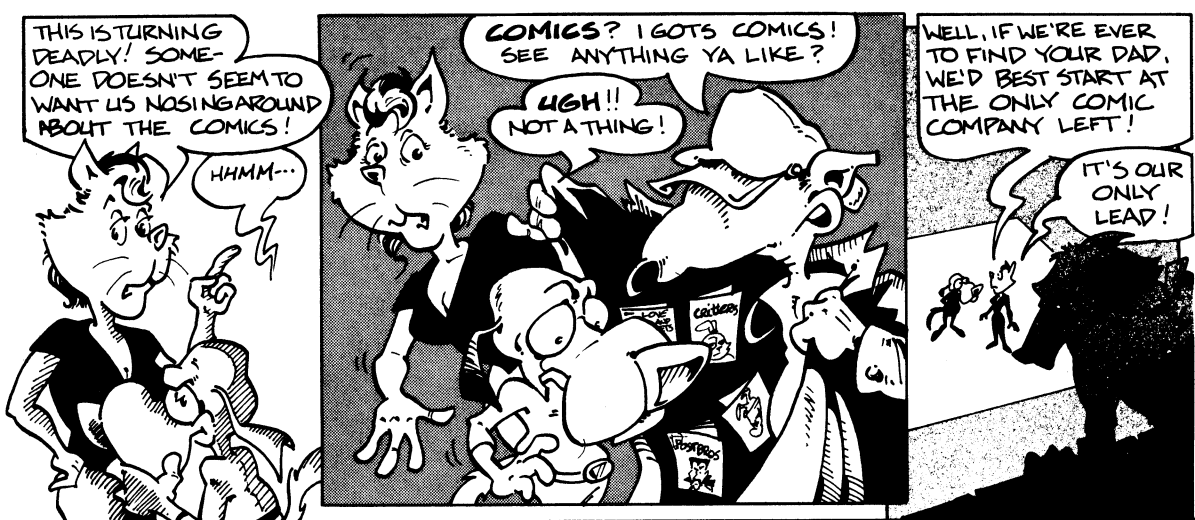


...I'M IN HIDING ON AN EDUCATIONAL CHANNEL WHERE THEY CAN'T FIND...



SEE WHAT I MEAN? BUT THEY'RE NOT GETTING THIS BIRD...







YOU SEE, THROUGH MARTYR COMES AND OTHER MEDIA WE HAVE EASILY MANIPULATED PUBLIC OPINION IN OUR FAVOR. AND IN THE PROCESS ROUNDED UP MANY OF THE VARIOUS UNDESIRABLES OF OUR SOCIETY INTO ONE NEAT GROUP --

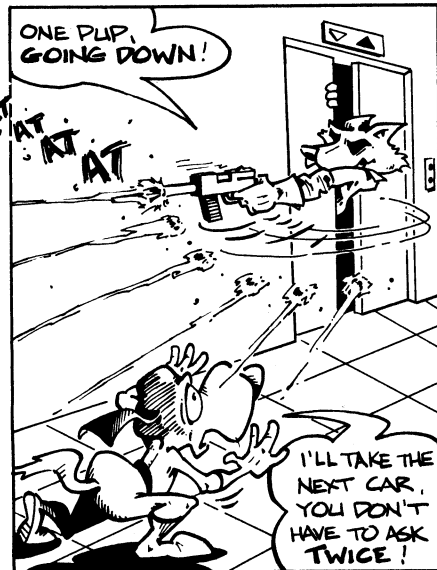


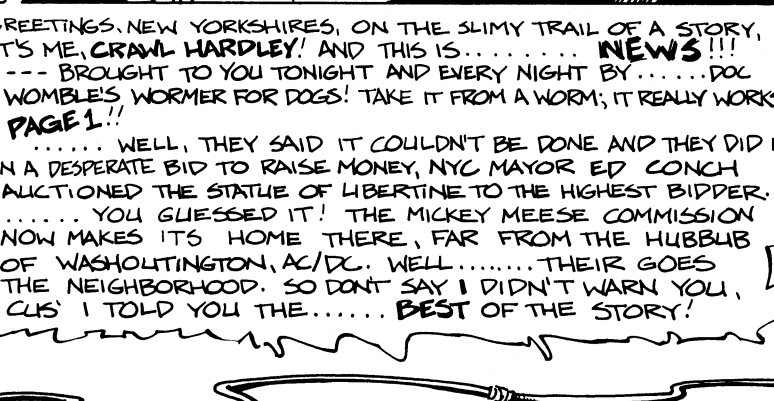
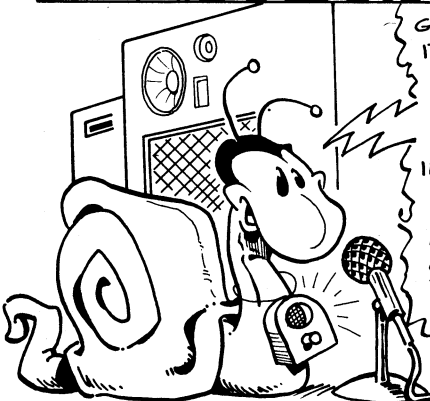
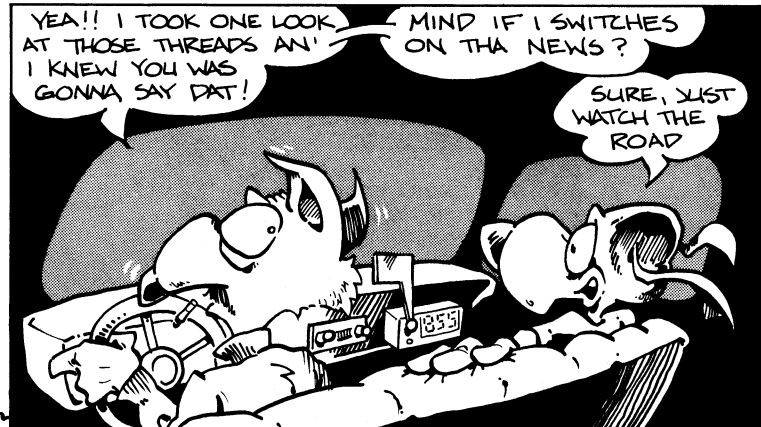
-- TROUBLEMAKERS LIKE YOUR FATHER AND YOU. WE'D LIKE YOU TO JOIN THE MICKY MEESE CLUB RIGHT NOW! TAKE HER AWAY, BOYS! WE HAVE A BOAT TO MEET!!

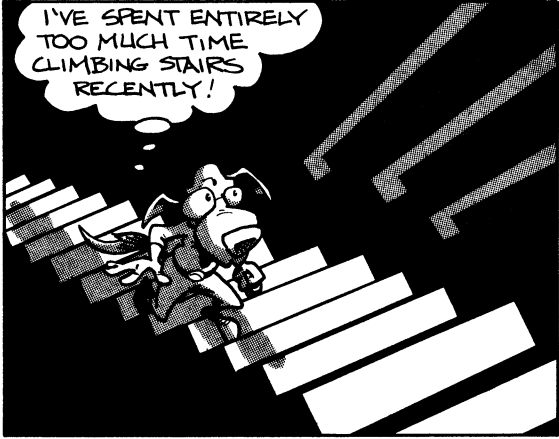


YOU KNOW, YOU SHOULD HAVE A COMIC BOOK OF YOUR OWN! ARE YOU A MUTANT?

YOU COULD BE IN THE EXISTENTIAL MEN!







I'VE SPENT ENTIRELY TOO MUCH TIME CLIMBING STAIRS RECENTLY!



YOU LUCKY CATS !! YOUR SHIP HAS COME IN!

WHAT'S ALL THE RUCKUS DOWN BELOW?



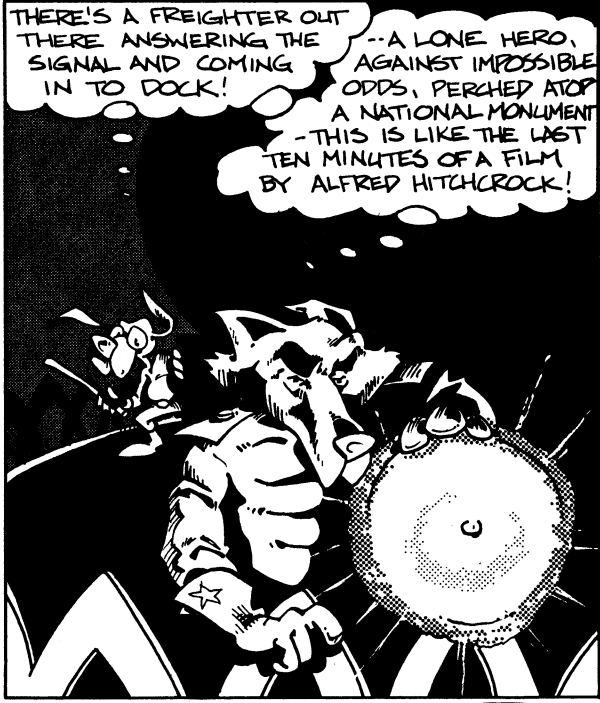
YOU CAN'T DEPORT US!

NO, BUT IN SERVICE TO YOUR COUNTRY, MY DEAR, YOU CAN BE ENLISTED INTO THE SECRET ARMY OF THE **CONTRA PANDAS**!!



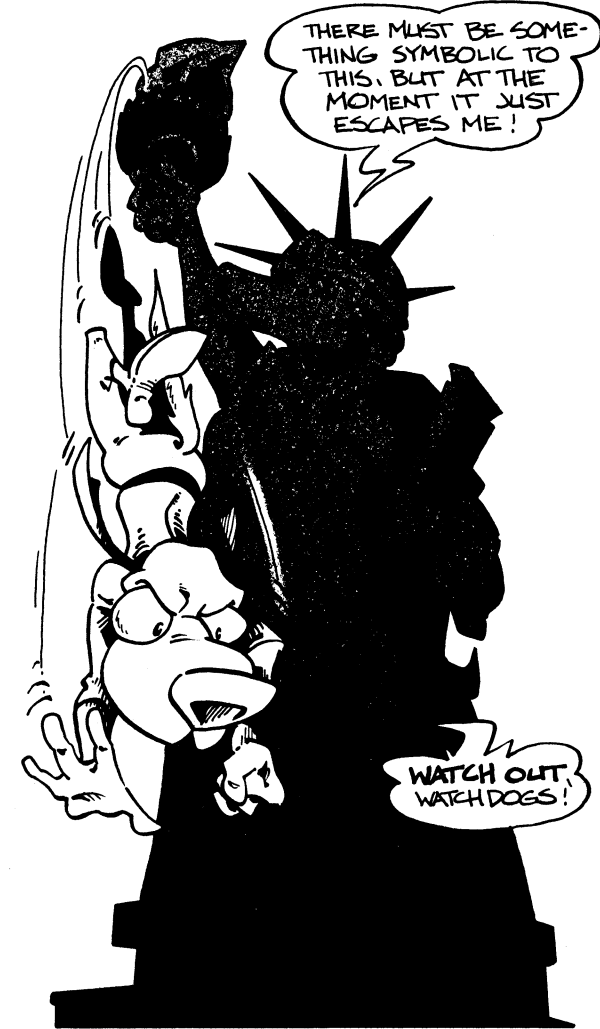
AND WITH ALL YOU BLEEDING HEART LIBERALS OUT OF THE WAY, I SHALL RUN UNOPPOSED FOR THE PRESIDENCY! JUST ANOTHER RAT IN THE WHITE HOUSE!

THEN CHANGES WILL BE MADE!!



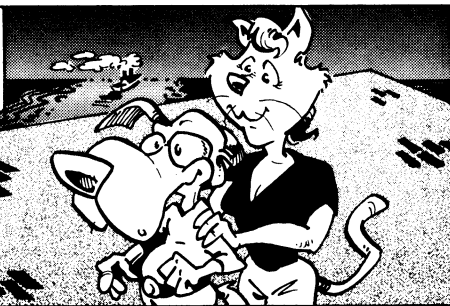
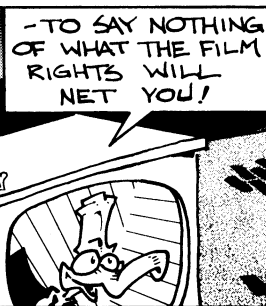
THERE'S A FREIGHTER OUT THERE ANSWERING THE SIGNAL AND COMING IN TO DOCK!

--A LONE HERO, AGAINST IMPOSSIBLE ODDS, PERCHED ATOP A NATIONAL MONUMENT -THIS IS LIKE THE LAST TEN MINUTES OF A FILM BY ALFRED HITCHCROCK!



THERE MUST BE SOMETHING SYMBOLIC TO THIS, BUT AT THE MOMENT IT JUST ESCAPES ME!

WATCH OUT, WATCH DOGS!



• A M B R O S E •

WELL, HERE WE ARE AT LAST, COLBY! THE **BIG TIME**!

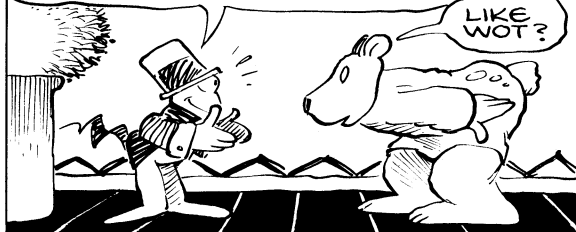
LOOK AT ALL OF THOSE PEOPLE OUT THERE! WHY THERE MUST BE WELL OVER NINE OF THEM!

YEAH, AN' ALL IN ONE PLACE, TOO. HUH, AMBROSE?



YOU BET! AND FOR AN AUDIENCE LIKE THAT WE'VE GOTTA DO SOMETHING SPECIAL! SOMETHING SO FUNNY THAT THOSE PEOPLE OUT THERE WILL BE PLUNGED INTO A DELIRIUM OF COMEDIC RAPTURE!

LIKE WOT?



I KNOW-LET'S DO A **JOKES**! THAT'LL BE FUNNY!

OH GOODIE! I LIKE JOKES! WOT ONE ARE WE GONNA DO?

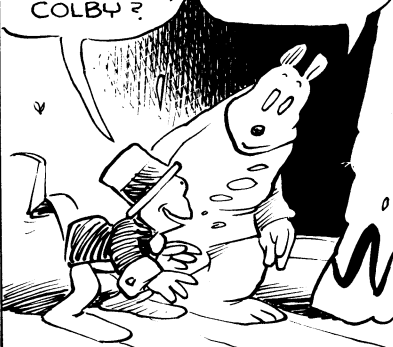


I DON'T KNOW. LET'S THINK LIKE CRAZY FOR A SECOND AND SEE IF WE GET AN IDEA!



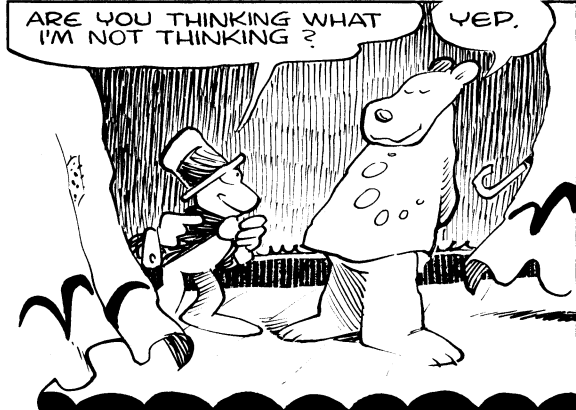
HOW ARE YOU DOING, COLBY?

WONDERFUL, AMBROSE.



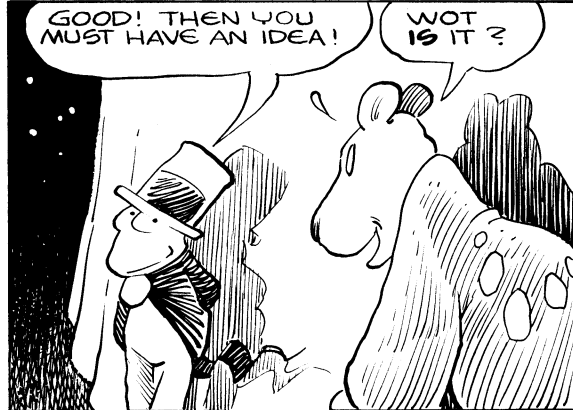
ARE YOU THINKING WHAT I'M NOT THINKING?

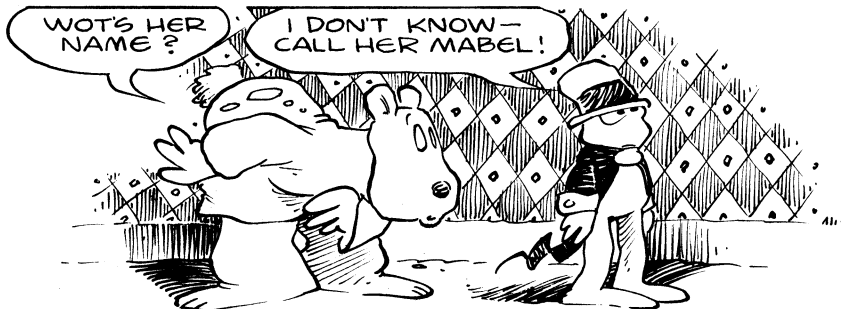
YEP.

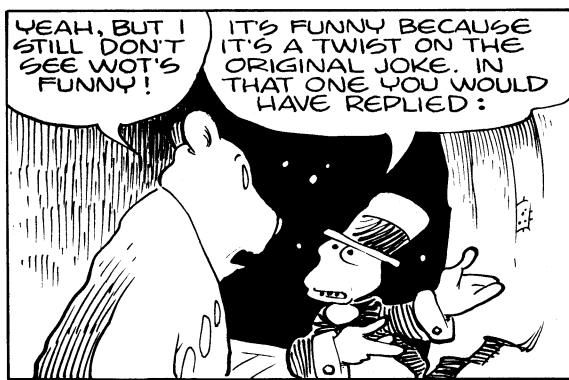


GOOD! THEN YOU MUST HAVE AN IDEA!

WOT IS IT?









a very workable medium because I can really let fly on the paper without worry of making any permanent mistakes. Other tools, such as a steel quill or sable brush, require a lot more skill and control (not to mention tons of practice) to give an effective work of art. (My steel quills are now used for darts).

Lastly, here is a picture of a couple of the characters I've come up with, not to make a point (it's ink anyway) But to get my friends off my back about sending something in. They really are pesky.

● *Thanks for the piece. You know, this military/funny-animal connection is beginning to puzzle me. Steve Gallacci, Josh Quagmire, and now a whole book devoted to it, Mirage's Grunts. Can anyone explain why people love to take animals, the creatures that don't engage in organized warfare, and make them embrace our worst characteristics? (Now if it were a series about ants, that would make sense.)* —KT

PHILIP M. COHEN
West Chester, PA

Dear Kim:

I was recently alerted to the existence of *Critters* #17 by the arrival of #18—apparently the local shop I go to orders so few that they sell out in days—but there are two other comic shops in town, and one of them had that back issue.

Once I had it, it was something of a disappointment. "Lionheart" was OK, but not as funny as in the past. I enjoyed discovering that he's from Pittsburgh, having lived in the area all my life until last month. Thought he worked in Hollywood. "Birthright II" left me cold enough that I haven't felt like rereading it to check my first feeling, that the refugees are abandoning the birthright of the title without a backward glance, to a pack of genocidal ideologues no harder to fight than the Tosiu. Even if they could do no better than call back the Tosiu and lead a puppet government, it's better than what the country faces now. As for "Lizards"—I once wrote you of my puzzlement at "Flying" and said I'd like to see more to form an opinion. Well, my opinion now—admittedly speaking as someone with no art crit skills—is that Wilber draws fine animal-headed people but he's the worst graphic storyteller you've ever published. No flow within or between panels, panels that look static even when the characters are in motion, odd viewing angles to no discernible purpose. Holland's no great plotter, either.

Issue #18 was a great improvement. I don't know that the cover's your most spectacular, but it's quite attractive. The figures are decidedly divorced from the background—looks like one cel of an animated cartoon. Good work by Engel; excellent critters, funny storyline. The cartoon outrage icons

are rather overworked, though; I'd like to see Clem O'Clam, the recycled paper tycoon, become a little more than a leaping cap at the edge of the jokes. From his reading material on the cover one can deduce that he has better taste than anyone else in the magazine. Stazer's OK. Blue Beagle is indeed better-drawn than last time, and it's certainly novel to have a superhero who faints, but I think the humor depends too strongly on bad puns and a wordplay. (If Fuller did "Lionheart," he'd have moved from Colliewood to Pigsburgh). "I Love Moosie," though dragged into the plot by brute force, was the funniest panel of the issue.

Alas, no "Fission Chicken" this time. I am unmoved by grouching about J.P. Morgan's drawing. Even if you're wrong and his cartooning is just weak rather than inventive, so what? Plot is what makes things worth rereading. Almost anyone who can draw at all can draw better than Cathy Guisewite, but Cathy is one of the five best newspaper strips around today. (Lemme check that—*Far Side*, *Doonesbury*, *Calvin and Hobbes*, *Bloom County*—yes, top five. Why are they all clustered at the front of the alphabet, I wonder?) If F.C. makes it into #19 with the "Speakingstone" sequel, it could be your best issue yet.

● *Different strokes for different folks. But let's bear in mind that Ron Wilber, John Holland, and Tim Fuller are very much at the beginning of their respective careers. Tim is very aware that he tends to go somewhat heavy on the puns and is cutting that tendency in the future, while Ron and John—well, the fact that I publish "Lizards" pretty much tells you all you need to know. I like the swing from the plot-heavy, rat-tat-tat action of many of the other series to the gentle, vignette-quality of "Lizards" (which you'll note C.E. Dinkins picked up on)—or many episodes of "Gnuff," for that matter. Not much happens in some of those stories... except you get to know and understand the characters a little better and share their feelings. Isn't that sometimes a nice alternative to hooking your eyes to a lean, mean, plot-machine story and being dumped at the other end ten pages later?*

One of the reasons the characters on the cover to #18 stood out so much is that it was done animation cel-style, with the background painting being a completely separate piece of art. I almost printed the background by itself on the back cover of that issue just to show what it looked like, but wiser financial counsel prevailed (those color separations are expensive, folks!). —KT

C.E. DINKINS
Oakland, CA

Dear K.T.:

Oh no! "Fission Chicken" and "Sam and Max, Freelance Police" in the same comic

book! What're you tryin' to do, make me die laughing?

Matter o' fact, I picked up Steve Purcell's *Sam and Max Special* this morning on a whim, and reading it over lunch I laughed so hard I nearly dropped it in the soup. The less manic influence of the latest *Critters* was called for, and for a while all went well. Gnicky Gnuff is accidentally launched on his first flight, taps into the dragons' racial memory (apprehended as a science class field trip gone berserk), and escapes certain doom to be rewarded with a lecture on cleanliness. Just another exasperating day in a kid's life. Over in Memphis (and Holland and Wilber's Memphis gets weirder in each installment of "Lizards"; reading this series is a little like learning a dialect), Dweezil and Bear give us a glimpse of the world as a nuclear free zone, and the irony that these two teenagers, aching for the freedom their junk spaceship promises, would never be more than economic slaves to whoever had the resources to make it work, keeps nudging this poignant fantasy vignette in the direction of tragedy. As far as we manage to fly from what we dislike, being human, it's never far enough.

Nearly finished with lunch, I relaxed—and my eyes widened to find Sam and Max in my hands again, back to assault my funny-bone with a reckless and inhuman glee that has surely been outlawed in our more conservative states. Thank God they had only three pages. Seized with a fit of nonstop chuckling, I had to abandon my attempt to finish my coffee without spilling it. If only I hadn't started on a refill by the time Fission Chicken confronted the machinations of the "Marketing Experts From Beyond!" I lost it. I looked down to find my necktie draped over a piece of buttered bread, but so what? I was busy watching J.P. Morgan fire a few random blasts of double-barrelled satire into an inexorable wave of corporate product ranging from merely useless to outrageously silly. True, throwaway culture is an easy target, but Fission Chicken whisks us into a realm of laugh-out-loud absurdity by figuratively and literally fighting treacle with fire. Besides, we're as always short on dangerously sane, pissed-off heroes to give our profane product panderers the swift kick in the demographics they deserve (spend their lives perfecting way to make us want to eat shit, will they?!). Morgan's back cover, too, was a treat.

Enough already. I'm eagerly awaiting the next issue, and determined not to spill anything on it.

● *What was Sam and Max, Freelance Police doing on a whim, anyway? Thanks for explaining about the butter; I was wondering what that was.* —KT

Freddy Milton's Gnuff

"NATURE'S WAY"

THE FAST-GROWING GIANT TREES HAVE BEEN STRICKEN BY DISEASE...



© MILTON

IN A REFUGEE CAMP...

I NEVER WOULD'VE THOUGHT I'D SINK SO LOW AS TO GET INVOLVED WITH GERM WARFARE!

YOU DEVELOPED THE BACTERIA FOR A GOOD CAUSE!

MEBBE SO, BUT THIS KIND OF THING CAN BE USED FOR BAD CAUSES, TOO... AND IT'D BE ALL MY FAULT, THEN! WHAT A MESS!

OH, DON'T EVEN THINK OF SUCH THINGS NOW!

PEOPLE DON'T HAVE TO FIND OUT YOU WERE THE ONE WHO FOUND A WAY TO STOP THE TREES' RUNAWAY GROWTH!

I JUST TRY TO TELL MYSELF THAT THE SAME STRAIN OF BACTERIA WOULD'VE DEVELOPED NATURALLY IN TIME! AFTER ALL, IT'S NATURE'S WAY!

I'VE HEARD THAT GEORGE STREET WAS HARDLY DAMAGED AT ALL BY THE TREES!

CRACK!

BUT EVEN IF THE TREES DIE, THAT DOESN'T SOLVE ALL OF OUR PROBLEMS...

...THAT'S KINDA WHAT I HAD IN MIND!

KABUMP

WORMS AND INSECTS
EAT AWAY TO
THEIR 'HEARTS'
CONTENT, AND DEAD
BRANCHES FALL
ALL THE TIME...

CRASH!

THE POLITICIANS LEAVE THE REFUGEE
CAMPS AND GO BACK TO CITY HALL...

WHEN THE TREES DIED, I THOUGHT THINGS
WOULD RETURN TO NORMAL, BUT NOW WE'RE
FACED WITH ROTTING TREES OF
GIGANTIC SIZE!

WHY DON'T WE JUST
LEAVE THEM WHERE
THEY ARE?

ROTTING
TREES ARE
A SAFETY
HAZARD!

THE TREES
HAVE TO GO!

IF WE CHOP THEM DOWN, WHAT PART OF TOWN DO
WE LET THEM
FALL INTO?

DOESN'T MATTER! PEOPLE DON'T
DARE LIVE WHERE THERE'S ALWAYS
THE DANGER OF FALLING KING
SIZE BRANCHES!

IF WE DECIDE THIS
POLITICALLY, WE'LL HAVE
TO COMPENSATE THE
PROPERTY-OWNERS
FOR DAMAGES-AND
THAT'D BE A LOT!

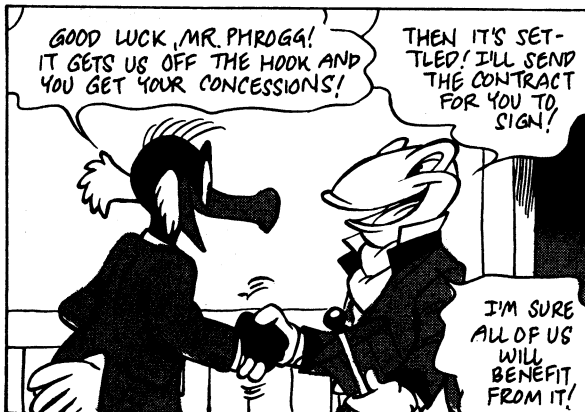
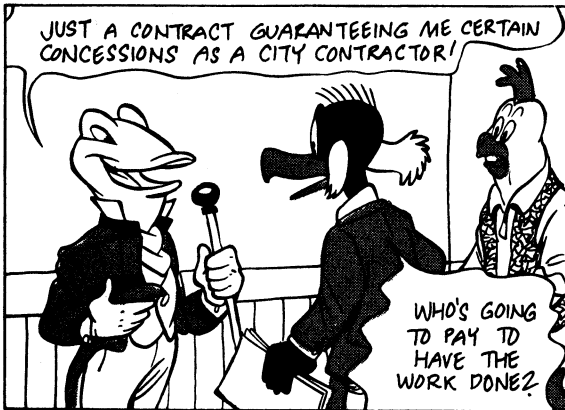
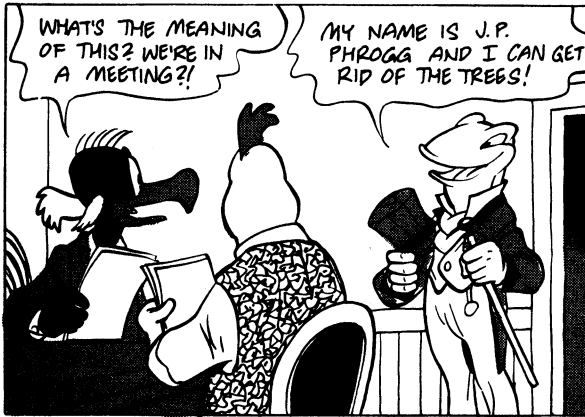
YOU CAN'T MAKE
AN OMELET
WITHOUT
BREAKING
EGGS!

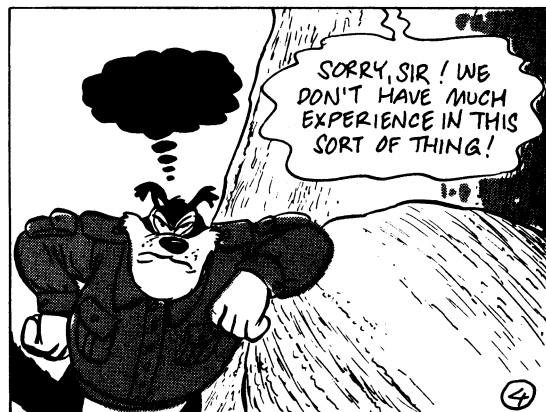
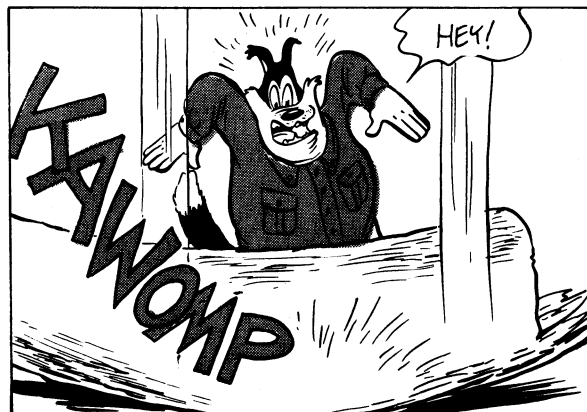
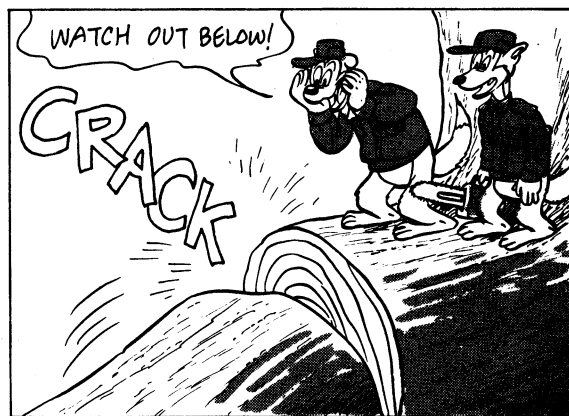
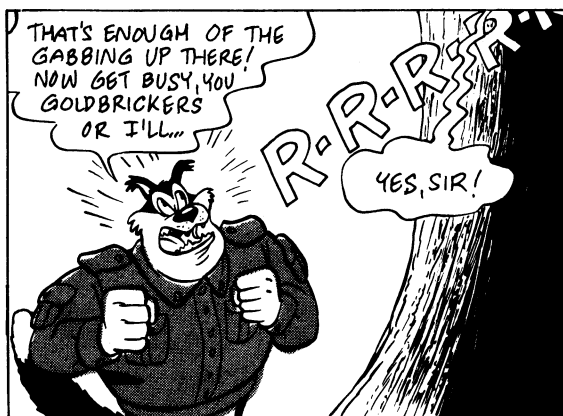
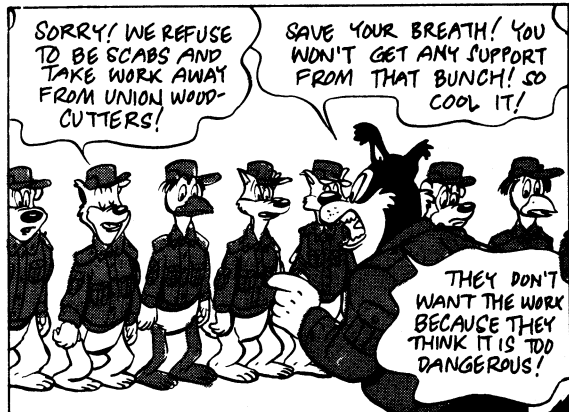
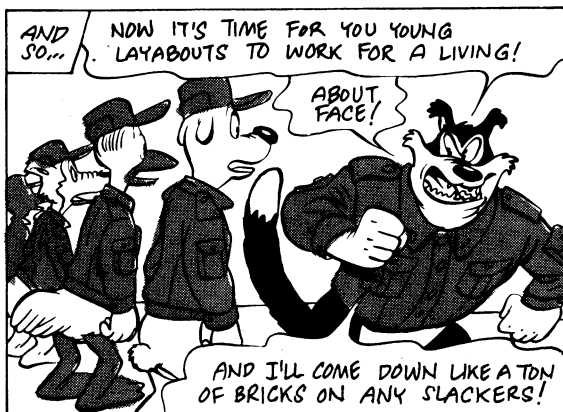
NOT THE
NORTH SIDE...
I LIVE THERE!

LET'S EXPROPRIATE THE POOR SIDE OF TOWN!
IT'S THE CHANCE FOR URBAN RENEWAL WE'VE
ALWAYS WANTED IN THIS COUNCIL!

WITH THE SHAPE THE BUDGET'S
IN NOW, WE CAN'T AFFORD
TO REBUILD WHOLE
DISTRICTS!

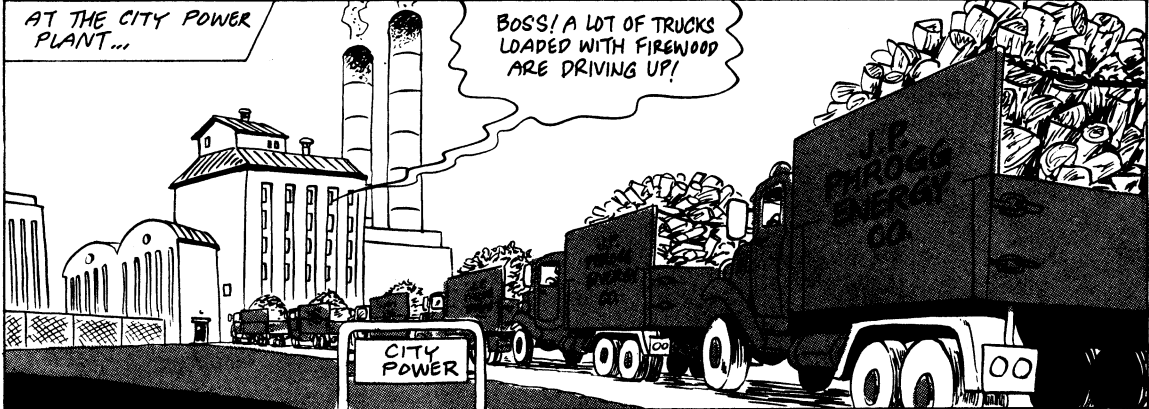
I CAN SOLVE YOUR PROBLEM!





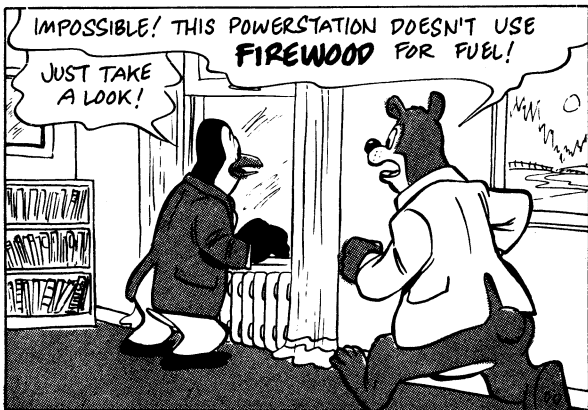
AT THE CITY POWER PLANT...

BOSS! A LOT OF TRUCKS LOADED WITH FIREWOOD ARE DRIVING UP!



IMPOSSIBLE! THIS POWERSTATION DOESN'T USE FIREWOOD FOR FUEL!

JUST TAKE A LOOK!



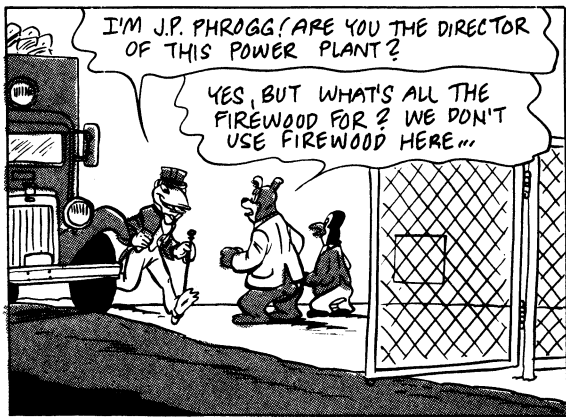
WHAT?! THERE MUST BE SOME MISTAKE!

A REAL BIG ONE, TOO!



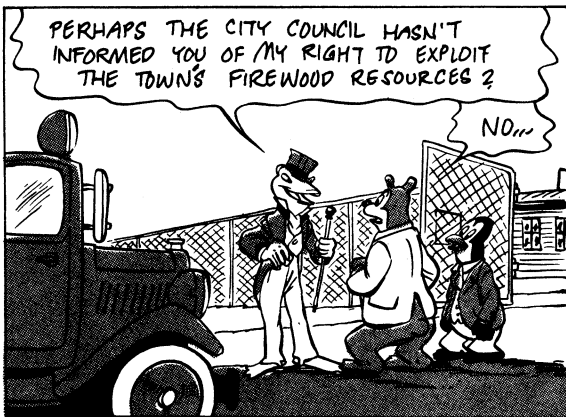
I'M J.P. PHROGG! ARE YOU THE DIRECTOR OF THIS POWER PLANT?

YES, BUT WHAT'S ALL THE FIREWOOD FOR? WE DON'T USE FIREWOOD HERE...



PERHAPS THE CITY COUNCIL HASN'T INFORMED YOU OF MY RIGHT TO EXPLOIT THE TOWN'S FIREWOOD RESOURCES?

NO...



BUT I CAN TELL YOU THAT WE HAVE ALREADY MADE OUR OWN FUEL SUPPLY ARRANGEMENTS, MR. PHROGG!

OH, NO DOUBT...

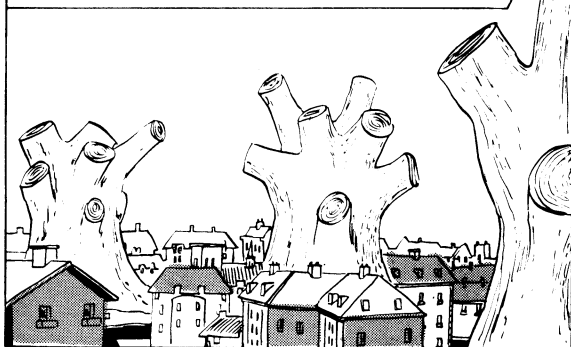


... BUT THE FINE PRINT OF MY CONTRACT WITH THE CITY STATES THAT YOUR PLANT MUST TAKE MY FIREWOOD!

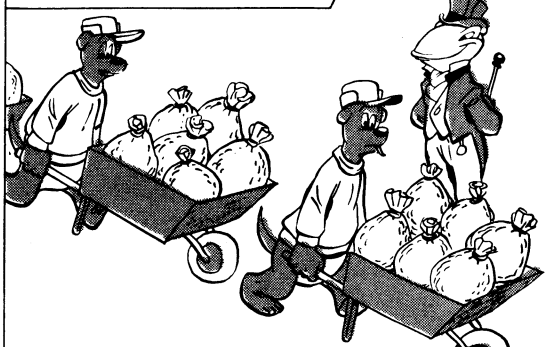
WHAT?!



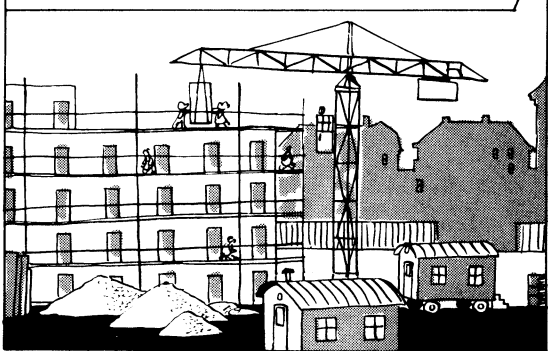
IN RECORD TIME, J.P. PHROGG HAS THE WORK DOWN TO A SYSTEM...



HE MAKES A LOT OF MONEY FROM THE WOOD...



THEN HE INVESTS THE MONEY IN THE GENERAL RECONSTRUCTION...



... AND MAKES EVEN MORE MONEY...



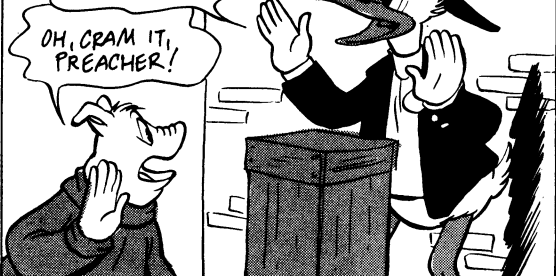
BUT NOT ALL OPPORTUNISTS ARE QUITE SO FORTUNATE...

THIS FORMULA CURES HOARSENESS (COFF-COFF)! I SAID IT CURES HOARSENESS!



HEAVEN HAS SHOWN MERCY ON OUR UNWORTHY SOULS BY RESCUING US FROM THIS DIRE CALAMITY, AND JUST...

OH, CRAM IT, PREACHER!



BUT BE NOT COMPLACENT! OUR TRIBULATIONS MAY NOT BE FINISHED! THE THREAT FROM THE TREES OF DOOM MAY RISE AGAIN AND CURSE US!

WE'RE SICK OF HEARING THIS SELF-RIGHTEOUS CLAPTRAP!



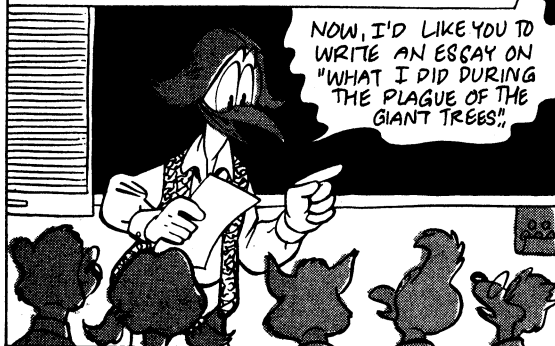
GRADUALLY PEOPLE RETURN TO THE INNER CITY...

FORTUNATELY, OUR NEIGHBORHOOD IS SAFE NOW!

WE OWE THIS J.P. PHROGG A GREAT MANY THANKS!



LIFE EVERYWHERE RETURNS TO ITS
NORMAL GROOVES...



NOW, I'D LIKE YOU TO
WRITE AN ESSAY ON
"WHAT I DID DURING
THE PLAGUE OF THE
GIANT TREES!"

YEAH, BUT THE GREAT FLOOD OF FORTY YEARS
AGO WAS JUST AS BAD AS THIS! MAYBE WORSE!

INDEED IT
WAS!

WHEN WE WERE YOUNG
WE HAD SOME REAL
DISASTERS!

WHAT'S
THE WORLD
COMING
TO ?

NOW BACK
IN '23...

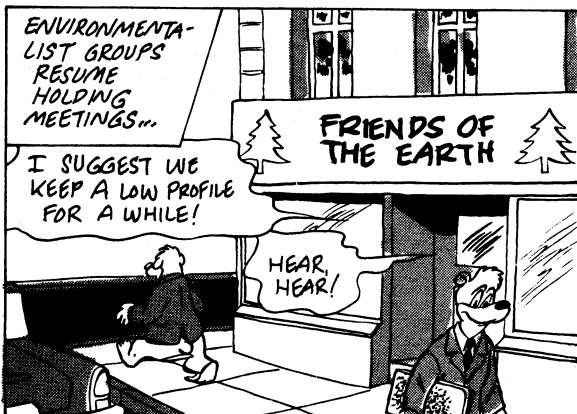


ENVIRONMENTA-
LIST GROUPS
RESUME
HOLDING
MEETINGS...

I SUGGEST WE
KEEP A LOW PROFILE
FOR A WHILE!

FRIENDS OF
THE EARTH

HEAR,
HEAR!



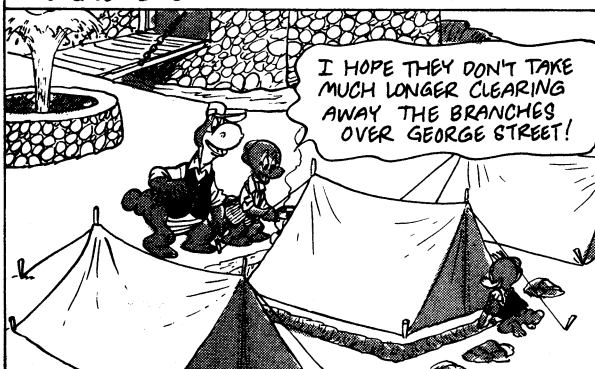
LAND SPECULATORS SCENT OPPORTUNITY...

THAT LAW SETTING LAND ASIDE FOR NATURE
CONSERVATION...
I THINK NOW'S
THE TIME TO
GET IT
REPEALED!

HEAR,
HEAR!



THE GNUFFS STILL LIVE IN THE REFUGEE CAMP...



I HOPE THEY DON'T TAKE
MUCH LONGER CLEARING
AWAY THE BRANCHES
OVER GEORGE STREET!

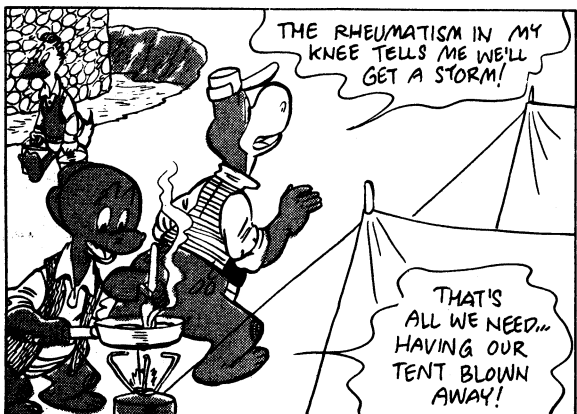
LIVING IN A TENT
IS GETTING A
BIT TIRESOME!

LOOKS LIKE IT'LL RAIN
TONIGHT!



THE RHEUMATISM IN MY
KNEE TELLS ME WE'LL
GET A STORM!

THAT'S
ALL WE NEED...
HAVING OUR
TENT BLOWN
AWAY!



I TIGHTENED THE TENT ROPES
AN' DUG A DITCH SO THE RAIN
WATER CAN RUN OFF!

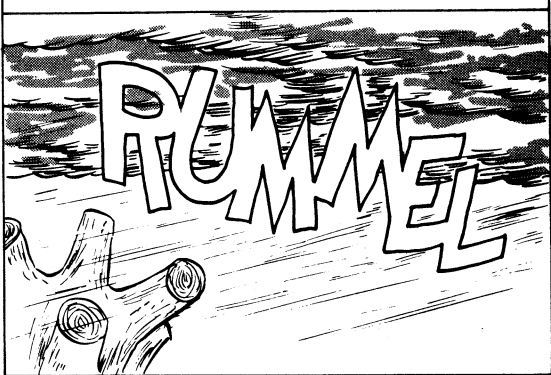
GOOD
FOR YOU,
GNICKY!



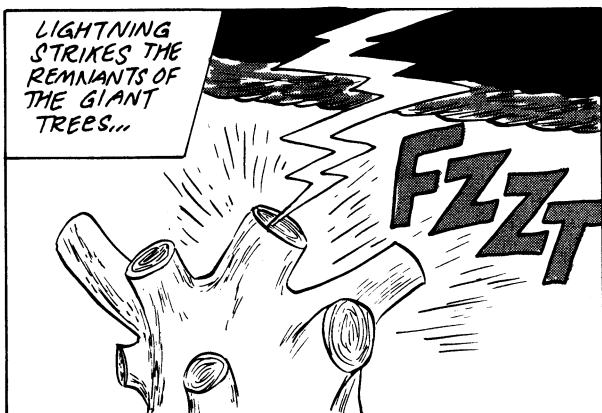
GNORBERT IS RIGHT... A STORM
GATHERS OVER THE CITY...



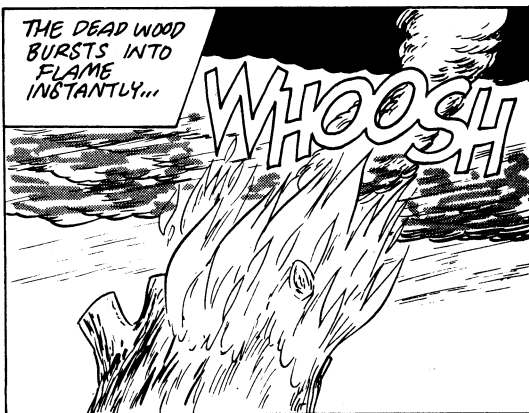
... AND WITH THE STORM COMES THUNDER...



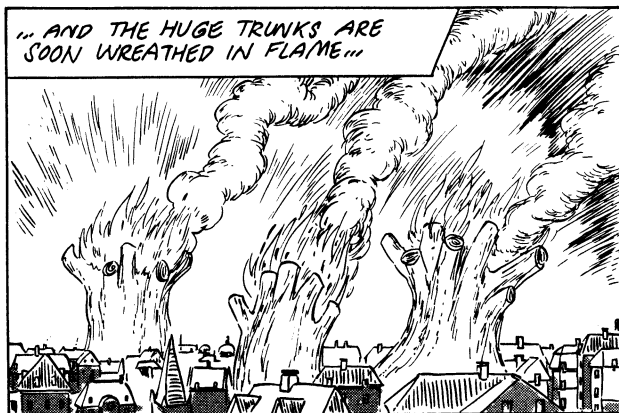
LIGHTNING
STRIKES THE
REMAINANTS OF
THE GIANT
TREES...



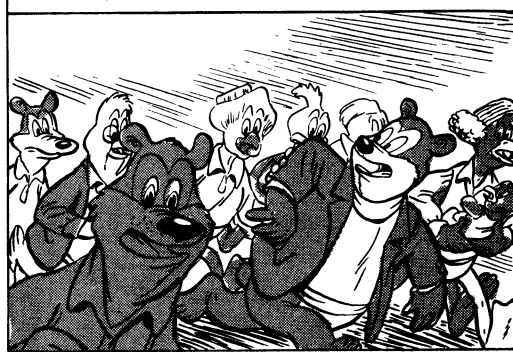
THE DEAD WOOD
BURSTS INTO
FLAME
INSTANTLY...



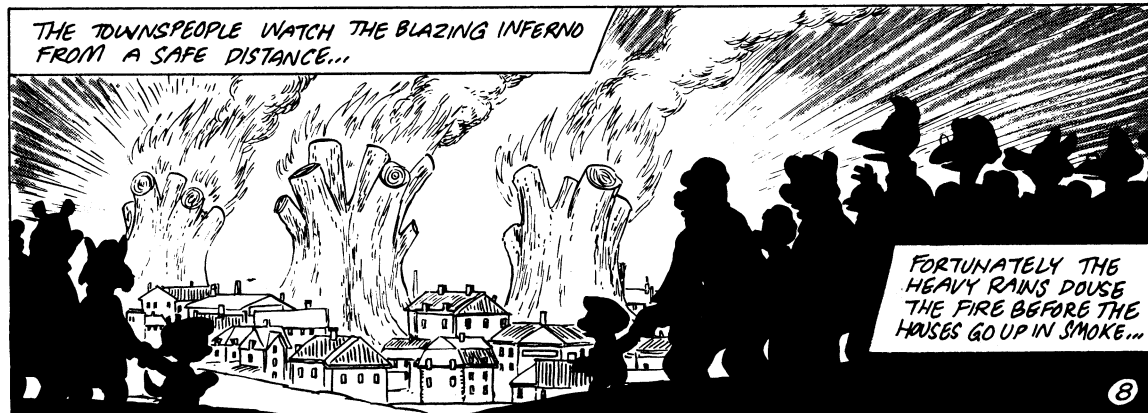
... AND THE HUGE TRUNKS ARE
SOON WREATHED IN FLAME...

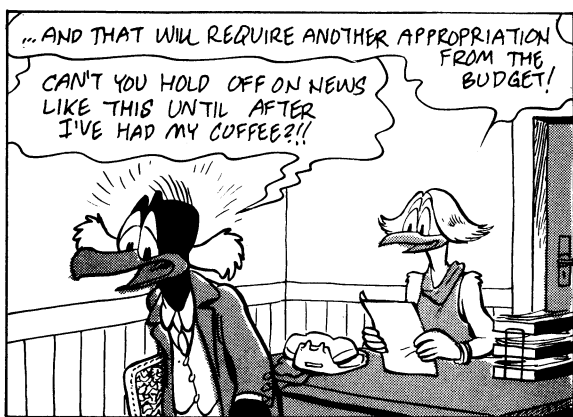
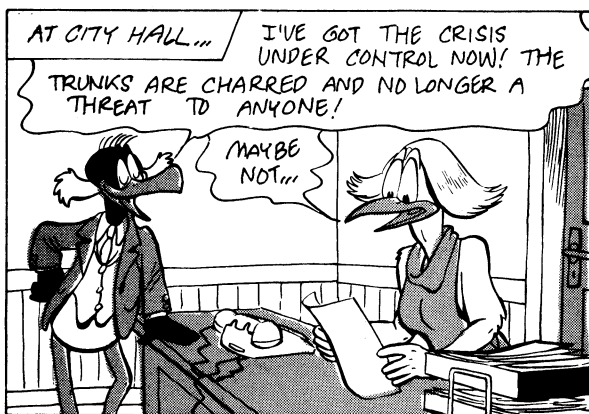
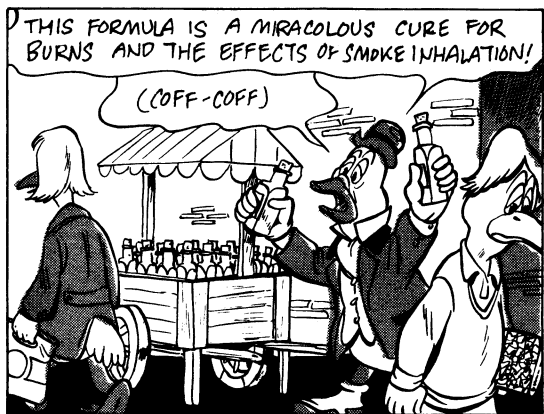
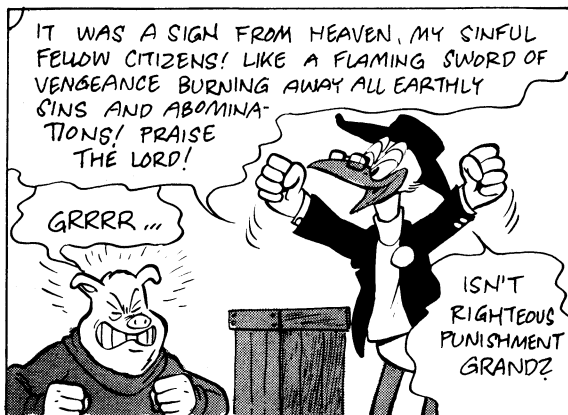


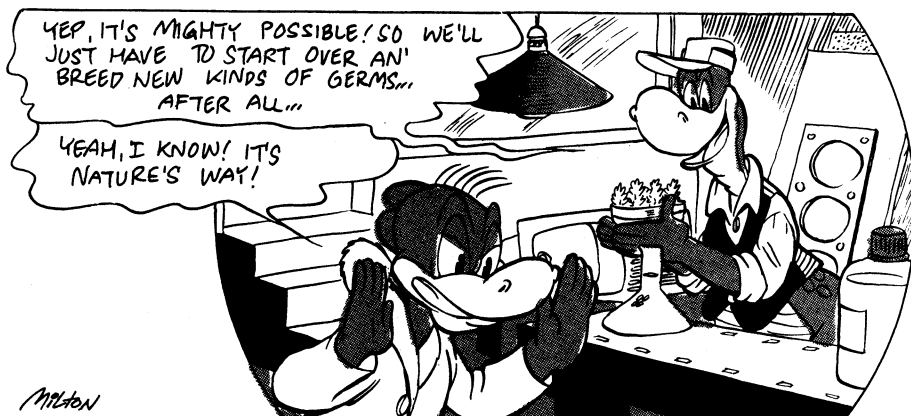
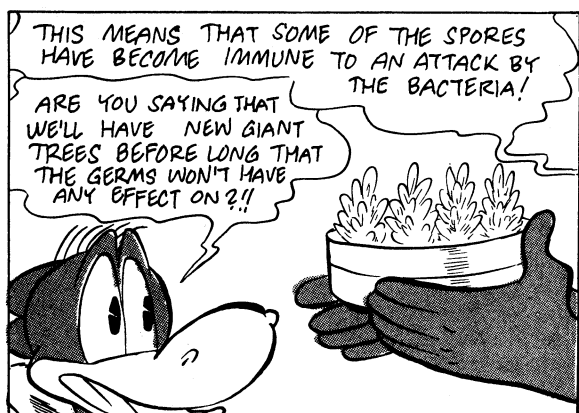
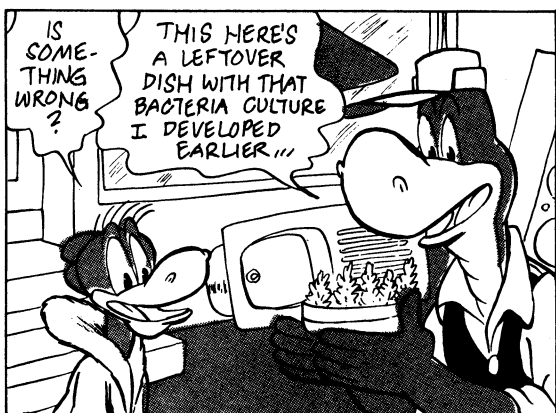
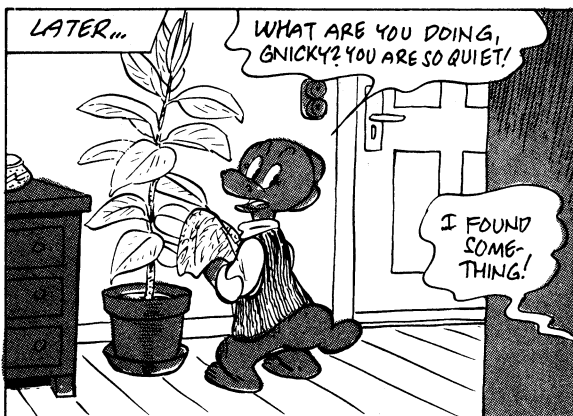
RESIDENTS ARE FORCED TO FLEE
AGAIN, THIS TIME BECAUSE OF THE HEAT...



THE TOWNSPEOPLE WATCH THE BLAZING INFERNO
FROM A SAFE DISTANCE...





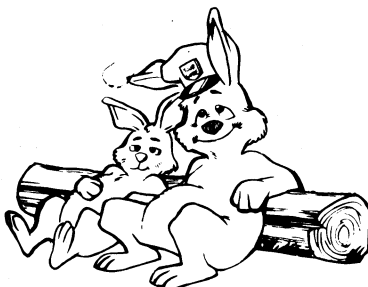
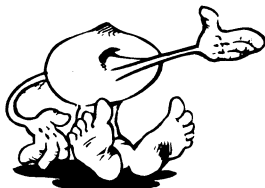
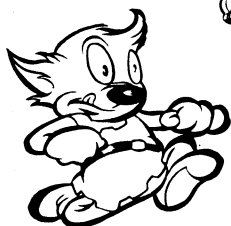
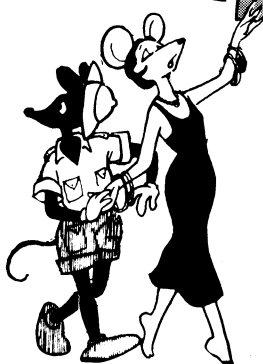


END

MILTON

Welcome to the Fantagraphics

MENAGERIE



ADVENTURES OF CAPT. JACK

Adventures of Captain Jack #3: Part 2 of "Sat. Night": Herman and Beezlebub visit the netherworld.

Adventures of Captain Jack #4: Maniacal astronauts and a batty back-up strip.

Adventures of Captain Jack #5: "Farmer Fred, I'm In Love With Your Daughter" Part 1: Arrival on Janet's planet. (This is the one that drove the distributors nuts around the country.)

Adventures of Captain Jack #6: Part 2: Herman and Janet decide to go away together.

Adventures of Captain Jack #7: Part 3: Beezlebub intrudes in Herman and Janet's relationship.

Adventures of Captain Jack #8: A daring escape, the Captain in drag, and more.

Adventures of Captain Jack #9: Pool hustling with Saturated Fats, and the conclusion of the storyline!

CRITTERS

Critters #4: *Gnuff* and *Birthingright* continue, *Lionheart* premieres, and the first Ken Macklin cover painting!

Critters #5: *Birthingright* continues, the first *Gnuff* novel concludes (with a cover), plus Stan Sakai's *Nilson Groundthumper*!

Critters #6: *Usagi Yojimbo* tale with cover, *Birthingright* concludes, and the first *Firecracker Jack* by Mark Armstrong!

Critters #8: *Jack Bunny* by cover artist Mark Armstrong, Templeton Kelly tribute, and *Lionheart* begins.

Critters #9: Hallowe'en issue with Gnuff behind a mask, *Lionheart's* nightmare, and Dog Boy.

Critters #10: *Usagi Yojimbo* cover and story, plus the continuations of *Gnuff* and *Lionheart*.

Critters #11: Special Christmas issue, featuring the conclusions of *Usagi Yojimbo*, *Gnuff*, and *Lionheart*, plus work by Mike Kazaleh, J. Holland and Ron Wilber, Mark Armstrong, Ty Templeton, Sam Kieth, Steve Lafler, and Ken Macklin. 68 pages!

Critters #12: *Birthright* returns, with a cover by Gallacci, plus Reed Waller and Kate Worley, and Sam Kieth!

Critters #13: *Gnuff* cover and 16-page chapter, plus *Birthright*, *Surfin' Neanderthals* by Mark Armstrong.

Critters #14: *Usagi Yojimbo* story and cover, plus *Birthright* and *Gnuff* continue.

Critters #15: *The Blue Beagle* and *Fission Chicken* both debut, and *Birthright* races on!

Critters #16: The conclusion to *Gnuff*, another *Nilson Groundthumper*, and *Birthright* reaches a climax.

Critters #17: *Lionheart* returns in a two-part Canadian adventure, plus the conclusion of *Birthright*.

Critters #18: *Leggo Lamb* by Jim Engel premieres. Also, the conclusion to *Lionheart*, and *Blue Beagle*.

Critters #19: *Gnuff* returns in a tale of nature gone wild, plus *Sam and Max*, *Freelance Police*, *Dragons*, and *Fission Chicken*.

Critters #20: *Speakingstone* by Waller and Worley returns, plus *Gnuff* and *Fission Chicken*.

Critters #21: More *Gnuff*, *Speakingstone*, *Fission Chicken*—32 pages worth—plus a Sam Kieth cover!

Critters Special #1—Nilson Groundthumper and Hermie: Both the *Albedo* stories, plus a new 10-page strip!

DOG BOY

Dog Boy #1: Journey off into surreal experiences with "Werewolf Bikers" and more!

Dog Boy #2: Sir Isaac Newton guest stars as reality unravels.

Dog Boy #3: Dog Boy shows how to publish your own comic book.

Dog Boy #4: Dog Boy goes to Hell, plus Dog Girl invades the White House. Guest starring Reagan!

Dog Boy #5: An experiment misfires, and Dog Boy and Benb combine to form... Dogb! Oh no!

Dog Boy #6: "Drinkin' Man's Blues," with a striking painted cover.

Dog Boy #7: He be Doog Boog. Jazzy issue exploring Dog Boy's multiple personalities!

Dog Boy #8: Alfred Knoot starts a new newspaper, Dog Girl goes graffiti-crazy, and more!

HUGO

Hugo #1: Milton (*Midnite*) Knight's feline "Meets the Baron."

Hugo #2: Hugo becomes a cartoonist and gets into deep trouble.

Hugo #3: Hugo is abducted by mermaids and fights sharks.

MYRON MOOSE

Myron Moose Funnies #1: Lots of goofy snort jokes, plus parodies of Dr. Seuss and Uncle Wiggly books.

Myron Moose Funnies #2: Parodies of Batman, Mickey Mouse, The Spirit, and lots more.

Myron Moose Funnies #3: "Comic Book Fans," and more silly snort.

USAGI YOJIMBO

Usagi Yojimbo #1 (2nd printing): Usagi journeys tells how he became a samurai. Plus: Dennis Fujitake!

Usagi Yojimbo #2: Usagi goes into training and has his first duel. Plus: A new strip by Dave Thorne.

Usagi Yojimbo #3: The continuation of "Samurai," and a "Croakers" strip by Don Dougherty.

Usagi Yojimbo #4: The conclusion to Usagi's origin, and the first half of a penguin strip by Gary Kato.

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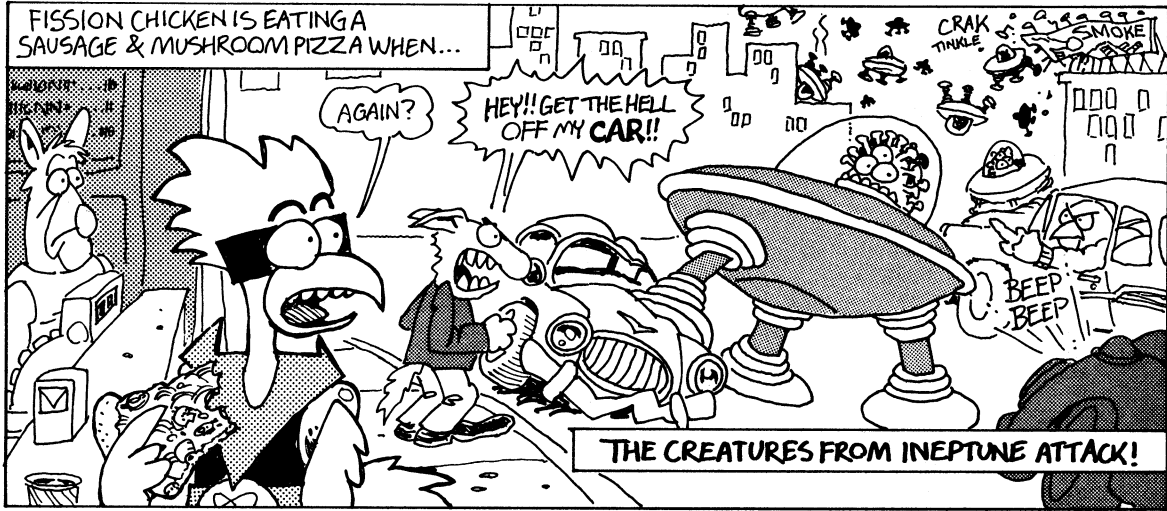
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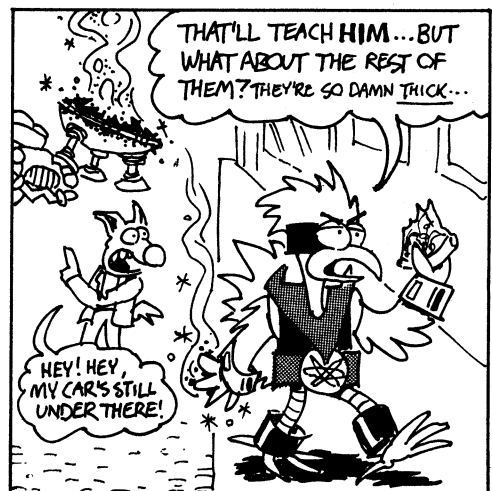
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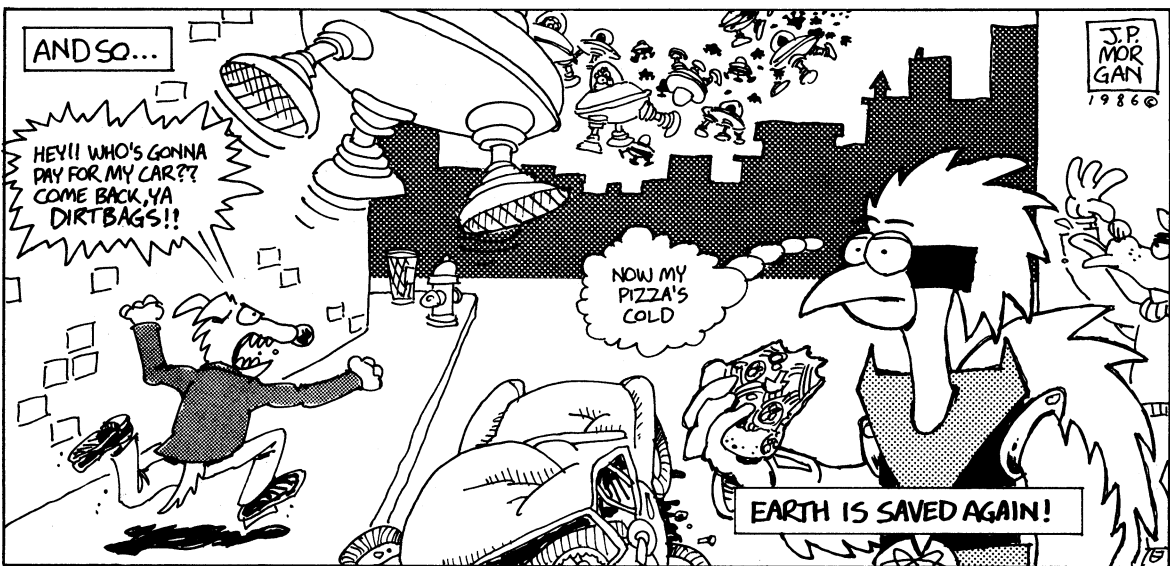
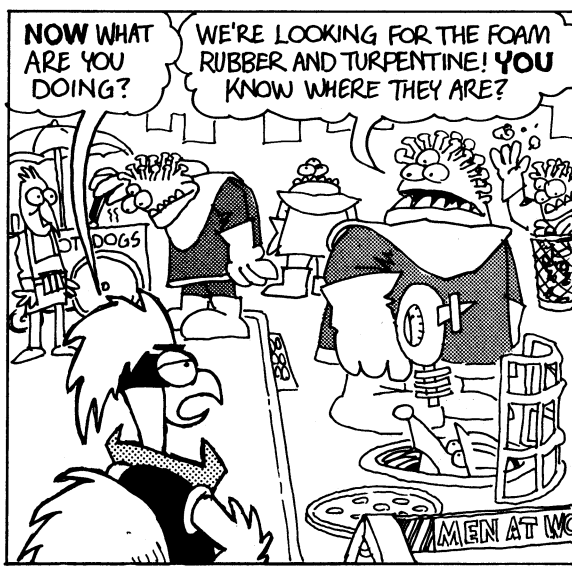
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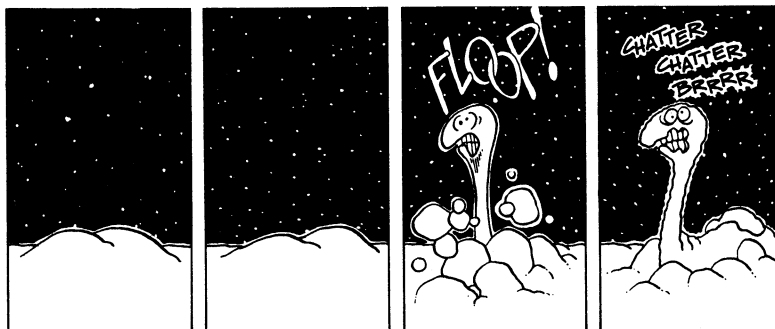






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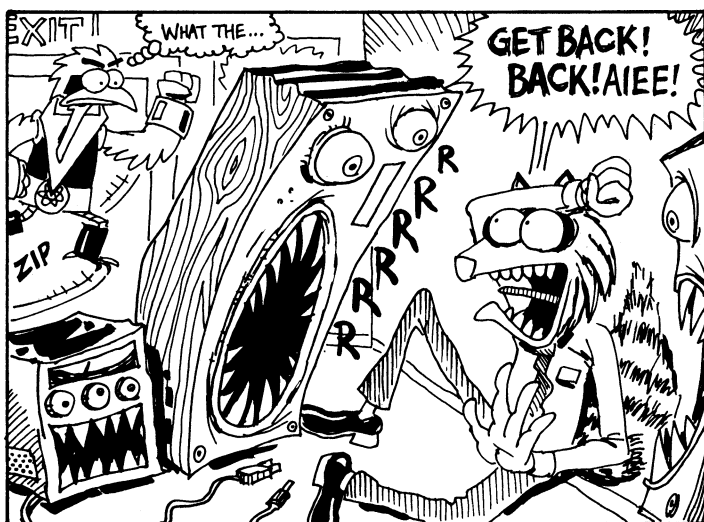
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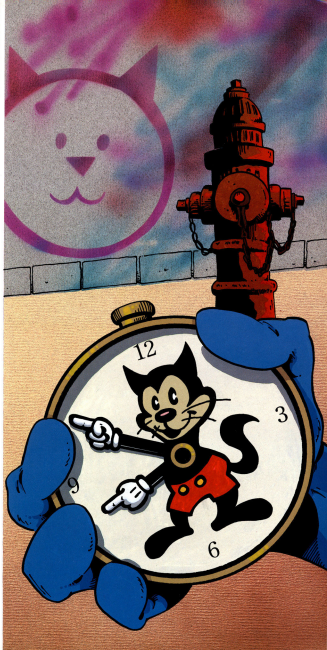
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