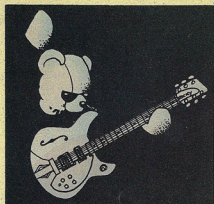


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(\$5.95 in
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Critters

No. 23
PRESENTS

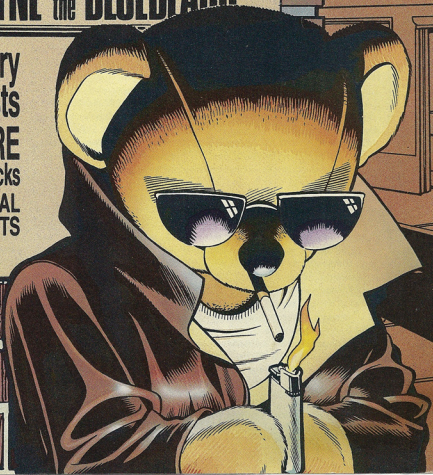


★ ★ ★
**FOR
ONE
NIGHT
ONLY**



TEDDY PAYNE and the **BLUEBEARS**

with their very
special guests
ALAN MOORE
& the Sinister Ducks
PLUS ADDITIONAL
SURPRISE GUESTS



© 1994 DC Comics

EDITORIAL

Well, now that it's here, I don't need to hype it, do I?

Oh, heck, let me hype a couple of things anyway. First, there's the return in full force of one of my faves, the one and only Ty Templeton; in collaboration with Anthony Van Bruggen, he has created what I think is probably his best, most accomplished strip ever. That, and singing, too!

I'd also like to welcome two new cartoonists (at least, new to *Critters*), Bob Conway and Marc Schirmeister. You may have seen Bob's work in the *Amazing Heroes* funny-animal issue, for which he did a full-page strip; look for more work from him from various publishers (we'll keep you apprised). The only thing of Marc's I've seen in print before this is a story he did for his friend Mike Kazaleh's "Captain Jack" (in *Doomsday Squad* #5), but he shows himself here to be a cartoonist of rare energy and wit. He'll be back, that's for sure.

Once I'd settled on a music theme for this issue, I wanted to discover that the cartoonists chose a wide diversity of musical genres to work from. We've got: blues (Templeton/Van Bruggen), Christmas carols (Stazer), rap (Fuller), classical music and good ol' rock-n-roll (Milton), punk rock (Holland/Wilber), cabaret rock (Moore), and satanic death music and muzak (Morgan). No country-western or jazz, but maybe next time...

Four creators slipped by without reference to music: Stan Sakai (who can do what he wants as far as I'm concerned), Mike Kazaleh (whose wonderful revival of Milt Gross's dialect writing qualifies as something nearly musical), and Bob Conway and Marc Schirmeister (whose stories are inventory pieces placed here to make up for some other stories that didn't quite make it on deadline).

Alert collectors will note that the flexidisc is mono only, although the Alan Moore track was originally released in stereo. It turned out at the last minute that the flexidisc printer couldn't handle stereo on both sides of the disc without going to a different kind of vinyl, which would have pushed up already considerable costs on the issue; so we decided to stick with mono. The full stereo version will have to wait for the day we release *The Cartoonists On Vinyl: Play Don't Draw* longplayer.

After all my vocal support of the paper we've been using, it's been particularly mortifying to see two issues (#20 and #22) go out printed on what looked like anorexic newsprint. Our printer's supplier shipped him a bum load of paper, and two issues went out before I could put a stop to it. It's especially disturbing in that the two issues featured

some of the nicest art jobs (by Reed Waller and Tim Fuller) the magazine has ever seen, and the dreadful paper made them almost a chore to read. Because the book has been so late, going back to press was not an option, but I've advised our printer that the next time he tries to slip us junk like what he printed those issues on he'd better be prepared to eat 9,000 copies of *Critters*.

Since this is the last issue of the year, tradition demands that I give a quick summary of what's coming up in 1989. Okay; here's a partial list of the goodies in store for you:

- * A new "Lionheart" serial by Tom Stazer and Anthony Smith, beginning in #25;

- * Semi-regular "Angst" strips by William Van Horn, including a cover-featured one in #26;

- * A new 10-page "Nilson Groundthumper" tale by Stan Sakai, with accompanying contest, in #27;

- * More chapters of "Gnuff" (cover featured next issue), "Lizards," "Fission Chicken," and "Blue Beagle";

- * And, eventually, the return of a space-opera serial we've been receiving some mail about lately.

Okay, that's it. Enjoy the issue!

—KIM THOMPSON

LETTERS

Noel Tominack
Indian Head, MD

Critters #19 was something of a surprise. Bummer about Reed and Kate's story not being in it, though—but they are so busy these days. At least it will synchronize with Reed's cover now. Another surprise was that I liked a couple of the stories. (*See, thanks.* —KT)

"Sam and Max" was pretty funny! I picked up their book last week and still can't get enough of them. Steve Purcell is a good artist/writer, although I think you should have put him in there on his own—not to fill in for "SpeakingStone." [*Actually, I'd been planning to ask Steve for a piece all along; the "SpeakingStone" fiasco just precipitated it.* —KT]

"Lizards" was pretty good too. It's a good example of the emerging funny-reptile sub-genre and pleasant to read. I don't know why it took me so long to discover that. However, in the future, can the stories be a little longer?

The letters pages were very interesting this time. I don't know what all the fuss over "Birthright" is about—and I'm one of its major fans! I think in a previous letter I stated if Steve were going to do another story, it should have the same characters but a different storyline. [*How revolutionary.* —KT] I also think Steve deserves a vacation for another six issues. (I'm getting used to the "six on, six off" idea). It seems you ran

a lot of art this time too—I really like that.

I have finally figured out why you will not run any of my partner's [Brian O'Connell's] drawings. So I had him draw up one with clothes and enclosed it. [*Oh, okay. Just so you don't think I'm persecuting you.* —KT]

Okay, so I shot my foot off with the worst idea; the second-worst idea was the double-sized Christmas issue (which came two weeks late, even). [*Oops.* —KT] As for you picking up "half-decent" stories, you are too late for one. Avitar studios of Freeport, Texas has picked up mine and Brian O'Connell's "AEI." [*It's a pleasure seeing someone who likes his own work as much as this, isn't it?* —KT] But don't worry, I'll send you a copy when it comes out. There's still other artists out there; just look in the small press. That also goes for all the readers of *Critters* too.

That's about it for this issue. Looking forward to that Waller/Worley story and another great letters page. Until then, drive carefully or else keep your head real low.

- Thanks, Noel. No hard feelings for the wisecracks, I hope? —KT



© 1987 Brian O'Connell

Edward Kandi
Carbondale, IL

Dear Kim,

I re-read the letter that I wrote several issues back and realized that I sounded like a real hard-ass. None of the new series you were putting in *Critters* seemed to please me. Well, I was wrong. I thoroughly enjoy the variety presented in every issue. It's a pleasant surprise to open every new release and see what's new in anthropomorphic comics. I know I commented that I probably wouldn't buy a book with just *Usagi Yojimbo* in it. I lied! I now subscribe. I also said *egnuff's* *egnuff* to *Gnuff*. I enjoy the stories very much, but seeing it just about every issue takes away that aforementioned pleasant surprise. Short one-issue titles such as

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 62]

Critters

NUMBER 23

APRIL 1988

C O N T E N T S

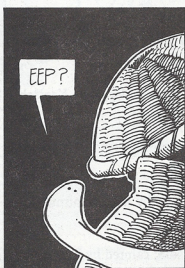
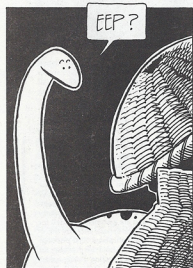
Usagi Yojimbo	by Stan Sakai	
"One Night in the Cold"		
The rabbit ronin makes a lot of new friends.....		2
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"Christmas"		
A primer to Yuletide carols for the modern world.....		4
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Sometimes the best rehearsal won't help a bit.....		9
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"Right to the Blues"		
Life can be a fern bar when you're on the road too long.....		10
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A Dickens of a yarn, spun anew.....		20
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A tender moment fueled by some tough songs.....		42
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A fairy tale all in dialect, with a surprising moral.....		50
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"The Origin of Mr.Fly"		
Panic in Buzzburg as the giant cats invade!.....		55
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"Those Newspaper Filler Articles"		
Ever wonder what's behind them?.....		59
Cover illustrated by Ty Templeton; colored by Tom Luth.		
Special Flexi-disc musical insert between pages 16 and 17.		

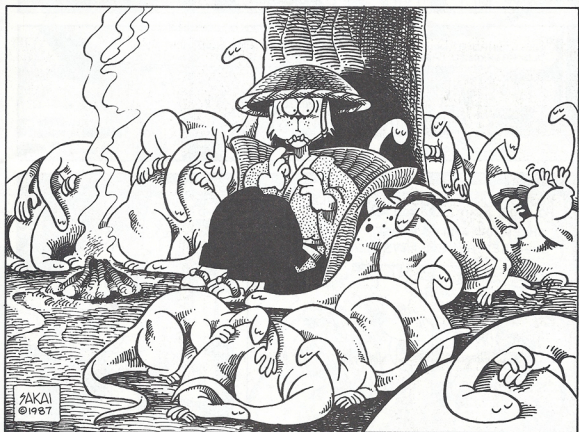
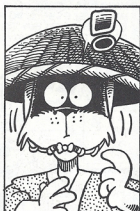
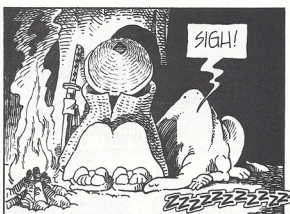
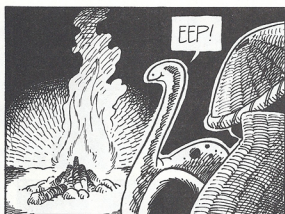


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ONE NIGHT IN THE COLD





SAKAI
©1987

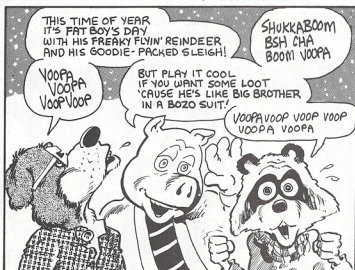
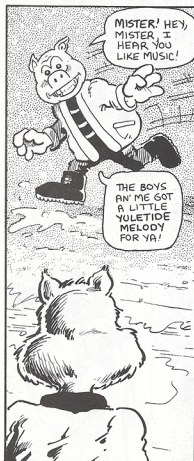
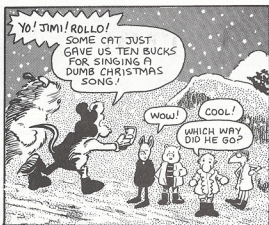
Christmas

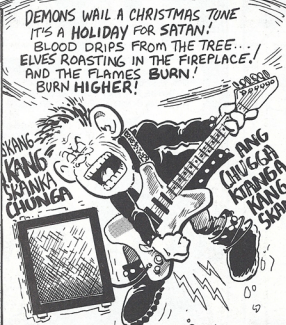
... IT'S NOT LIKE IT WAS WHEN I WAS A KITTEN.

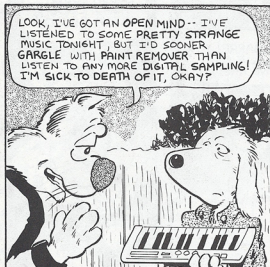
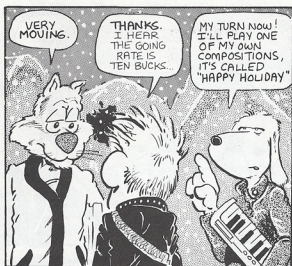
IN THE BIG CITY, CHRISTMAS IS PRETTY MUCH LIKE ANY OTHER DAY -- EXCEPT I DON'T HAVE TO GO TO WORK.

LIONHEART











end

DE GRAND

WA-ZOO!

87 © (KIETH)

ONE DAY "IS" AND "DE
WAZ" ARE PRACTICING FOR
TONIGHT'S BIG GIG WHEN...

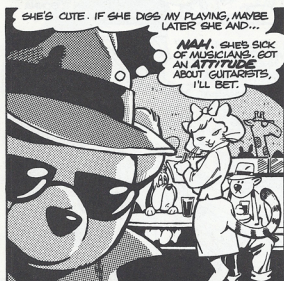
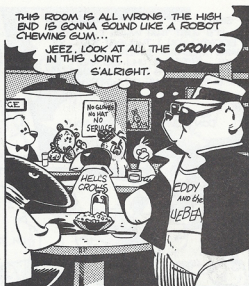
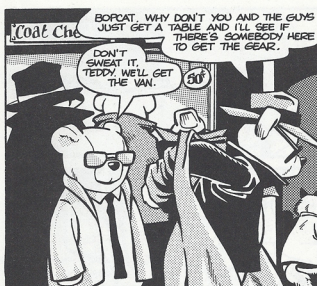


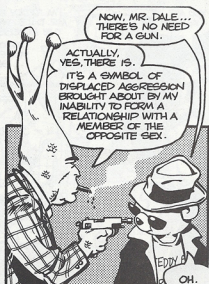
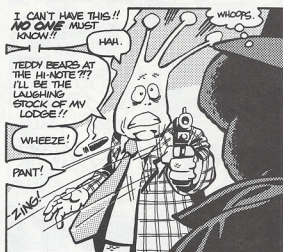
MY THROAT
LOOK SORE, IS?

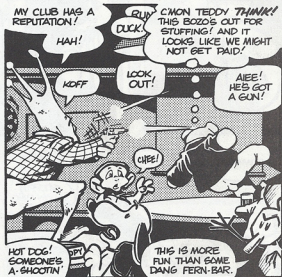
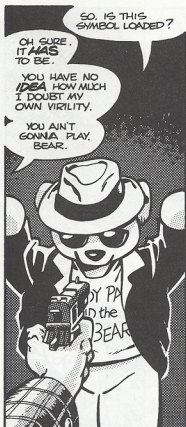


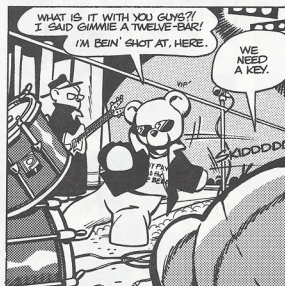
SORRY
TO CUT IN
HERE, BUT
'IS' NEVER
ANSWERS THAT
QUESTION
AS THE
WORLD
ENDS.

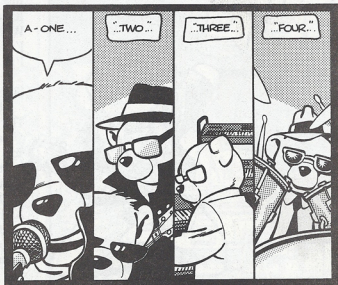
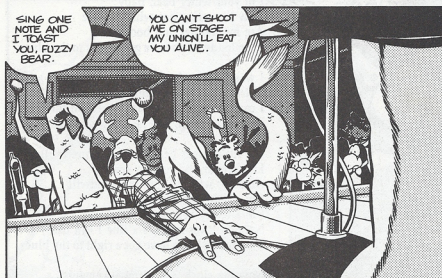
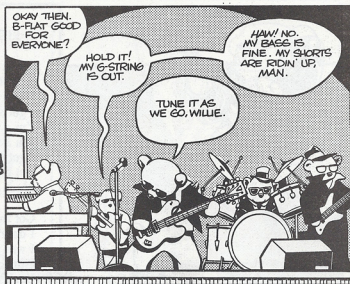
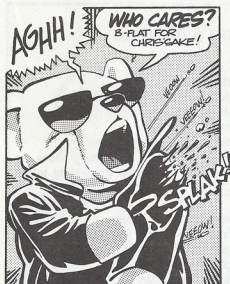














A RIGHT TO THE BLUES

I'm as cute as a button
 Won'tcha give me a hug?
 Got a face full of stuffing
 I got skin like a rug
 I'm a teddy bear, baby
 I'm a teddy bear, baby
 I got fuzzy arms and I wear fuzzy shoes
 But even teddy bears have got a right to the blues.

Got these little stumpy legs
 I only come up to your knees
 I was put here for loving
 Won'tcha give me a squeeze?
 I'm a teddy bear, baby
 I'm your teddy bear, baby
 Now the only ones who love me
 Are my mother and booze
 Even teddy bears have got a right to the blues.

I want to be a bad guy
 But I've got a smile that's stitched on
 I can be forgiven 'cause my reason for livin'
 Was taken away, she is gone, gone, gone

My little sugar bear had taken pretty ill
 Lost an ear and lost an eye
 And she was put into the goodwill
 I'm a teddy bear, baby
 I'm a teddy bear, baby
 Nobody loves me, it's a line I can use
 Even teddy bears have got a right to the blues.

Now the clock is starting arguments
 Just by sitting on the shelf
 It's always ticking at me
 While I'm talking to myself
 I'm a teddy bear, baby
 I'm a teddy bear, baby

First you broke my plastic nose and then you
 broke my heart
 The stitching on my inseam, you've pulled it
 all apart
 You sit me on the toybox and then you close
 the lid
 I know you'd really rather have a Cabbage
 Patch Kid
 And the only fire within me is a quick burning
 fuse

Even teddy bears have got a right to the blues.

ROUND SIDE (other side)
"RIGHT TO THE BLUES"

Composed by Teddy Payne and Ty Templeton
(from the album "WAKING UP IN TROUBLE")

Performed by Teddy Payne & The Bluebeats

Produced and Recorded by Jerry Dale for "My Music Company" Ltd.

© 1967 Ty Templeton



F.B.I.
MUSIC
NOISE

PLACE COIN HERE
33 $\frac{1}{3}$ RPM
MONAURAL
SOUND SHEET

FLAT SIDE (this side)
"MARCH OF THE SINISTER DUCKS"

Composed by The Sinister Ducks
(originally released on the single "THE SINISTER DUCKS"
on the "Beggars Banquet Music" label)

Performed and Produced by The Sinister Ducks

Engineered by Derek Duck

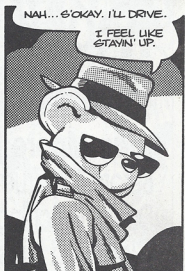
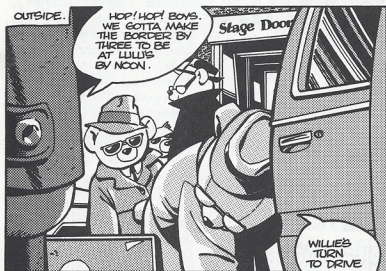
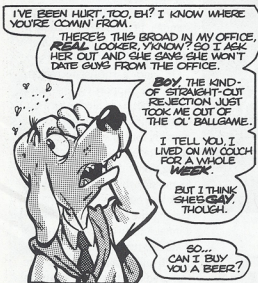
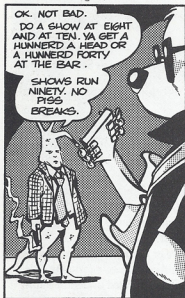
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MFD. IN U.S.A. BY

1033161ABX
EVA-TONE
SOUND SHEETS

CLEARWATER, FL.





SINISTER DUCK



ROCK N ROLL

Alan Moore Relates the Never-Before-Told True Story of the Sinister Ducks' Hatching, Brief Flirtation with Glory, and Subsequent Retirement



The Sinister Ducks first waddled into the limelight early one Saturday afternoon in the Summer of 1979. Local new wave compo-

poser, entrepreneur, and Adolf Hitler lookalike Mr. Liquorice had arranged a number of lunchtime cabaret sessions which were held in a crumbling Edwardian pavilion when the sun was at its highest and audience figures at their lowest. Combining local New Wave or Hardcore bands with vintage Augie Dawgie cartoons, this venture operated under the alluring title of the "The Deadly Fun Hippodrome," and over the single summer of its brief duration it built up a loyal audience of, literally, dozens.

On one particular occasion, when the support for the band The Shapes had failed to turn up, Mr. Liquorice asked me if I could possibly form a super-group and be on stage in ten minutes time. Being pretty drunk, this seemed to me a viable proposition. If I took four minutes carefully hand-picking the correct musical personnel and two minutes writing a modest twenty-minute set, this would allow almost a full one hundred and twenty seconds for rehearsal. I agreed, and ten minutes later the Sinister Ducks took the stage. Other than myself, these included Bauhaus bassist David J., saxophonist Max Akropolis from the ska band ARMY, and singer-guitarist Grant Series of Birmingham's D-Go-Tees. The audience, muddled by glue fumes though they were, were roused to a slouching ovation by a tight and professional set that included David J. reading extracts from that morning's paper and a heart-breaking rendition of the incomprehensible "Debbie's Gloss" by Grant Series on a bass guitar and half an amplifier. Reeling from this

fabulous reception and concerned lest we should peak too soon we did nothing for the next two years.

During this time, the Deadly Fun Hippodrome ceased to function as a venue after a particularly spirited bunch of teen misanthropes that had been booked to play there ripped the water pipes from the walls in the ladies' toilet and flooded the entire building. The management, desperately bailing water, seemed fairly insensitive to the need for self-expression amongst disaffected youngsters and told us that the pavilion would no longer be available for hire. With a poignant sense of loss and regret, Jamie Delano and I ripped off a couple of six-packs from the flooded bar and ruefully called it a day, leaving Mr. Liquorice to squirm out of paying for the damage.

The Sinister Ducks' first reunion performance happened at another financially doomed venture carried out under the auspices of the enterprising Liquorice, this being a one-day event known as "Summer Shock Day." The Ducks' lineup, expanded to include D-Go-Tee saxophonist Bridget (who used to go out with Hunt Emerson), also included a plastic Minnie Mouse doll that provided the vocal upon at least one number, the immortal "Plastic Man Goes Nuts." The doll's head was detachable from its body save for a length of retractable string, which, when jerked savagely, would cause the hideous toy to utter one of six cute catchphrases at random in between bursts of jazz so freeform that it might be better described as completely boneless. Once again, the reaction was so overwhelming that the Ducks retreated in a David Bowie-style phase of remote inaccessibility.

Some years later, when elitism was in vogue and bands like Spandau Ballet were making the news by doing special limited con-

certs in mid-air over the Atlantic, courtesy of Concorde, the Ducks rose to the challenge by performing for the glitterati at the birthday celebration of Bauhaus drummer Kevin Haskins, on a corroded barge sailing down the river Nene in the middle of the night. By now, the Ducks were judged superstars. Seemingly contemptuous of the audience that had supported them over the years, they provided a cursory run-through of their hit single (one side of which is included in this issue of *Critters*) before breaking up over irreconcilable musical differences on their way back to the bar at the rear of the barge.

Since then, there has been a prolonged and almost merciful silence. David J. is now playing with psychedelic swingers Love and Rockets (the band, rather than the comic that inspired their name) and we see each other

every couple of months. Grant Series still sends me a card each Christmas, and last year he included a tape of the Bossa Nova numbers he's been working on with Mr. Liquorice. Unfortunately, the tape snapped after the first few bars, so I've no idea what it was all about.

Me and the Minnie Mouse doll are rehearsing in secret. We don't need those other losers. We're hoping to have an album ready by the mid-1990s, just in time for the big Gothic Skiffle revival, but Minnie has a drink problem and is spending time in a detox clinic so it may take a little longer. Have patience, Duck-Boppers: Rock 'n' Roll will never die, and the best is still ahead.

Get Down with the Sinister Ducks!

—ALAN MOORE
Heartbreak Hotel
Northampton, 1987

LEFT HAND PAGE (big drawing): Alan Moore by Doug Erb. LEFT HAND PAGE (tiny drawing): Savage Pencil's interpretation of a Sinister Duck. BELOW: The illustration for the original SINISTER DUCKS single by Kevin O'Neill, of NEMESIS and MARSHAL LAW fame (also a GREEN LANTERN CORPS story the Comics Code rejected in its entirety because it was drawn in too disgusting a manner).



The **FAT BOIDS** present



by John Leasure and Tim Fuller

Charlie Dickens'

A CHRISTMAS RAP

Cold 'n dark, jus' like a freezer,
We gots a story 'bout a mean ol' geezer.
A real mean mother, like no other,
He be cold, he be old,
An ornery wheezer by the name of Ebenezer.



He's the main man—works a great racket,
Second in command is a cat name o' Crachett.
Poor ol' Bob works like a mutt,
'Neezer keeps him runnin' an' kicks him in the butt.

Workin' all night, workin' all day,
Poor Bob takes home piss poor pay.



'Neezer warms his cockles on this Eve's night
By the low glow glimmer of a small fire's light.
When out of his grog comes a shimmerin' sight.
Cowerin' an' quakin', with his ol' knees a'shakin',
He strains his eyes until they're achin'.
Peerin' through the gas and glum,
To the shape of an ape from his boyhood slum.



"I be deader 'n a stone, ya damn dumb geek;
The ghost of your pal, that nose pickin' freak.
I'm dead a whole year, an' you never shed a tear
For your friend with the Harley—I be Jacob Marley!"

"I come ta tell ya now, before your demise,
What I seen out there with my own two eyes.
You're in deep shit brother, and can blame no other,
But it's not too late to change, and that can be arranged."

The great gas ape made ol' Neezer gape,
Like a chill from a swill
of the Boone's Farm grape.
"Expect three ghosts to be your hosts,
On a far-out trip past reality's grip.
So show me some gratitude
an' change 'round your attitude."



The Ghost of Christmas Past was a real Bad rocker,
A hip-hop locker, a rip-rock socker,
A hot pink punk with some sassy rap funk.

Lookin' to his left an' lookin' to his right,
Marley flicked out flatly like a tiny neon light,
An' in his place stood a terrible sight.



"Yo' was lean, yo' was mean,
An' yo' terrorized tha' scene.
When you an' Marley took it to the streets,
No one was safe from you dudes' mean streaks.
You're headed fo' trouble, an' you'll wind up with zip,
Just remember your past put you on this trip."



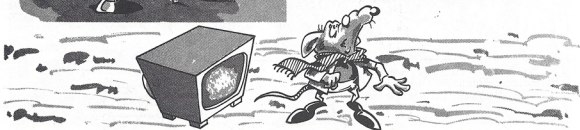
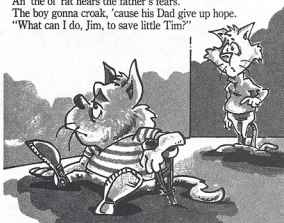
Gone as quickly as the ghost of Marley,
He moonwalked off to party hardy.
An' in his place was the next cool spook,
The Ghost of Christmas Present was a television kook.

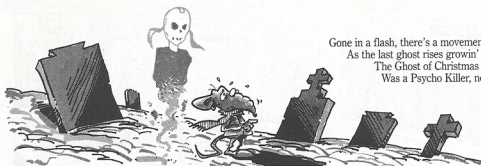
"I'm the Reverend Jim-Jam, family man,
Bringin' salvation right into your hand,
I'm a man o' God an' I don't feel odd
Sayin' me an' my wife, cute little Pammy,
Don't want you hit with a Hell-fire whammy."



In the glowing cathode ray,
He sees a kid who can not play.
An' the ol' rat hears the father's fears.
The boy gonna croak, 'cause his Dad give up hope.
"What can I do, Jim, to save little Tim?"

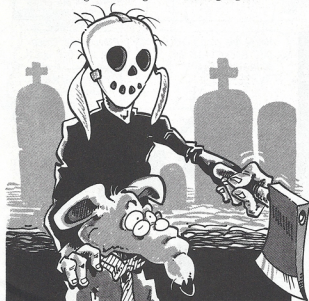
"You know already what they need,
Now I must go to preach against greed.
But if you ever have the time,
Or can even spare one thin dime,
Give me a call an' I might sell
A piece or two of the PTL."



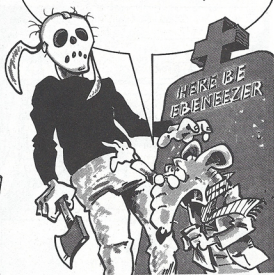


Gone in a flash, there's a movement in the trash
As the last ghost rises growin' several sizes.
The Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come
Was a Psycho Killer, not some bum.

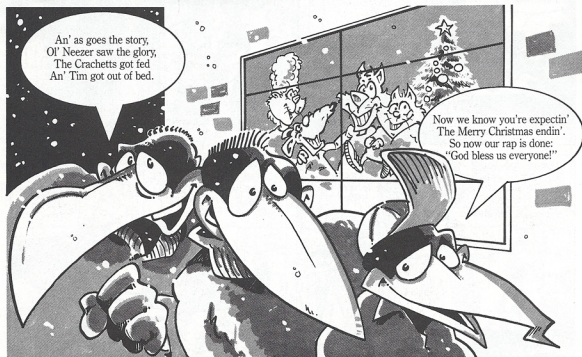
The dark cloaked shape makes 'Neezer's mouth gape,
He's seen the light now he's gonna make things right.



"I don't need a real hard kick in the head,
To know my money won't keep me from the dead.
So take me to the Crachetts an' I'll bury the hatchet."



An' as goes the story,
Ol' Neezer saw the glory,
The Crachetts got fed
An' Tim got out of bed.



Now we know you're expectin'
The Merry Christmas endin'.
So now our rap is done:
"God bless us everyone!"

Freddy Milton's Gnuff

"THE FATEFUL PIANO"

POPULARITY IS A WONDERFUL THING...AND SOME MUSICIANS ARE VERY POPULAR!!

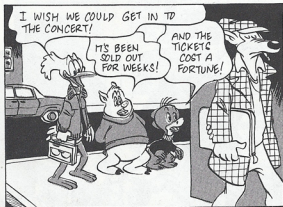


JUST THINK! DAVID DONNER WILL BE HERE TONIGHT!

IT'S THE FIRST TIME WE CAN SEE HIM!

HE'S JUST BEEN PLAYING THE BIG CITIES BEFORE NOW!

© MILTON



I WISH WE COULD GET IN TO THE CONCERT!

IT'S BEEN SOLD OUT FOR WEEKS!

AND THE TICKETS COST A FORTUNE!

MAYBE WE COULD HELP OUT BACKSTAGE OR SOMETHING?

PEOPLE ARE LINED UP FOR THE JOBS!

LET'S GO THERE ANYWAY! IT WON'T HURT TO TRY! COME ON!



MAYBE WE'LL EVEN CATCH A GLIMPSE OF DAVID DONNER!



BUT...

STAGE ENTRANCE

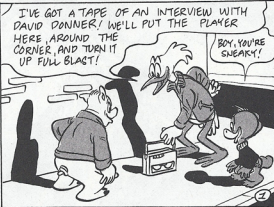


THERE'S TOO MANY FANS! IT'S HOPELESS!

WE'RE WASTING TIME!

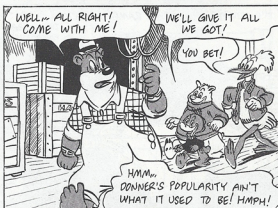
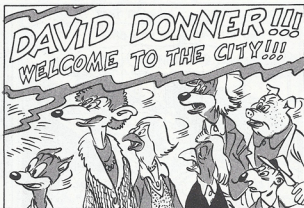
WAIT!

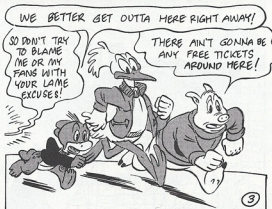
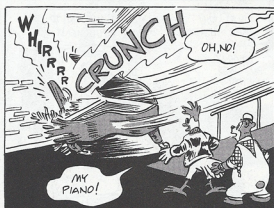
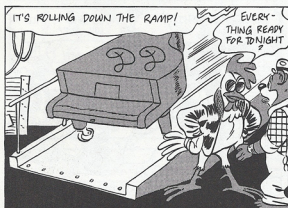
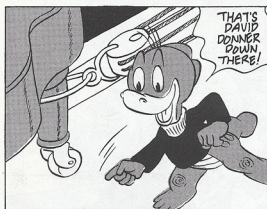
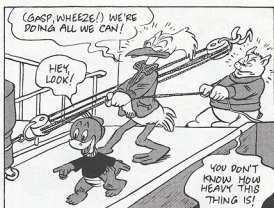
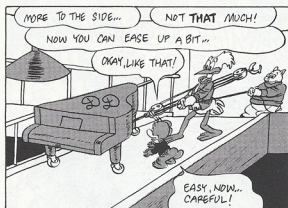
STAGE ENTRANCE

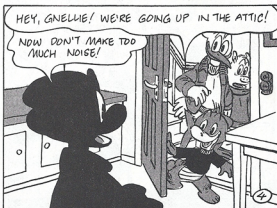
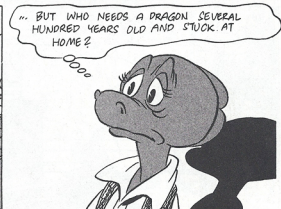
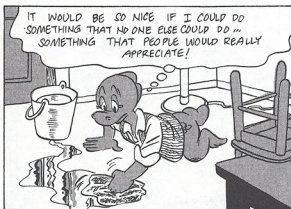
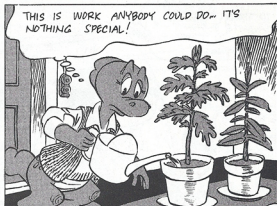
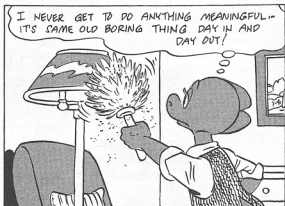
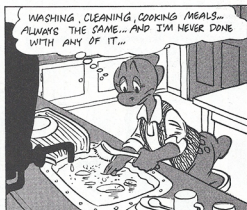


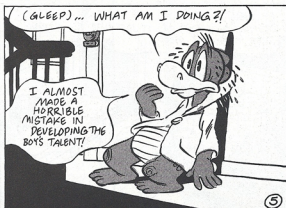
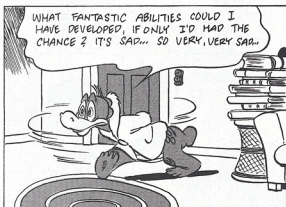
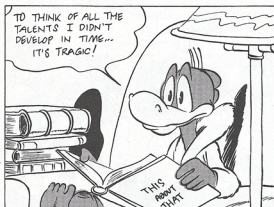
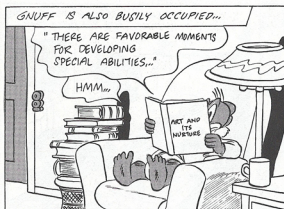
I'VE GOT A TAPE OF AN INTERVIEW WITH DAVID DONNER! WE'LL PUT THE PLAYER HERE, AROUND THE CORNER, AND TURN IT UP FULL BLAST!

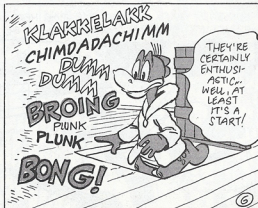
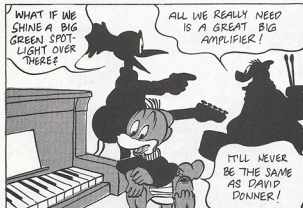
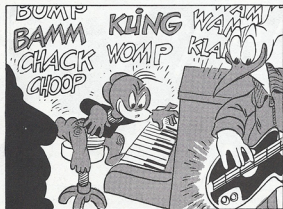
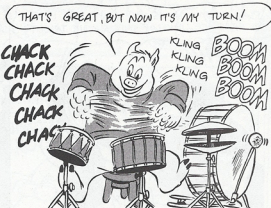
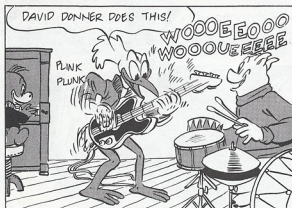
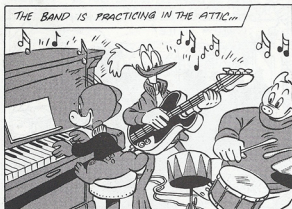
BOY, YOU'RE SNEAKY!

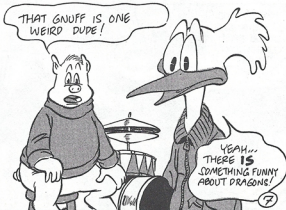
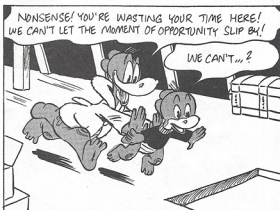
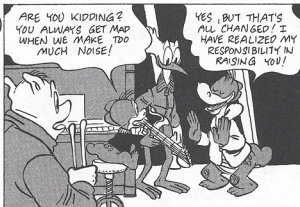
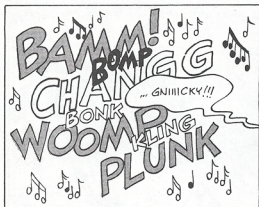


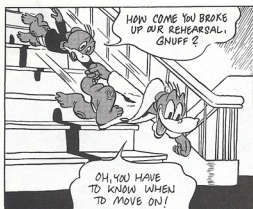






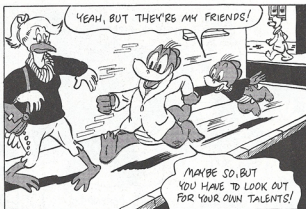






HOW COME YOU BROKE
UP OUR REHEARSAL,
GNUFF?

OH, YOU HAVE
TO KNOW WHEN
TO MOVE ON!



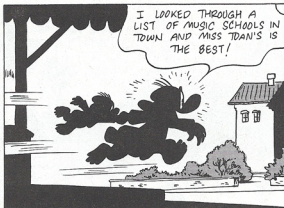
YEAH, BUT THEY'RE MY FRIENDS!

MAYBE SO, BUT
YOU HAVE TO LOOK OUT
FOR YOUR OWN TALENTS!



EVEN WHEN IT'S SO
MUCH FUN TO PLAY
WITH THE GUYS?

MUSIC ISN'T SUPPOSED
TO BE FUN--- IT'S
SUPPOSED TO BE **GOOD!**



I LOOKED THROUGH A
LIST OF MUSIC SCHOOLS IN
TOWN AND MISS TDAN'S IS
THE BEST!



BUT WHY DOES IT HAVE TO BE RIGHT NOW?

MISS TDAN'S
SCHOOL OF MUSIC

YOU'RE ALMOST
A HUNDRED YEARS OLD,
GNUCKY-- IT'S TIME TO GET MOVING!

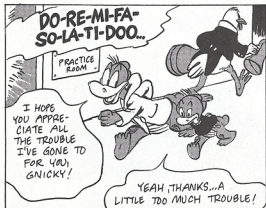


HERE WE ARE-- NOW BEHAVE YOUR-
SELF!

SHHH!

OK, OK!

I TRIED
TO GET YOU
ACCEPTED
RIGHT AWAY,
BUT YOU'LL HAVE
TO BE REALLY
GOOD THEN!



DO-RE-MI-FA-
SO-LA-TI-DOO...

PRACTICE
ROOM

I HOPE
YOU APPRE-
CIATE ALL
THE TROUBLE
I'VE GONE TO
FOR YOU,
GNUCKY!

YEAH, THANKS...A
LITTLE TOO MUCH TROUBLE!

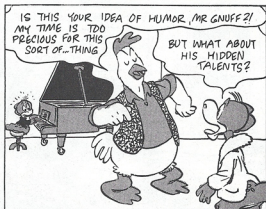
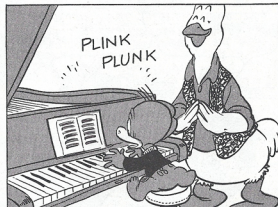
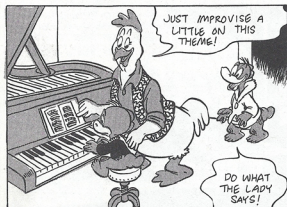
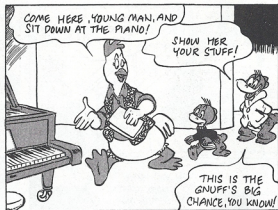


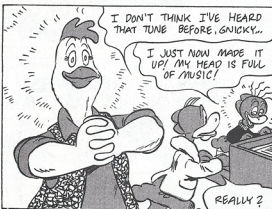
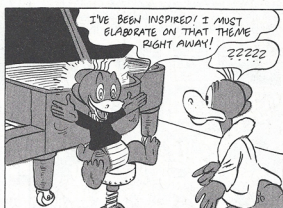
MISS TDAN IS EXPECTING
US...

SSHH!

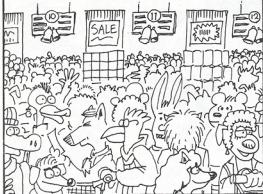
JUST A
MOMENT
...

8





CHRISTMASTIME! AND ONCE AGAIN THE STORES ARE JAM-PACKED WITH THE HUSTLE AND BUSTLE OF THE ANNUAL CONSUMER FRENZY! A FAMILIAR SIGHT...



AND AMONG THE BURGEONING CROWD MOVES THIS DARK FIGURE: P.U. EVOLCRAFT, INFAMOUS OCCULTIST AND LAPSED DENTIST...



HIS PRESENT GOAL IS TO PURCHASE A JAR OF MAYONNAISE...

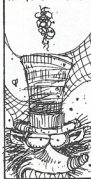


...A GOAL NOT EASILY REACHED!



YOU MEAN THIS IS THE EXPRESS LANE?

THE HOURS PASS LIKE MOLASSES DRIPPING THROUGH AN HOURGLASS—AND, EVENTUALLY...



EEYARRGH! I CAN'T STAND IT ANY LONGER! I DEMAND TO SEE THE MANAGER!



GET OUT! AND MERRY CHRISTMAS!

BOOM



CURSE THESE CROWDS!! THEY CAN'T DO THIS TO ME! I'LL PLAGUE THEM WITH VILE DEMONS! I'LL SUE! I'LL ... I...



HAA HAA, I KNOW WHAT I'LL DO!! I'LL SABOTAGE CHRISTMAS!! HYAAAA HA HA HAAAAA HEE HEE HAAAAHAHA



YES, FISSION CHICKEN BATTLES ANOTHER WEIRD MENACE IN...

"HOLIDAY * MUSICAL * CHEER * FEAR" COO

A HEARTWARMING CHRISTMAS STORY BROUGHT TO YOU BY

J.P. MOR GAN

©1987



MEANWHILE, WE FIND OUR HERO DELIVERING THE ANNUAL 50-FOOT CHRISTMAS TREE TO THE MUNICIPAL CENTER! HOTCHA!



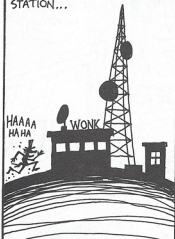
HOT-DAMN, FISSION CHICKEN, YOU'VE DONE IT AGAIN... WHAT A GREAT TREE! I REALLY APPRECIATE IT, AND SO DOES THE WHOLE TOWN!

WELL YEAH, MAYOR, YOU SHOULD APPRECIATE IT—THE FOREST RANGERS TRIED TO BRING ME DOWN WITH A BAZOOKA THIS YEAR! WERE THEY MAD!

HA-HA, HAVE SOME FRUITCAKE, F.C!



BUT EVEN AS FISSION CHICKEN STARTS NOSHING AWAY, P.U. EVOLCRAFT HAS MADE HIS WAY TO A LOCAL RADIO STATION...

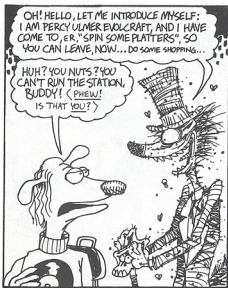


...AND YOU'RE LISTENING TO STATION W.O.N.K., FOLKS, WHERE THE BEAUTIFUL CHRISTMAS TUNES KEEP COMIN' AT YA! ONE, TWO...



OH! HELLO, LET ME INTRODUCE MYSELF: I AM PERCY ULMER EVOLCRAFT, AND I HAVE COME TO, ER, "SPIN SOME PLATTERS", SO YOU CAN LEAVE, NOW... DO SOME SHOPPING...

HUH? YOU NUTS? YOU CAN'T RUN THE STATION, BUDDY! (PHEW! IS THAT YOU?)

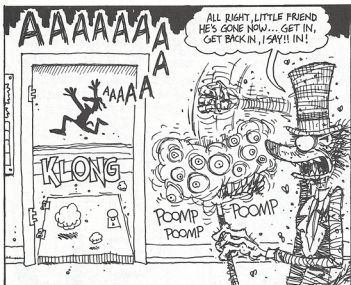


OH, BUT I HAVE A GOOD FRIEND HERE WHO INSISTS THAT I TAKE A SHOT AT IT...

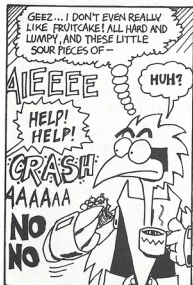
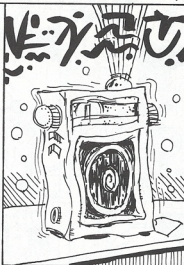
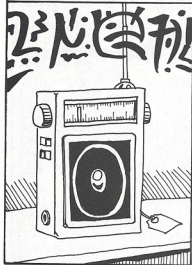


AND HERE HE IS NOW! SAY HELLO TO THE NICE DEESAY, KAKAMOOKIE!

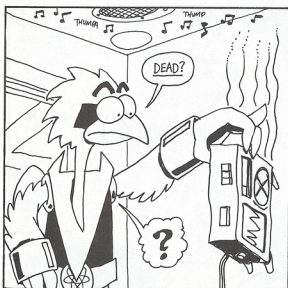


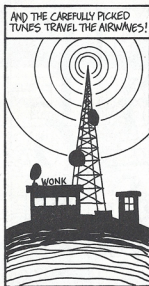
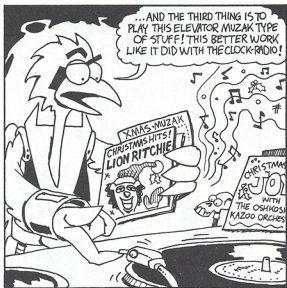
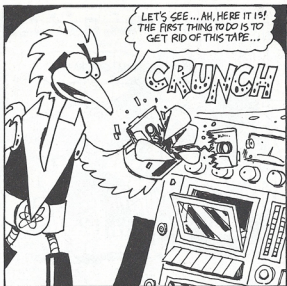


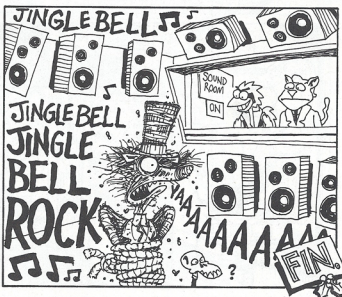
AS THE UNEARTHLY, DISCORDANT MUSIC DRONES ON... AN UNUSUAL (TO SAY THE LEAST) EFFECT IS ALSO TRANSMITTED OVER THE AIR!





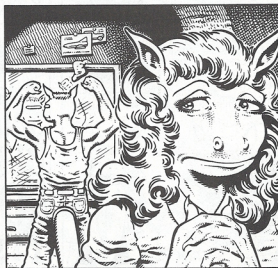
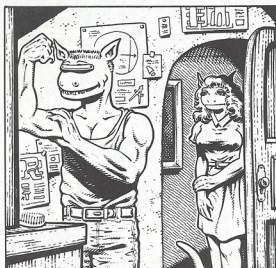
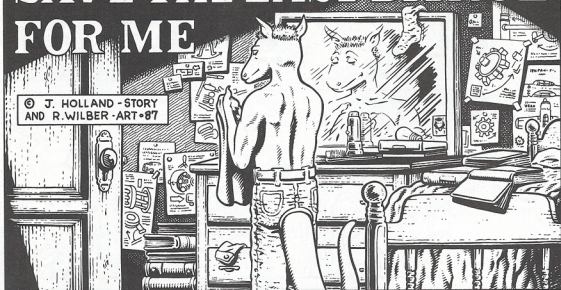


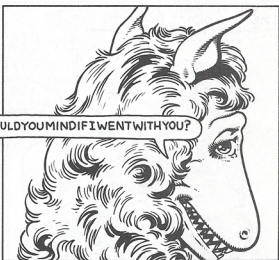
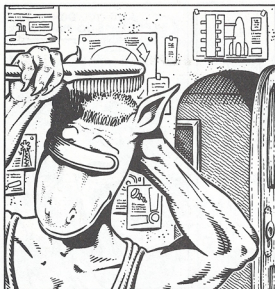


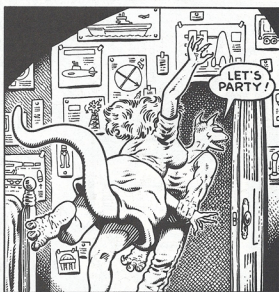
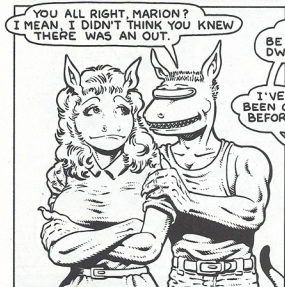


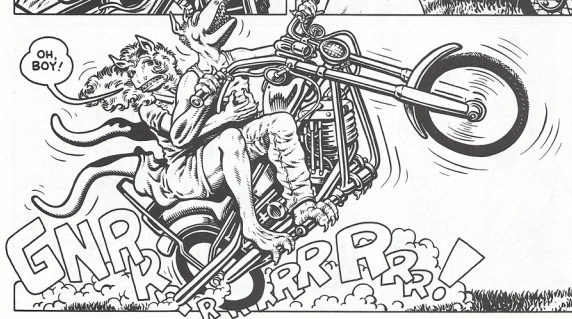
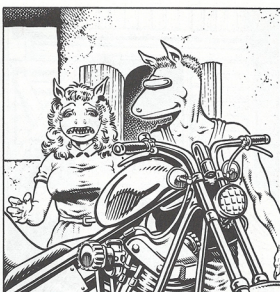
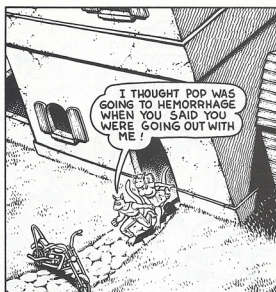
SAVE THE LAST DANCE FOR ME

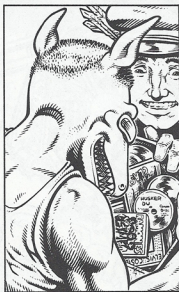
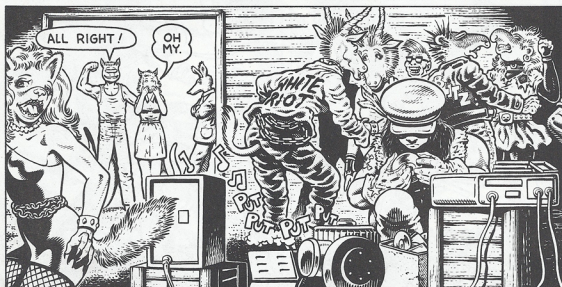
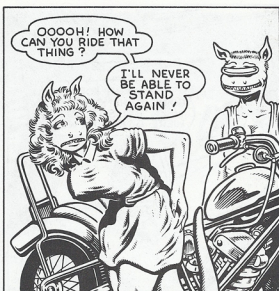
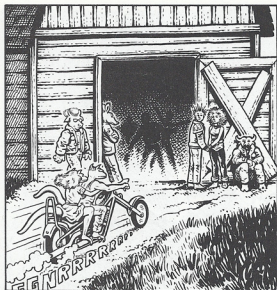
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AND R. WILBER - ART - 87



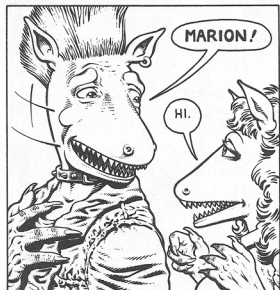
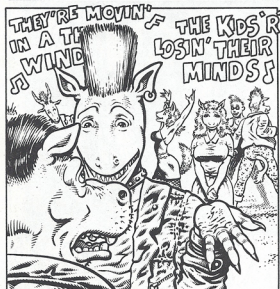


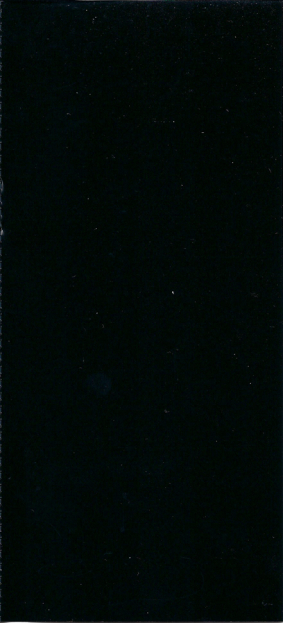


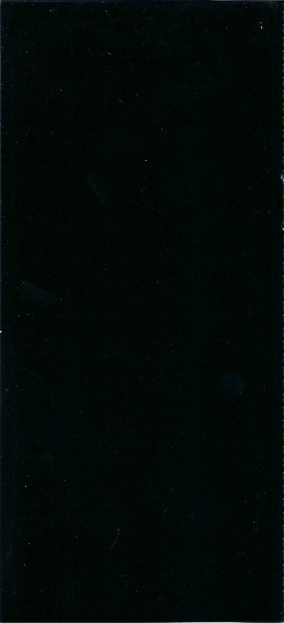


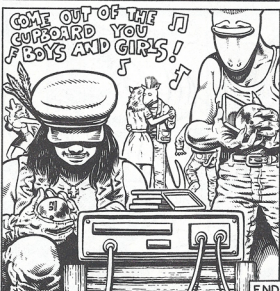








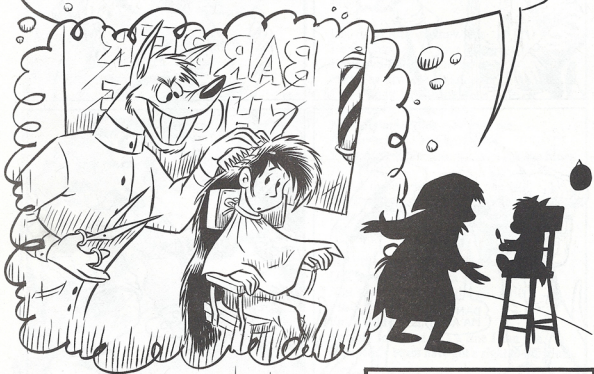




END.

OOO, HOO! NIZE BABY! GEEV A LEESTEN, UND I WEEEL TELLING
YOU A STORY! A STORY FROM GREAT EGZITEMENT WITT
EDWENTURE WOT IT GUZZ BY DE TITLE FROM:

"DE WOOLF UND DE LEETLE BOY WITT LUNG HAIR!"



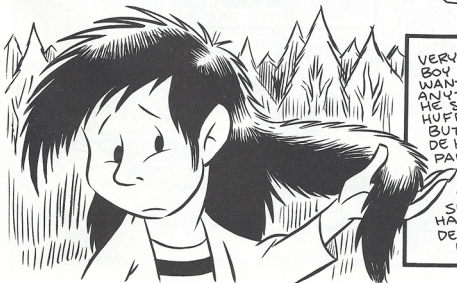
"WONCE UPON A TIME, DERE
IN DE WOOTS IT LIFFED A
WOOLF. VERY CONNING IS
DE WOOLF. BUT NOT SO
LOCKY FOR HEEM, UL SO
VERY HONGRY WITT
FEMMISHED IS DE WOOLF.
DISS IS ON ACCONT FROM
DE FECT DAT IS VERY
TIRED DE WOOLF FROM
EFFRY DAY EATINK IT DE
CORN WOT I GRUWS WITT
MOCH EBUNDANCE IN DE
WOOTS."

TINKS NOW DE WOOLF: "IS NOT FOR DE WOOLFS HEES DEENER SHOULD CONSISTING FROM CORN! BETTER I'M SHOULD EATING FROM HUMAN BEENG'S HUFF MINE PLATE. SO DEELEECIOUS WITH ZOCCULENT! PRACTICALLY I'M RIGHT NOW TASTING IT!"



SO DECIDES HEEM DE WOOLF HE SHOULD HEADING TO WHERE IT'S POPULATED FROM PIPPLE DE WOOTS.

NOW AS IT HEPPEND, IT LIFFS DERE ULISO IN DE WOOTS, A LEETLE BOY, WHO UPON DE TOP FROM HEES HEAD IS POSSESSING PILES WITT MONDS FROM LUNG BLECK HAIR. DISPIE FROM DE FECT IT WAS SHINY WITT BEAUTIFUL DE HAIR, STILL IT WAS A SAUCE FROM MUCH ENGZIETY ON ACCONT FROM DE TUNTS ODDER CRECKS ODDER RIMARKS IT WAS ALWAYS MAKING DE ODDER CHEILDREN.

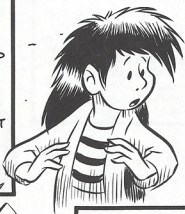


VERY SAD IS DE BOY WOT HE'S WANTING LIKE ANYTING HE SHOULD COTTING HUFF DE HAIR. BUT PROUD FROM DE HAIR IS DE PARENTS WOT DEY DUN'T WEESHING DEY SHOULD SEEING DE HAIR HALL OVER DE FLURR FROM DE BARBER.



SO WHAT COULD IT WAS, DE FOIST SITE NOT HE'S SEEING DE WOOLF? YOU GAZZED IT! IS DE BOY! SOBBING WIT' MOANING IS DE BOY: "IS HOKAY BY ME I SHOULD COTTING HUFF DE HAIR, BOT TOO CHIP IS DE PROJANITORS DEY SHOULD PAYING HEEM DE BARBER! PRIDE? HA! DUN'T MAKE ME LEFF! IS JOIST PANNY PEENCHING!"

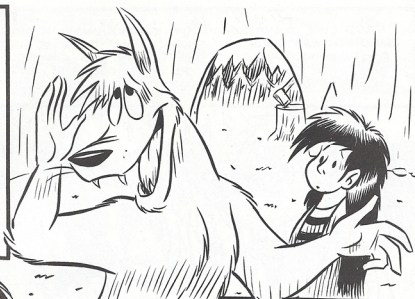
SMOTT LIKE ANYTING IS DE WOOLF, WOT HE MAKES BY DE BOY EQUVAINTENCES: "HALLO, KEED! DE BAST FROM BARBERS IT SO HEPPENS YOU CONVERSING WIT'! UND TODAY IT MAKES A SPASHUL DIZCUNT PRIZE DE HAIRCOTTS: IN FECT, IS FREE DE HAIRCOTTS!"



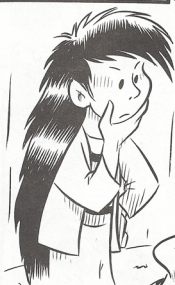
"...NO CHARGE TO LOP DE MOP HUFF DE HEAD! IS A GAT EQUVAINTED HUFFER, NOO?" SO HEADS BACK TO DE CAIF GRADUALLY DE BOY WIT' DE WOOLF.



IN DE CAIF SPIKS
HOUT DE WOOLF,
"HOW TUTTLESS FROM
ME! EMEDEGE I
SHOULD FORGATTING
DE PAIRS SCISSORS!
I TINK I'M
HOUTSIDE LEAVING
DEM WHEN I WAS
DIS MORNINK
COTTING DE
WILD FLOWERS!
WON MUMMENT
PLIZZ I SHOULD
RETRIFFING DEM!
DUN'T MOOF!"



IN' DE WOOLF'S EBSSENCE
IS GRADUALLY BECOMING
SUSPISHUZ DE BOY.
ESPASHULLY WHEN HE
NUTTIZING DE WOOLF
HE DUN'T PUZZESING
DE CHAIRS FROM BARBERS
BOT EENSTAD HE'S
FINDING DE BEEGEST
FROM KATTLES, A
KEST IRON WON!

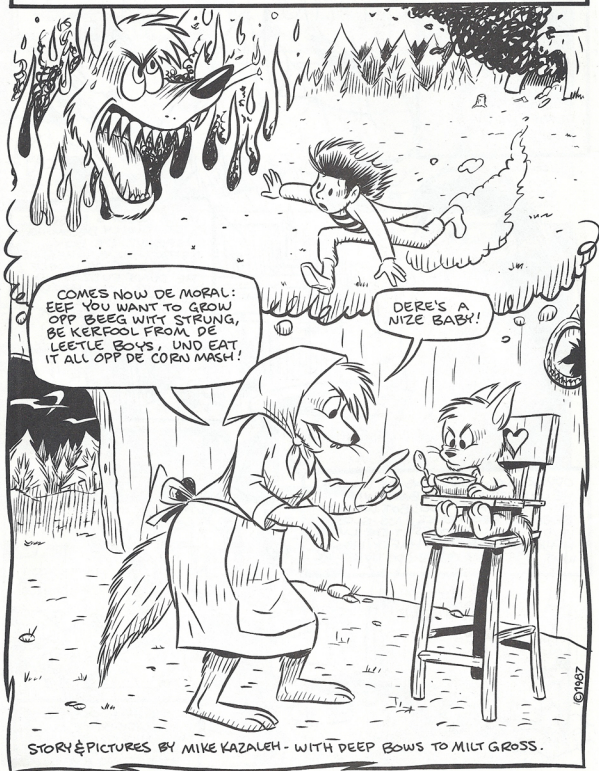


ODDER INTENTIONS HAS DE WOOLF!
HE'LL NUTT COMING BACK WITT DE
PAIRS SCISSORS! NOO! BOT WITT DE
BEEGEST FROM EXES! NO SLOCH
IS DE BOY WHO TIES IT DE LUNG
HAIR TO A ROCK, A HAFTY WON
WOT IT'S LOCATED BY DE DURRWAY.



TIGHT POOLS DE
HAIR DE BOY, SO
WHEN IT COMES IN DE
WOOLF HE SHOULD
TREPPEING BY IT.

"MEDD LIKE ANYTING IS DE WOOLF, WHO IS NOW IN DE FIREPLACE FINDING HEEMSALF. SO WOT YOU TINK IS NAXT HEPPENING? POOF! ZINDERS! NOO, DUNIT ESK! SO GREBS DE EX DE LEETLE BOY, WHO COTTS FROM DE ROCK DE HAIR, UND QUEECKLY HE MAKES IT A LUNG DEESTANCE BETWEEN HEEM UND DE CAIF!"



STORY & PICTURES BY MIKE KAZALEH - WITH DEEP BOWS TO MILT GROSS.

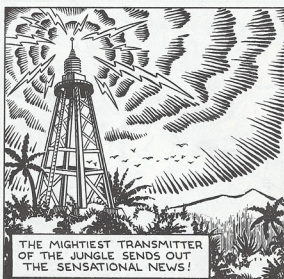
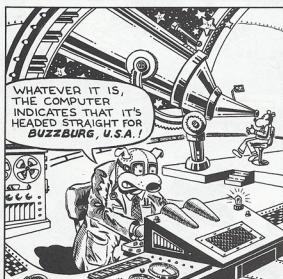
BOB CONWAY PRESENTS:

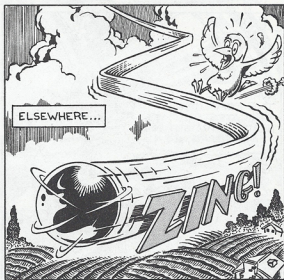
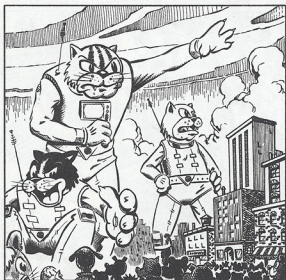
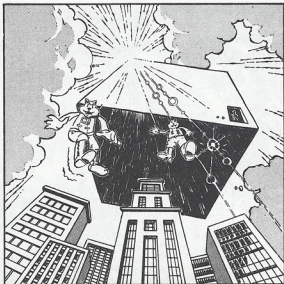
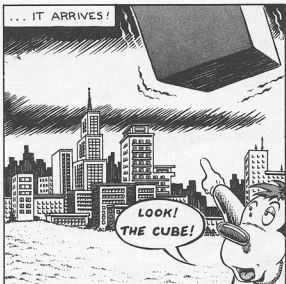
The ORIGIN of MR. FLY

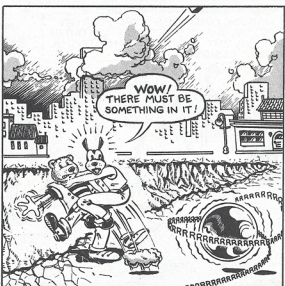
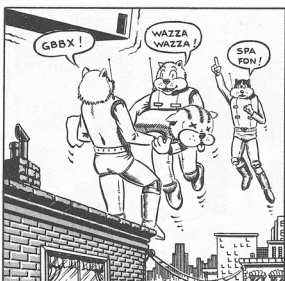
STORY © 1987 BY MARK ARMSTRONG
ART © 1987 BY BOB CONWAY

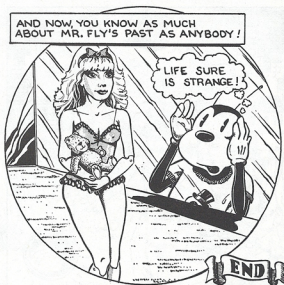
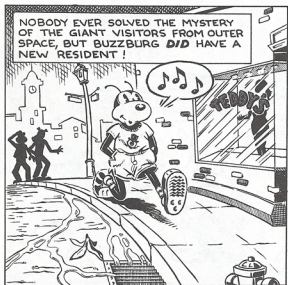
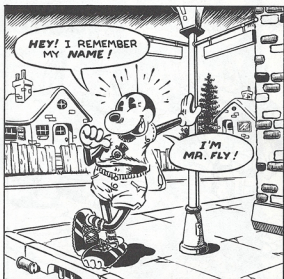
WOW!
WHAT IS
THAT THING?

AT THE FAMED IWERKS OBSERVATORY
HIGH ATOP MOUNT ZUZU, ASTRONOMERS
MAKE A STARTLING DISCOVERY...



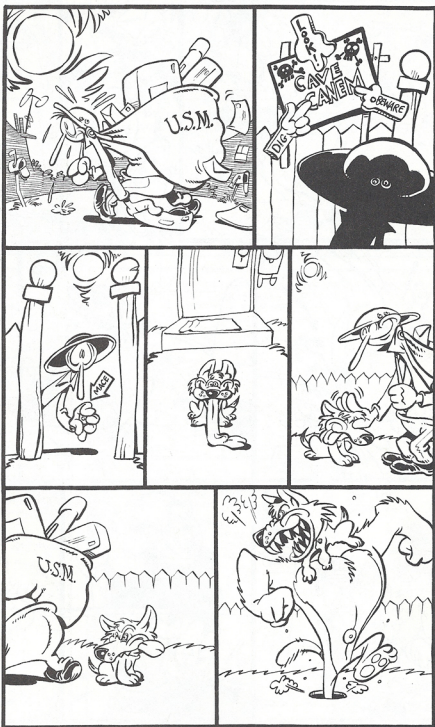




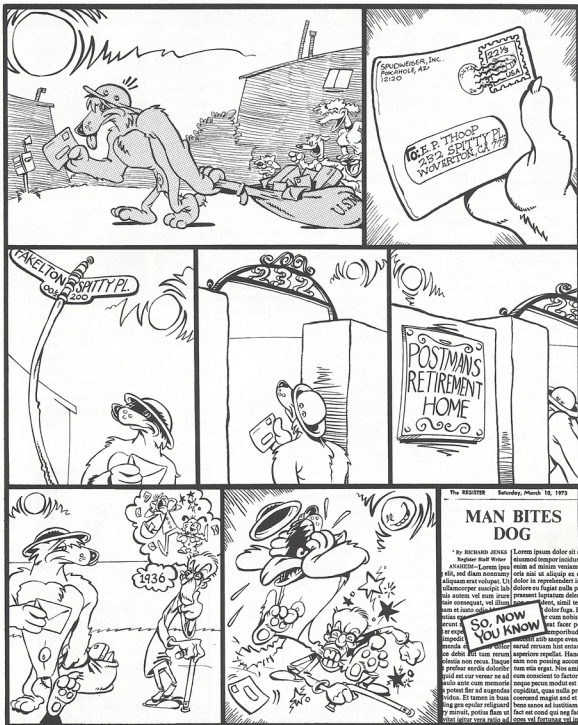


DID'CHA
EVER
WONDER
WHATS
TH' REAL
STORY
BEHIND
THOSE
NEWS-
PAPER

FEEL
REFS?







The REGISTER Saturday, March 10, 1973

MAN BITES DOG

* By RICHARD JENKS
Register Staff Writer
ANALYST—Lorem ipsum
elit, sed diam nonamny
aliquam erat volutpat. Ut
ullamcorper suscipit lab
is autem vel cum inu
sae consequat, vel illum
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menda e
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ry miruit, pot
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narrul rerum hist oris
asperire repellat. Hanc
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neque pecun modut est
cupiditat, quas nulla p
coercond magist and et
beus sarros ad iustitiam,
fact est cood qui neg fac
ones vel fortunat vel in

SO, NOW
YOU KNOW

"Angst" in #20 are sheer delights. Are there not other artists besides Milton to fill the spot, or is Gnuff just a personal favorite?

Finally, there has been a question in the back of my mind for some time. What is the average age of your readers? I'm simply curious. I am a graduate student, and the attitude I get from other college students is that funny animals are for kids (*Omaha the Cat Dancer*)? and I should be reading *Mutant X Things* from *Wetland Environments*. I've noticed that many anthropomorphic puns their punches either in using poo-poo pee-pee language or writing plots so inane a four-year-old would think so. Yet *Albedo*, "Birthright," etc., are so wonderfully complex it's hard to figure out who's reading what. Who's reading *Critters*? College students? Yuppies? High schoolers? Grade schoolers? I'd like to know.

● Thank you, Edward. Your family will be shipped back to you soon. I don't know what the general age range of *Critters* readers is, but most comics readers seem to end up following the stuff they loved as kids. I haven't checked this theory out, but I expect the readership of something like the *Gladstone Comics* is concentrated among really young readers and fairly old ones, with a big demographic hole where all the mutant-loving teenagers roam.

Actually, there are several features I'd like to run in every issue of *Critters*, but few artists can produce 10 pages on a monthly schedule (all of them have other projects, since *Critters*' page rates are not something you can build a life on). It just happens that Freddy has hundreds of pages in inventory and I could run him in every issue through about 1992 with no problem. The fact that "Gnuff" is among my favorites in the book doesn't hurt either, admittedly. —KT

Andrew P. Somlyo Jr.
Ardmore, PA

Dear Kim,

I am a 16-year-old who is deeply in love with the comics medium, and especially with its most innovative works such as *RAW*, *Cerebus*, *Love and Rockets*, and *Omaha*. First, I would like to thank you for bringing to light more of Reed Waller's exquisite work in *Critters* #20. Waller and Worley always execute their stories with a charm and grace which puts their work among the finest. "SpeakingStone" is a warm and beautiful story which will hopefully enable those who are unable to enjoy *Omaha* as an insight into humanity a glimpse of what it is about.

The main reason for my letter of comment is William Van Horri's "Angst" story. "Angst" creates an atmosphere which is straight from Eisner's best *Spirit*. This story draws two fine characters who are a cross between Walt Kelly and Will Eisner: enthralling, amusing,

bittersweet, thought-provoking. Perhaps someday Ratface and Louie may find an end to their troubles or at least another good bar. If they're interested in the bar may I suggest Callahan's. The directions are given by Spider Robinson in Callahan's *Crosstime Saloon*.

Thank you for a fine book.

● When I was your age I had no idea who Will Eisner was, and spent my time writing letters of comment to Captain America. I don't know whether to be delighted or mortified. Thanks for the letter, Andrew. —KT

Frederick Smith
Framingham, MA

Dear Kim,

I have been reading *Critters* for the past couple of years and have enjoyed it immensely, especially Gnuff. It is just plain enjoyable. May *Critters* be as long-lived as Superman.

● We're on the way, Fred. Did you know that this summer, when *Critters* hits #28, it'll be the second highest issue number reached by an independent black-and-white comic (behind *Cerebus*, which, I concede, has a pretty substantial lead)? I didn't realize this until David Anthony Kraft mentioned that Southern Knights was in the running for second-longest-running and I realized that *Critters*, being a monthly, would pass SK shortly. —KT

Steve Lafler
Oakland, CA

Hi, Kim,

A quick note: I just took a break from inking to eat *Critters* #19, which has been languishing on my nightstand forever.

It was a typically surprising and delightful issue. I like the cover color scheme especially...very nice, and food for thought for future *Dog Boy* covers. Loved the time-twister/dream theme in "Gnuff"—a fun, playful story.

OK, now I must also say that "Fission Chicken" was hilarious! Well executed, and J.P. Morgan is highlighting some important themes, couched in humor. Keep up the good work on this title!

● Thanks, Steve. Everyone should be checking out Steve's *Dog Boy*, and not just because we publish it, either—just because it's damn funny. —KT

Steve Gaituso
Canoga Park, CA

Dear Kim,

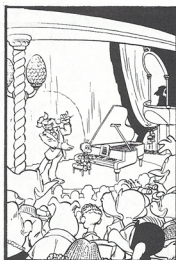
I read about your lack of letters and came to the conclusion that it was time to write

you that letter I had planned to send after #12. Your anthology series has been giving me pleasure for quite some time now. Through *Critters* I have discovered the talents of dozens of artists and writers I had never even known about until seen in your series (Freddy Milton and J.P. Morgan, for example). In addition, your efforts have made it possible to enjoy the work of some of my favorite artists produced outside of their normal efforts (Stan Sakai and Steve Gallacci stand out in my mind). It is in fact one of these efforts that originally prompted my desire to write you. I'm speaking, of course, of that incomparable series "SpeakingStone." I've been a fan of Waller and Worley's efforts for many years now (ask them about a guy who followed them all over the San Diego ComicCon this August like a little lost puppy). It's good to see Amanda and the Professor back again and I can hardly wait to see how the story continues. By the way, if you need any background information on the lost city, just ask me. My friends will vouch that I'm totally Mixtup.

Here's a question I've been mulling over for a while: Does Fantagraphics have a business relationship with Kitchen Sink? The only reason I'm asking is that I keep seeing their ads in your magazines and occasionally your ads crop up in theirs.

● I've known Denis Kitchen for a number of years and we trade ads, but there's no business relationship beyond that. We just happen to respect each other's publishing output. In fact, once you've bought up every issue of Fantagraphics Books comics you can find and have money left over, you should spend it on Kitchen Sink books. Even though we don't get a cut.

Next issue: More "Gnuff," more "Fission Chicken," and more "Lizards." Look for the cover below! —KT



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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: Halloween 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 #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, Surf-in' Neanderthals by Mark Armstrong.

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

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

Critters #16: The conclusion to Gnuff, another Nilson Ground-thumper, 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, Lizards, Fission Chicken—32 pages worth—plus a Sam Kieth cover!

Critters #22: Watchmen cover parody for Blue Beagle story, plus Gnuff, Fission Chicken, and Ambrose.

Critters #23: Christmas issue with Gnuff, Lizards, Fission Chicken, Lionheart, as well as strips by Scott Shaw!, Sam Kieth, Tim Fuller, Mike Kazaleh, Ty Templeton and Anthony Van Bruggen—plus a flexidisc with songs performed by Templeton and Alan Moore!

Critters Special #1—Nilson Ground-thumper and Hermy: 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: Jazzy issue exploring Dog Boy's multiple personalities!

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

Dog Boy #9: Dancing with the cats, Dog Girl in jail, Benb goes crazy!

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 not 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.

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.

Usagi Yojimbo #5: A one-issue tale of silk, treachery, and greed, and the end of the penguin tale by Kato.

Usagi Yojimbo #6: Usagi battles a water elemental, plus "Digger Duckbill" by Shaw and Evanian.

Usagi Yojimbo #7: Usagi makes a friend, plus Phil Yeh!

BOOKS, MAGAZINES, AND OTHER STUFF

Usagi Yojimbo Book One: Every Usagi Yojimbo story before Usagi #1 collected in one handy 160-page volume, with a new Stan Sakai cover.

Amazing Heroes #9: Behind the scenes of DC's *Captain Carol* comic with Scott Shaw! and Roy Thomas. Plus a funny-animal pictorial.

Amazing Heroes #42: Funny-animal issue with Joshua Quagmire cover and interview. Plus: Arn Saba on Neil the Horse and Dave Sim on Cerebus!

Amazing Heroes #111: Ty Templeton (of *Critters*) interviewed. It's funny.

Amazing Heroes #129: Interviews with Steven A. Gallacci and Freddy Milton, "Why I Draw Funny Animals" by various, plus more!

The Comics Journal #73: Carl Barks featured, with long retrospective.

The Comics Journal #82-83: Mammoth interview with Dave (Cerebus the Aardvark) Sim.

The Comics Journal #99: Big interview with Arn (Neil the Horse) Saba.

Anything Goes! #3: Featuring a full-color Captain Jack story by Mike Kazaleh, Cerebus vignette by Dave Sim, and Cerebus cover by Neal Adams.

Anything Goes! #6: Cover painting by Stan Sakai of Usagi Yojimbo, worth the cover price.

NEMO #21: 28 pages of Jack Kent's classic *King Aroo* strip—a treat for classic funny-animal lovers!

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