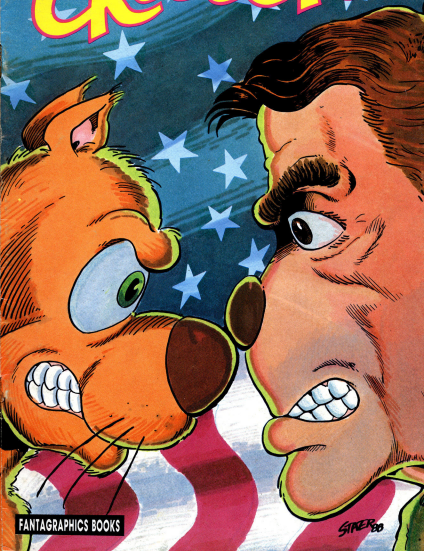


No. 29

\$2.00

(\$2.00 in
Canada)

Critters



FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS

Captain Jack:

"His day off"

MK'88-

VERA

CHUCK

DAVE

UNCA JACK,
WE'RE BORED!

WELL, WHY DON'T YOU KIDS PLAY A GAME?

BUT WE'VE PLAYED
THEM ALL!

MAKE ONE
UP, THEN!

BUT WE'RE
TOTALLY
LACKING IN
IMAGINATION,
UNCA JACK!

YOU LITTLE CREEPS'D BETTER
GET OUT OF MY SIGHT BEFORE I
KILL YOU, SO HELP ME I WILL!

AND FIND
SOMETHING
CONSTRUCTIVE
TO DO,
DAMMIT!!

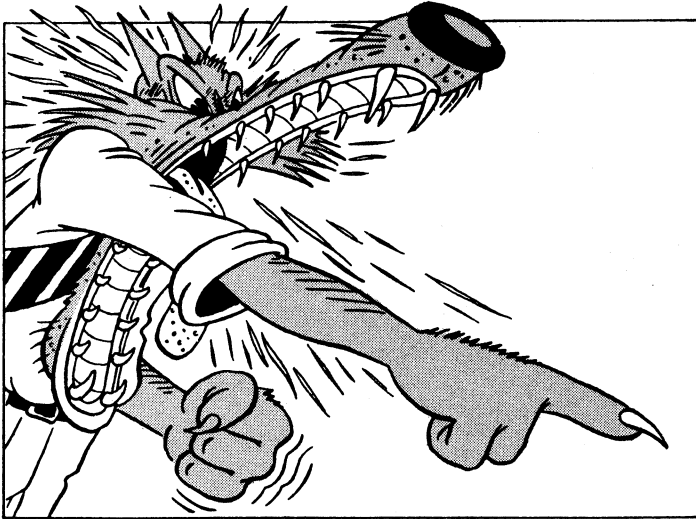
Later...

YES, UNCA
JACK!

-YOU KIDS FOUND
SOMETHING TO DO?



Critters



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NUMBER 29 OCTOBER 1988

C O N T E N T S

Captain Jack by Mike Kazaleh

It's on the facing page, son! Whatta we gotta do—read it for you too?

Lionheart by Tom Stazer with Anthony Smith
"Fourth Estate, Fifth Column"

At the conclusion of the five-part series, Lionheart finds himself in an ethical bind—but his antagonists are worse off 3

Lizards by Holland and Wilber
"Stuck Inside Memphis With the Mobile Blues Again"

Dweezil and Bear drive off to reach the peak of wisdom—and and end up considerably higher than they bargained for 13

Lone Wulff & Bub by Volker Reiche
"Woolly Wulff"

Wulff's worries over his new sweater give new meaning to the expression "wolf in sheep's clothing" 22

Critters #29, October, 1988. *Critters* is published monthly by Fantagraphics Books, Inc., and is copyright © 1988 Fantagraphics Books, Inc. All stories © respective creators: J. Holland and Ron Wilber, Volker Reiche, and Tom Stazer. No part of this magazine may be reproduced without written permission from Fantagraphics Books and the authors. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and institutions in *Critters* and those of any living or dead persons 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: June, 1988. Available from the publisher for \$2.50: Fantagraphics Books, 1800 Bridgegate Street Suite #101, Westlake Village, CA 91361.

With this issue we bid a fond farewell to Tom Stazer's "Lionheart," who wraps up the longest serial these pages have seen since the days of Gallacci. May I suggest you gather up all your old issues and sit down for a nice, long read-through of Tom and Anthony Smith's pulse-pounding novella? As much fun as it was to read on an issue-by-issue basis, it reads even better that way—trust me.

"Lionheart" won't be popping up in *Critters* for several issues, but Stazer fans needn't fret—there will be an eight-page "Lionheart" story in Usagi Yojimbo #12, on sale in August.

Someone's missing in this issue of *Critters*, namely J.P. Morgan with the third chapter of his "They Saved Walt's Brain" serial. Alas, the dreaded deadline doom has struck; however, I'd been wanting to run the wonderful Volker Reiche story that begins on page 22 for a while, so everything comes out even—more or less.

I also wanted to say that the rumors of Captain Jack's demise are, if not quite unfounded, a bit premature. Mighty Mike Kazaleh, who occupies the inside front cover this time around, has actually completed #11 (which will be released in August), and #12 (scheduled for October) will be a semi-finale to the series. Back issues of Mike's fine and funny space opera are still available to those of you over 18; but if you're cheap or under 18, keep watching the Mighty Mouse Show!

Next issue: Mark Martin Mark Martin MARK MARTIN MARK MARTIN!! Plus the return of "Gnuff" and "Angst," and the next chapter of "Walt's Brain." Miss it and your life will become meaningless.

—KIM THOMPSON

L E T T E R S

C.E. Dinkins
Oakland, CA

Dear Kim:

Issue #25's lettercol was my first notice that the village of Lansing had had its way with Friendly Frank's. I'm waiting for my *Comics Journal* subscription issue to arrive with the details (a staff member of Berkeley's Comic Relief tells me that Mike Correa has decided to appeal), but it sure feels like the Supreme Court's legally amorphous "community standards" have spit in our collective eye this time. A nasty price to pay for pluralism...

I think I'll concentrate on this issue of *Critters*, letting my countenance soften into an expression of contrition as I admit to being a fan of Tom Stazer's work for years and—*mea culpa!*—keeping the fact to myself. The endless snafus of the workaday world exert a gravitational pull on Stazer's sense of

humor, and his sarcastic approach to genre fiction undermines space opera (*Spaced*), horror ("Detour," *Critters* #8-11), and the detective thriller (many of the Lionheart stories to date) with a firm belief that Murphy's Law is the most powerful determinant in the universe. To question, as *Spaced* does, military and corporate authority (not to mention the guiding "artistic vision" of the megabuck entertainment apparatus's leaders) is to learn how bereft of practical answers that authority is. That's hardly news, but in the confident sphere of Stazer's satire, it's still hilarious.

I can't get enough of "Lionheart." "Zany But Deadly!" (*Critters* #4) captured my imagination as an acidic epilogue to the classic age of animation, casting the Warner Bros. comedy stable as a circle of bitter Hollywood has-beens living as less than the sum of their memories of the murdered Bugs B—excuse me, Dizzy Dog. Lionheart's pursuit of the truth was objective to the point of rendering him a minor character in his own debut, and the Hollywood locale was only a plot necessity, not the corrupt Camelot enshrined in genre fiction. The city didn't scream for the charge of a cynical knight errant wielding the power of the press. (Yes, Nathanael West and all those Southern California detective story writers whose attitudes, especially Raymond Chandler's, I swallowed whole as a kid daubed an indelibly romanticized tint on the impressions of Hollywood that I gleaned in the month I spent there.)

Moving the series Northeast has given Stazer's subsequent stories an evocative boost. Lionheart displays that deadpan sarcasm characteristic of native Pittsburghers, perhaps natives of the whole tri-state (PA, OH, WV) area. Pittsburgh has a Manichean cultural stolidity that's difficult to suggest in fiction: I tried (and probably failed) to do it in an *Oakland Tribune* short story published last December, which was set in an imaginary corner of my old Northside stomping grounds. (Highly imaginary: I eavesdropped on a conversation between a couple of dog and squirrel barmates sharing poverty and delusions of significance. Blame it on those prints of poker-playing dogs they used to advertise in *TV Guide*....)

Tom Stazer's stories do me a world of good. They set a lot of memories in motion, asking if the piecemeal disarmament of my stockpiled, abrasive verbal defenses is a matter of environment or attitude. That's a big bonus in a series of funny, ironic, and slightly paranoid adventure stories that would keep me coming back for more, anyway.

● *Thanks for a nice dissertation on the considerable charms of "Lionheart." Tom Stazer's legion of fans is growing, including such notables as—well, see the next letter.*

—KT



Stan Sakai

Just a little downstate, CA

Dear Critters Editor,

I just finished reading issue #25 and I've just got to say that *Critters* is the best funny-animals anthology around...and I'd say that even if you weren't my publisher.

● *Aww, thanks. Gawrsh. And as if all this—the nice comment and the drawing—weren't enough, Stan is also playing host to "Lionheart" this summer. See my editorial for details.*

—KT

Chris Larason

Monroe, LA

Dear Kim,

I really like *Critters*. In this age of the post-comix boom (independents, anyway—the Big Two are still making a killing, the bastards), when I find myself cutting down my buying list(!), I still keep buying *Critters*. Why? I'm not sure, but I don't ever feel ripped off when I'm done reading it for one thing (at the very worst). And sometimes I prize the issue (fairly often). But...one thing... "Gnuff."

"OH NO! Not more gripes about 'Gnuff!'"

Well, geez! Yeah, it's okay, I don't hate it like I useta, but hell, it's in nearly every ish! Maybe you should rename the comic "Gnuff and Pals" or somesuch.

Or maybe not publish so much "Gnuff." (As he puts these hideous, blasphemous words on paper, he fancies he hears all the Gnuff fans, including Kim Thompson,

thrashing in their beds, with uneasy dreams of cancellation haunting their sleep.)

Or better yet, publish it in its own book! Yes, be the first with the translated Swedish comics! Forget Japanese; we've got Swedish! (How about Gnuff 88? Or Gnellie, the Psychic Dragon? Gnicky, a True Dragon Story? Sorry, couldn't resist!)

Okay, okay, so I've been silly here and probably missed Milton's nationality to boot, but I believe I've made my point. I can stand "Gnuff," but Gnuff's egnuff, okay? Please, thin it out.

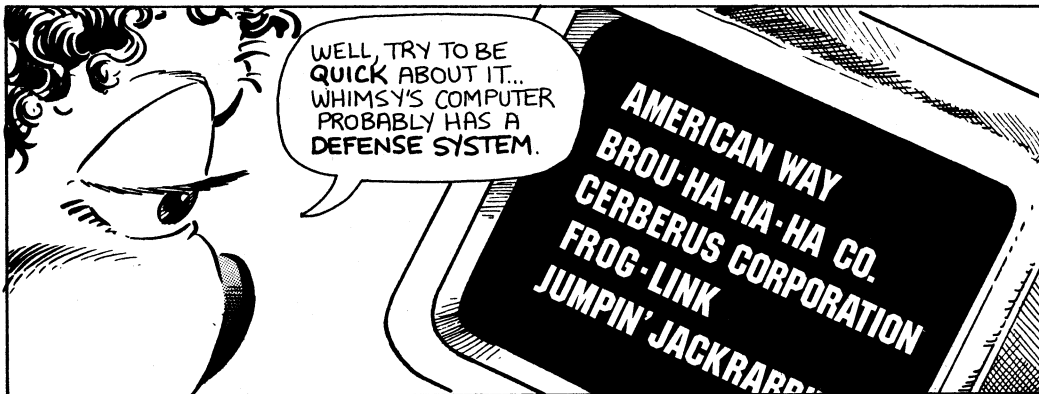
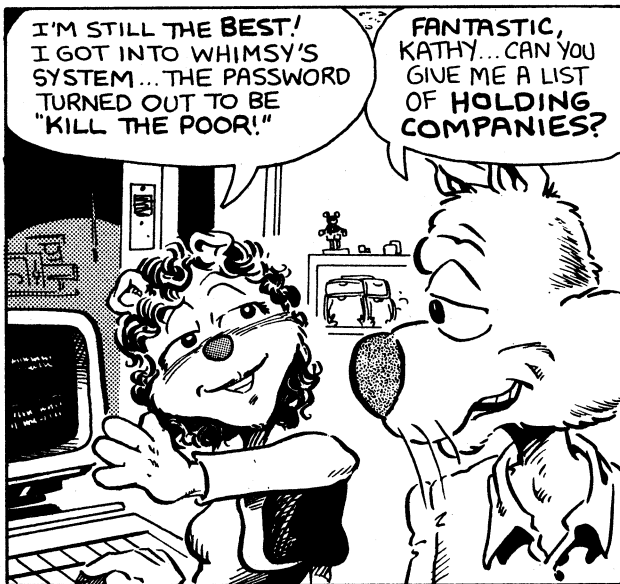
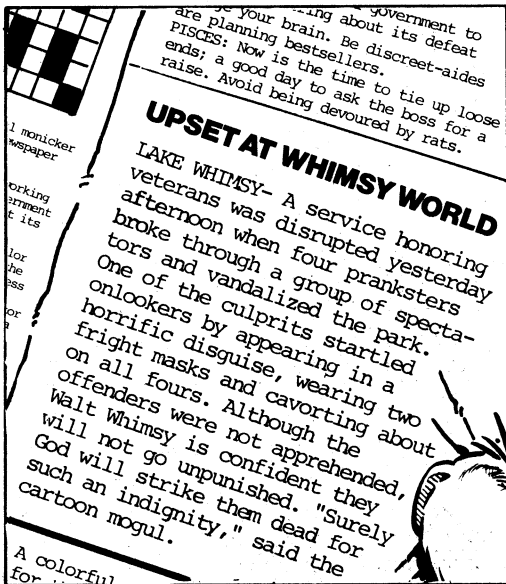
Apart from that, I really do enjoy the average issue of *Critters*. Without so much Gnuff, though, it wouldn't be so average.

● *Okay, to address your poi—*

P.S.: I just realized I never said why I disliked Gnuff. (1) *It's not funny*. Neither is "Birthright," but this isn't very interesting or original, either. (2) *The art is thin*. Look at page 5 in issue #24. It's so pale! Thin lines, thin panel borders, and lots of the same tone Zip-a-Tone. His work doesn't please my eye. It seems to need more contrast, usually.

● *Ah. Finished? Okay. Freddy himself might agree with you that his graytoned (it's not Zip-a-Tone, by the way, but a gray tone added photographically) black-and-white art lacks a little something: "Gnuff" is drawn for color, and the only reason we print it in black-and-white here is because we can't afford color. However, those who would like a glimpse of Freddy's work in full color, this fall's Rog-2000 #1 will feature a new Gnuff story in sparkling hues executed by none*

[LETTERS CONTINUED ON PAGE 21]

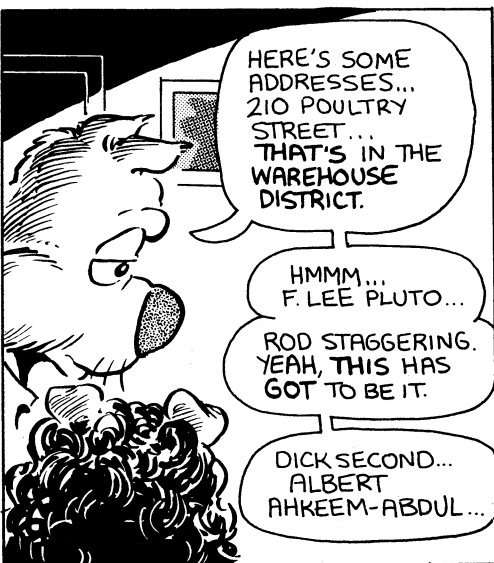


CERBERUS CORPORATION?

CERBERUS--
THAT'S THE
NAME OF
THE THREE-
HEADED CANINE
GUARDIAN
OF THE
UNDERWORLD!

YEAH? I THOUGHT
CERBERUS WAS THE
AARDVARK WITH A
TALK SHOW SET IN
A BAR.

PULL ME UP A FILE
ON CERBERUS.

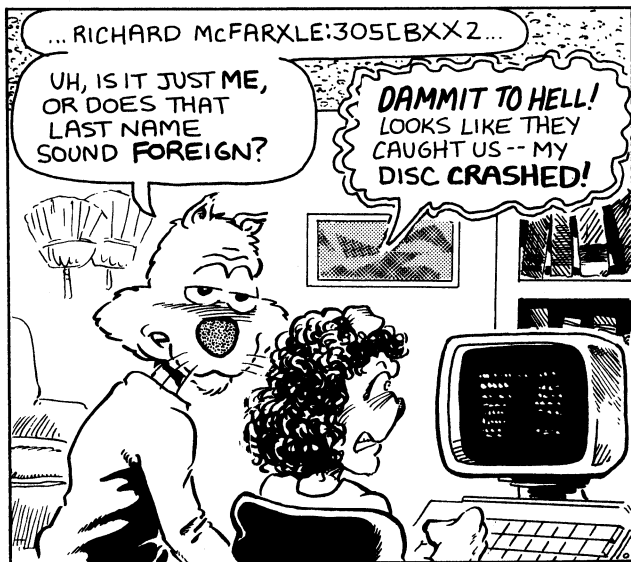


HERE'S SOME
ADDRESSES...
210 POULTRY
STREET...
THAT'S IN THE
WAREHOUSE
DISTRICT.

HMMM...
F. LEE PLUTO...

ROD STAGGERING.
YEAH, THIS HAS
GOT TO BE IT.


DICK SECOND...
ALBERT
AHKEEM-ABDUL...



... RICHARD MCFARXLE:305LBXX2...

UH, IS IT JUST ME,
OR DOES THAT
LAST NAME
SOUND FOREIGN?

DAMMIT TO HELL!
LOOKS LIKE THEY
CAUGHT US-- MY
DISC CRASHED!



IT DIDN'T TAKE
YOU LONG TO
RUIN MY DAY.
WHAT ARE YOU
GOING TO DO
NOW?

NORSE AND HIS PALS MUST BE
COVERING THEIR TRACKS...
I'VE GOT TO GET OVER TO
THE WAREHOUSE BEFORE
ALL THE EVIDENCE IS
DESTROYED!



SHOULD
I COME
WITH YOU?

NOT UNLESS
YOU'RE PACKING
HEAT!

SHORTLY...

THIS ALLEY RINGS A BELL,
ALL RIGHT...

NO PROBLEM
FINDING A
PARKING
SPACE.



LOOKS LIKE SOMEBODY
HAD A CLEARANCE
SALE IN HERE.

BUT, SURELY THERE
MUST BE SOME
EVIDENCE LEFT
BEHIND.





I HOPE YOU'VE COME TO APOLOGIZE ... YOU MADE A MOCKERY OUT OF THE VETERANS MEMORIAL SERVICE!

FOR THE LOVE OF GOD, HOW COULD YOU?



SORRY I DON'T LIVE UP TO YOUR HIGH PERSONAL STANDARDS, COLONEL, BUT I'VE BEEN BUSY.

IN THE LAST 24 HOURS I'VE BEEN KIDNAPPED, DOPED, DETAINED -- AND BEEN SHOT AT WHILE BEATING ONE OF YOUR LAB REJECTS IN A MARATHON.

I DON'T NEED A LECTURE FROM DADDY WARBUCKS!



WHO SAYS THE DOG IS MINE? THE TECHNOLOGY IS STRICTLY RUSSIAN. THE WAY I SEE IT, I WAS MISLED.

AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, THE BUCK STOPS AT IVAN.



FOR SOMEONE SO COMMITTED TO TRUTH, JUSTICE AND THE AMERICAN WAY, YOU'D THINK YOU MIGHT EMPLOY THEM MORE OFTEN.

I'VE ALREADY SEEN YOUR VERSION OF YESTERDAY'S EPISODE.

IT WON'T HOLD UP.



REPORTERS ARE MARXIST CRYBABIES; WE ALREADY KNOW THAT. IF THEY'RE ALL AS STUPID AS YOU, I FIGURE I'M SAFE.

GO AHEAD... DO YOUR "JOB." ASK ME ANYTHING YOU WANT.

WHY DID YOUR GOONS LET ME ESCAPE AND THEN CHASE ME DOWN?



OPERATOR ERROR. OUTSIDE OF THE MARINES, IT'S HARD TO FIND A FEW GOOD MEN.

WE SHOULD HAVE KILLED YOU.



WHAT'S WHIMSY'S STAKE IN THIS? I KNOW ABOUT CERBERUS.

I'M AWARE OF YOUR MOMENTARY ENTRY INTO OUR FILES... YOU HAVE ABOUT AS MUCH RESPECT FOR PRIVACY AS YOU DO FOR GOVERNMENT.



AS FOR WHIMSY... HE JUST SIGNS THE CHECKS. HE DOESN'T KNOW THAT MR. PLUTO USES HIS HOLDING COMPANIES TO MANAGE THE ENTERPRISE'S CAPITAL.

NOT THAT HE'D MIND.

R.R.R.R.

HE DOESN'T CARE WHAT YOU DO WITH THE MONEY?

FRIENDS OF DEMOCRACY FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD HAVE DONATED MONEY TO ARM THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS IN NICARAGUA...

R.R.R. KLIK!

BUT ACTUALLY, THE CONTRAS HAVE MORE CASH THAN THEY NEED, THANKS TO THEIR LUCRATIVE ... UH, IMPORT BUSINESS.

SO, I SIMPLY DIVERTED SOME FUNDS TO A MORE NEEDY CRUSADE.

THE CREATION OF A MUTANT DOG?

SMART INVESTMENT.

IN FACT, IT IS... SOLID RETURN FOR YOUR DOLLAR.

FOR ONE PRICE, WE GET A DEMOCRACY IN CENTRAL AMERICA, DISGRACE FOR COMMIELAND, REVITALIZATION OF THE ARMAMENT INDUSTRY AND STRENGTHENING OF THE RIGHT WING POLITICAL BASE.

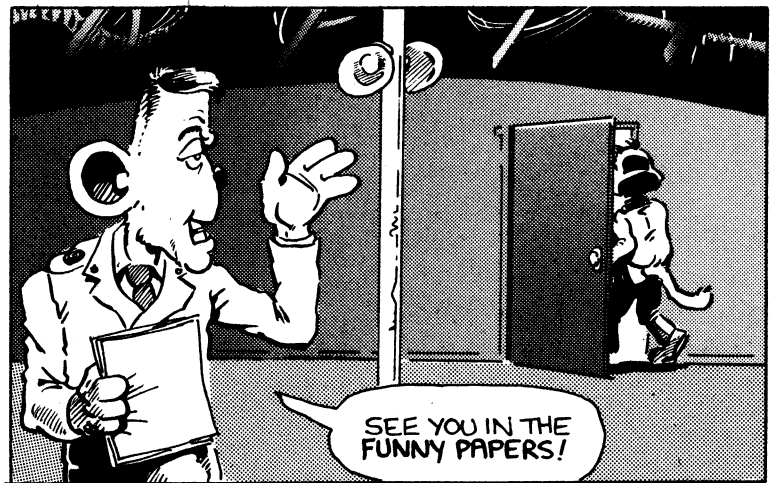
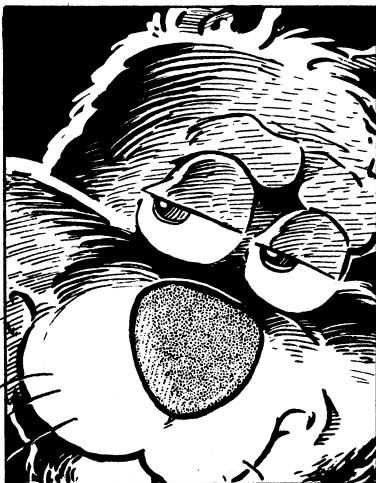
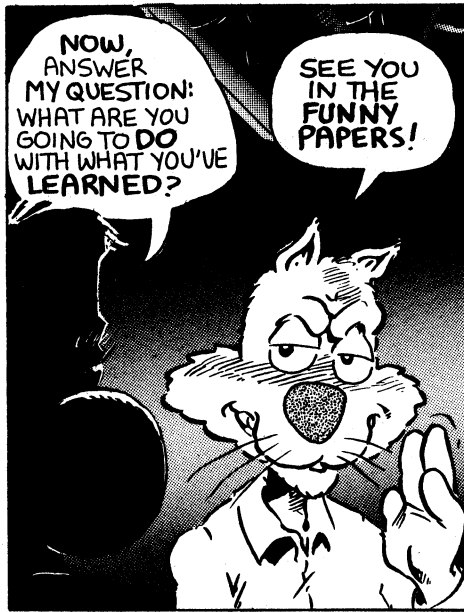
WITH ANY LUCK, EVEN WAR AND FULL EMPLOYMENT.

AND, BEST OF ALL, IT DOESN'T COST THE TAXPAYER A CENT!

DOES YOUR RUSSIAN PAL SHARE YOUR ENTHUSIASM?

WE SHIPPED IVAN HOME... NO DOUBT HE'S FILLING SALT SHAKERS IN SIBERIA BY NOW.

WHO ELSE IS INVOLVED... JUST HOW FAR UP THE LADDER DOES THIS THING GO?





EPILOGUE

a few weeks later...

DUTY.

TRUTH.

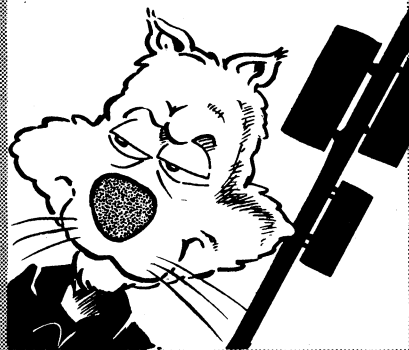
JUSTICE.

MY JOB AS A JOURNALIST IS TO REPORT THE NEWS. WHEN I DO MY JOB WELL, WHETHER BY ACCIDENT OR BY DESIGN, I TELL THE TRUTH.

COLONEL NORSE CLAIMS MY DUTY IS TO MY COUNTRY, MY FLAG.

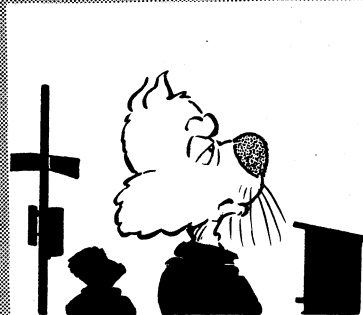
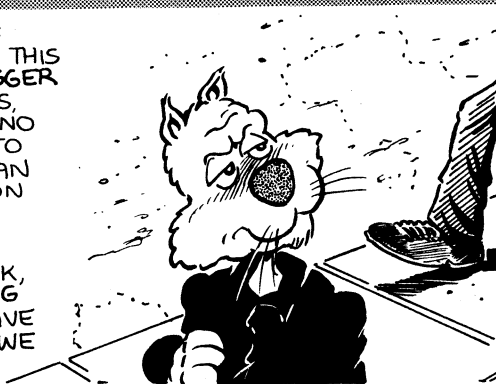
IF I HIDE THE TRUTH, I FAIL MY DUTY AS A JOURNALIST. IF I REVEAL THE TRUTH, I HASTEN THE SUCCESS OF NORSE'S PLOT... AND FAIL MY DUTY AS A CITIZEN OF THE WORLD.

I MAKE A MOCKERY OF JUSTICE.



I WON'T LIE TO YOU: THERE ARE IDEAS IN THIS WORLD THAT ARE BIGGER THAN ANY ONE OF US, AND A REPORTER IS NO BETTER EQUIPPED TO DEAL WITH THEM THAN THE AVERAGE JOE ON THE STREET.

WE ALL STUMBLE AROUND IN THE DARK, AND IN THE "ENSUING CONFUSION" WE HAVE TO CLING TO WHAT WE FEEL IS RIGHT.



I BURIED THE STORY.

SMALL COMFORT, BUT I ALSO BELIEVE TRUTH WILL OUT. THE IDEA ISN'T ORIGINAL WITH ME, BUT I LIKE IT ANYWAY. I BELIEVE TRUTH WILL OUT BECAUSE I BELIEVE THERE IS JUSTICE IN THIS WORLD-- NOT JUST THE NEXT. SOONER OR LATER GUYS LIKE NORSE WILL BE RECOGNIZED FOR WHO THEY ARE. THEY'LL BE CAUGHT AND THEY WILL PAY.

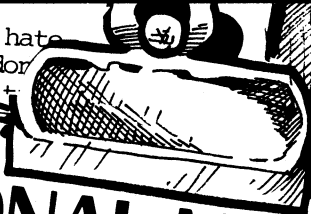


THEN AGAIN...
MAYBE I'M JUST KIDDING MYSELF.



Dogs of war, and men of hate
There's no cause, they don't
discr...

JUNE 12 \$2.00



a CABELLERO newspaper

NATIONAL MIDNITE STAR

SIAMESE TWINS ADOPT TWO-HEADED DOG! WILL RAISE MUTE MONGREL LIKE OWN SON



Metropolitan Area: Partly cloudy tonight and Wednesday. Lows near 70. Cool to mid-60s inland. Westerly winds less than 10 mph tonight shifting to northwesterly. Victoria Area: Partly cloudy Wednesday. San Antonio Area: Partly cloudy tonight and Wednesday. Lows tonight between 60s. Highs Wednesday between 80s. Northerly winds less than 10 mph tonight shifting Wednesday to easterly 10 to 15 mph.

HOW DAVEY DUCK
CARTOONS CURED
MY BRAIN TUMOR!

GHOSTLY MARINE
GIVES SLIDE SHOW
FROM BEYOND
THE GRAVE!

MEET
BATEMAN'S
HOT NEW
BEAU!

Dr. Rx's
MIRACLE DIET!

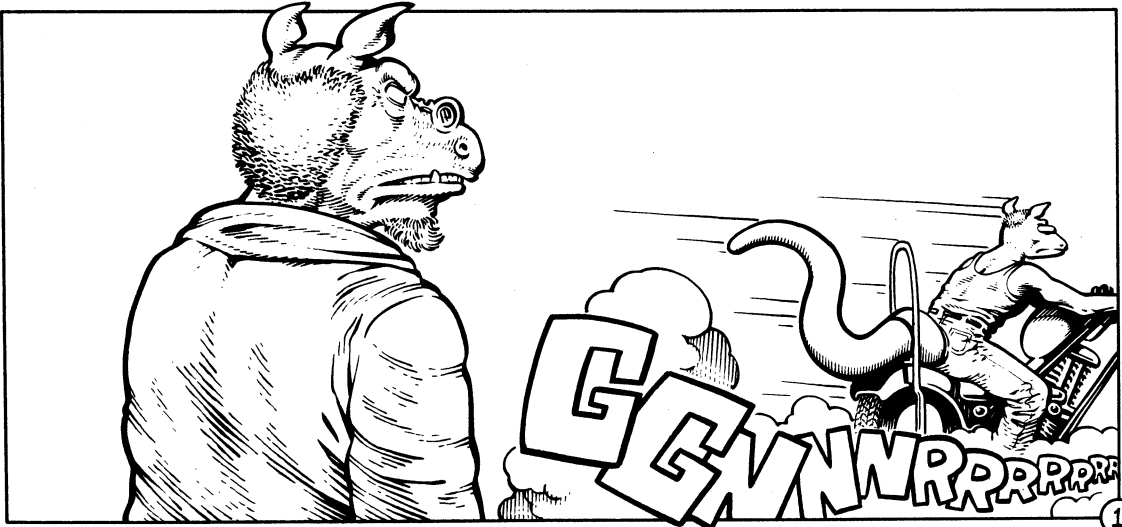
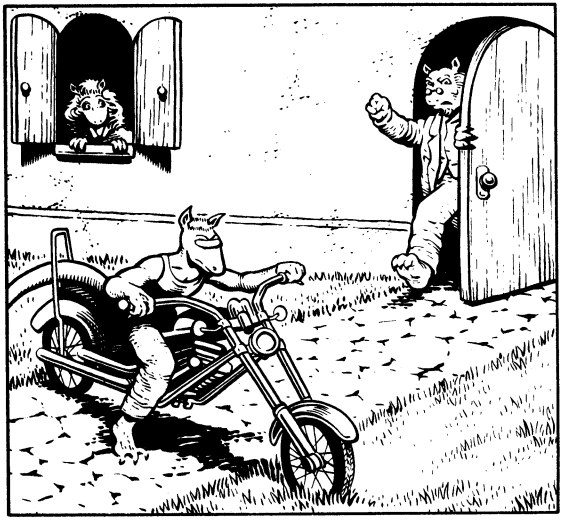
EAT ALL YOU WANT
-SLEEP NO MORE!

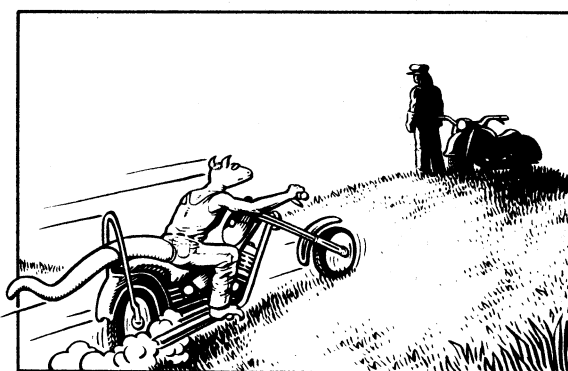


In the areas of yesterday's
agreements, remember the
traditions of East and West;
when three worlds hunt for
your heart, and everyone is
a collaborator, there

And there comes a time when
what was wrong becomes right;
and then comes a time when
friendly dogs begin to bite

THE
END



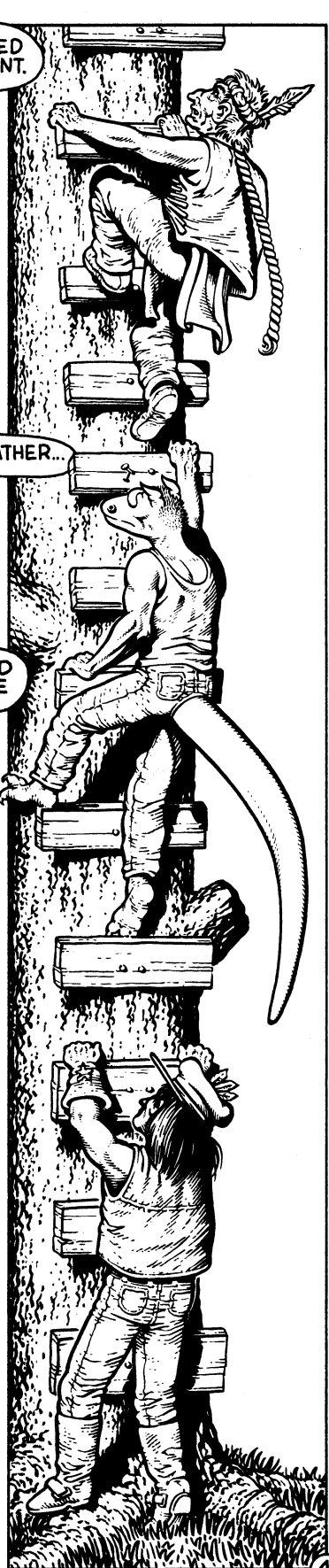
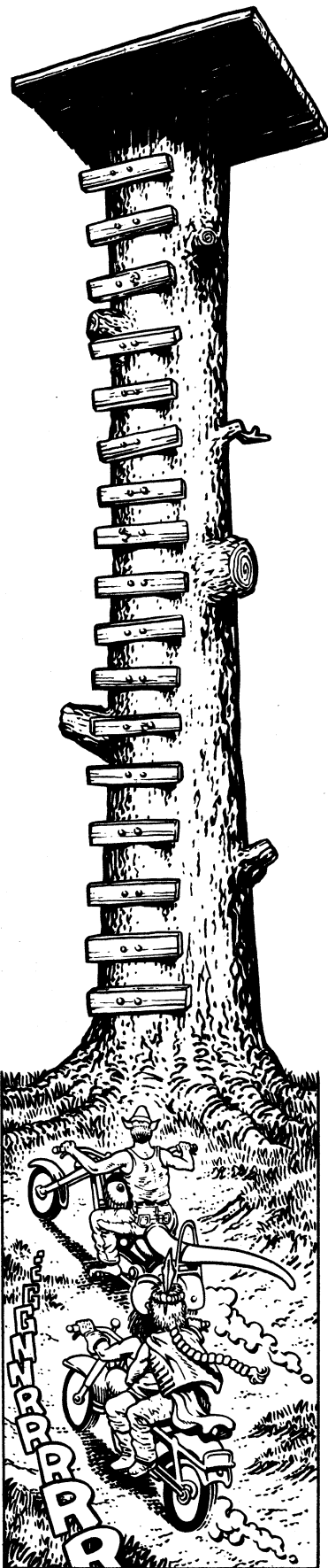


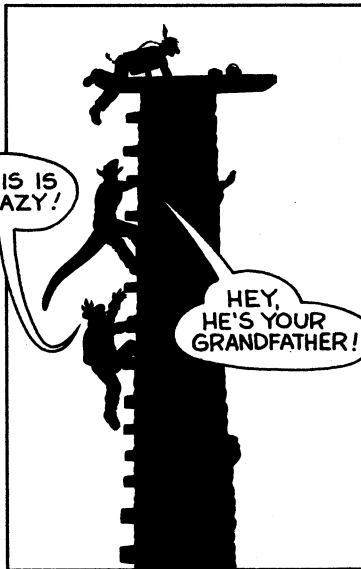
STUCK INSIDE MEMPHIS

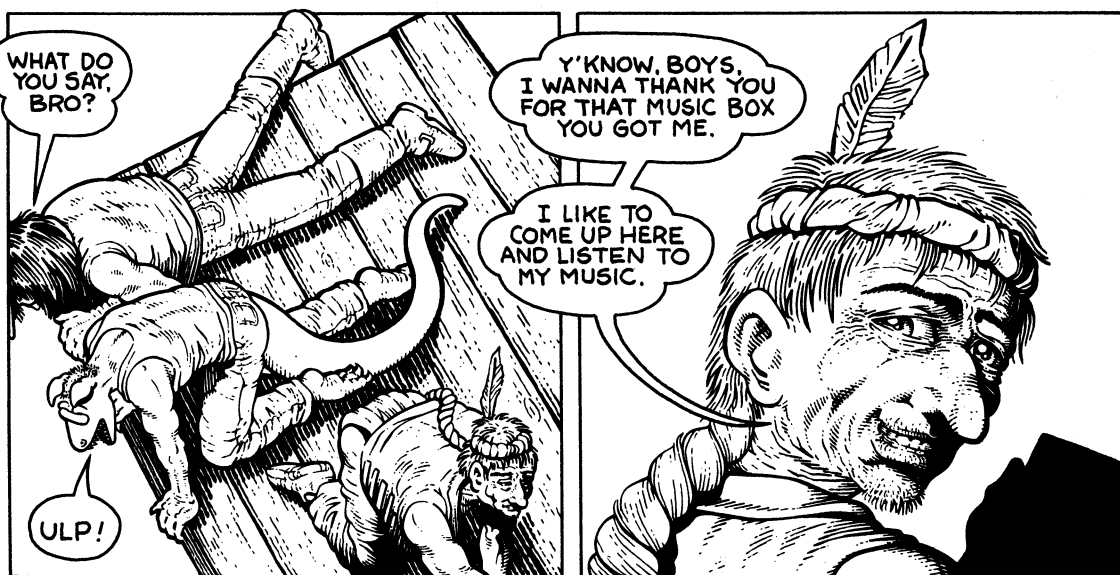
with the mobile blues again

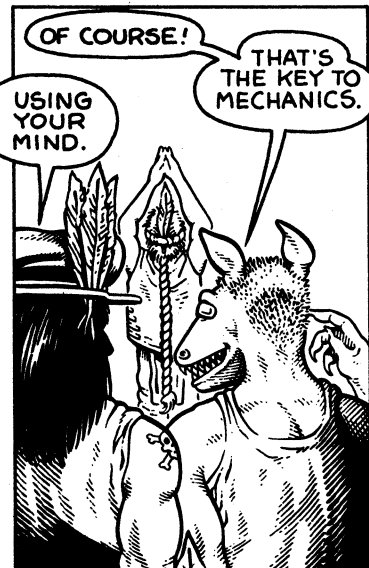
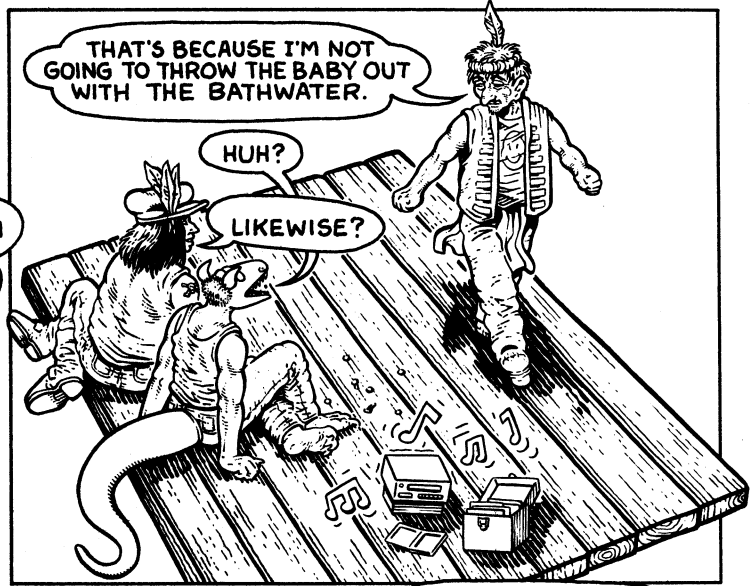












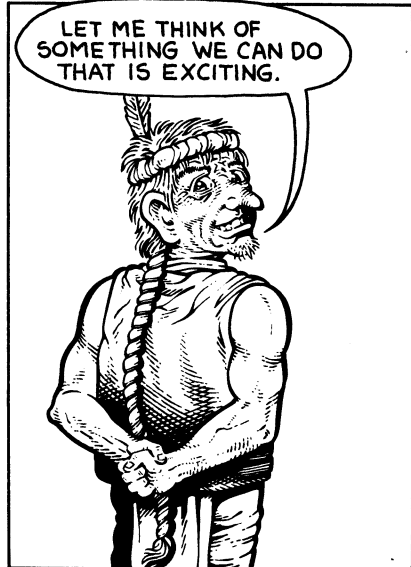


IF YOU BELIEVE,
YOU CAN DO ANYTHING.

ACCORDING
TO THE SCIENCE
OF MECHANICS...

SCIENCE! SCIENCE
WAS INVENTED TO TRY TO
EXPLAIN WHAT COULD NOT
BE EXPLAINED!

BUT
ENOUGH!
YOU
WANTED
EXCITEMENT.



LET ME THINK OF
SOMETHING WE CAN DO
THAT IS EXCITING.

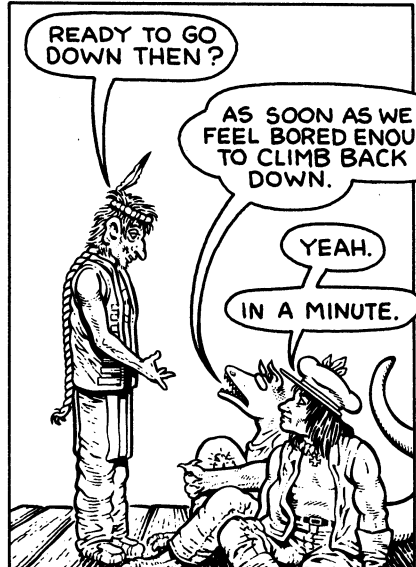


NO, NO.
THAT'S ALL RIGHT!
WE DECIDED WE LIKE
BORING AND DULL!



IN FACT WE LIKE THE
DULL AND BORING
GROUND.

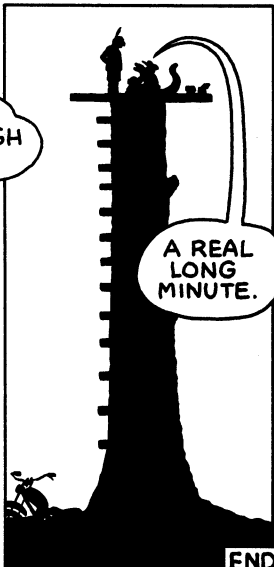
LIKE
DITTO,
BRO!



READY TO GO
DOWN THEN?

AS SOON AS WE
FEEL BORED ENOUGH
TO CLIMB BACK
DOWN.

YEAH.
IN A MINUTE.



A REAL
LONG
MINUTE.

END

other than Mike Kazaleh. If you saw the Captain Jack stories Mike colored for Anything Goes! and Doomsday Squad, you have a hint as to how sensational this is going to look.

As for spacing out "Gnuff," it averages out to four issues on, two issues off. This seems a good rhythm to me—what do the rest of you think?

And... Swedish? SWEDISH?! First the Comics Buyer's Guide calls Freddy Dutch, and now this?! Get your North European countries straight, folks! How would you like it if I referred to you as "that reader from Alabama"??

For another slant on the great "Gnuff" debate, see the following letter. ... —KT

Niall MacConall
Hull, Quebec, Canada

Mr. Thompson:

Hello! I finally decided to write to *Critters*. I find it one of the best on the market, due to the quality of the stories and the great editorial job (no, I'm not trying to butter you up: I'm simply expressing my opinion), of which the surefire sign is a great lettercol: yours has depth, humor, spirited debates, and an ongoing concern for the book. You love your job, and it shows.

In fact, *Critters* is one of the books (along with *Amazing Heroes*, *The Comics Journal*, and *CBG*) that got me hooked on the alternative market, in the beginning of 1987. (Yes, it was "Birthright II" that got my attention, due to the art. I didn't pay much attention to the actual story and dialogues, since at the time I had little money to spend each week, and my only recent arrival on the comics scene added to the cost of the book, in Canadian dollars, doused a little bit of interest. But it grew. Rapidly. And by the time I decided to throw caution and my allowance to the wind in exchange of quality, I could only get #18 and up. I could kick myself to death for not instantly buying those now-classic issues. If only the stores in Ottawa could carry *Albedo*, I would have picked them up much faster.) Now, I watch for several alternative books, hoping (sometimes vainly) that a distributing glitch don't get them all on the same week. But I still buy Marvel books, and I still like them; I don't feel that I should dump them just because I have "quality books," as some people I meet in the store tell me (and as I see that feeling permeating from many letters and editors in many alternative books). Quality is a personally defined value: there can be a consensus on many cases, but I don't feel I have "outgrown" mainstream comics. They are different: different process of printing, of creation, of editing, of scheduling. Different expectations in the results, too. Just like the European *bandes dessinées* are different. I know, I've been in it since I could read. (That's the advantage of being on the border of a francophone province, Quebec, and an anglo-

phone province, Ontario: I can easily get the best of both!) And if you're wondering about my age, I'll tell you that I'm 21.

Speaking of Canada, I can assure you, residing next to the nation's capital, that the statement made by John Sain in #25 about acid rain is quite erroneous: we would certainly not "bitch" on a subject as serious (and destructive) as acid rain; but since he lives on the West Coast, it could be that he had information from news reports that are not as concerned as they are in the East Coast. So I'm just trying to correct a comment that could be misleading in our attitude.

Enough of this. On to the stories: "Lionheart" starts very well, mixing thriller with science-fiction. I was curious to see the second installment of "Angst," since I couldn't judge much of the personalities of Louie and Ratface in only one scene from their lives; I was delighted. Van Horn has made with "Angst" what I call an "atmosphere strip," in which the mood is primordial to the story. Even the action contributes to the mood, rendering itself almost normal. (Note: I try hard to convey into words my feelings of the stories; I'm not used to it yet, so don't take everything to the letter. This especially applies to that last sentence.) The Martin poster is a treat; I hope he'll have more than a cover on #30. And "Gnuff": ah, the controversial "Gnuff."

I like it.

It has that European touch I know so well, especially the pacing, quite slower than the usual American comic book. One of its special attributes, though, is the fact that it is always eight panels a page, all practically the same size, with one or two round panels, and very few large panels; this contributes immensely to the pace and the flavour that is unique to "Gnuff." Congratulations, Mr. Milton! (But Mr. Thompson, in your known enthusiasm for the strip, you have missed a little error on the cover of #24: Gnelli has the same mouth as Gnuff, where it should have been green all over. I guess you got carried away...)

What do you think you were doing, giving us six uninterrupted months of "Fission Chicken"? Kill me by laughing? Well, you almost succeeded! This is true farce, with parody and intelligence all over. A very good try indeed, but I think you could only do it with a ten-pager of F.C., Sam and Max and Captain Jack in the same issue, and the odds of that happening are minuscule. At least I hope so... All right, I warn you, if you do it, you'll have my death along with hundreds of others on your conscience; and I'll make sure we all come and haunt you at deadline time. You are warned!

Wait a minute: what's this? Sam and Max? In *bathing suits*? Is the world ready for this? And shame on you for not saying a word on

Eric Blumrich's great-looking fox! He has a very interesting pose, some good foreshortening, a good face expression, and some swell inking to boot!

The only hope I have for this mag is that you finally say goodbye to those subscription blues...

● That's it—J.P. Morgan didn't want to kill one of his loyal readers. That's why he blew his deadline. Incidentally, Sam & Max fans should be aware that Steve Purcell, their hideously talented creator, is the writer of this year's Gumby Christmas Special. Steve is one of the few people who could follow in the footsteps of Bob Burden and not fall in, so this is delightful news.

Thanks for the kind comments. —KT

Andrea Feldman
Providence, RI

Dear Kim,

I'm writing this letter mainly in response to "Ambrose" in *Critters* #22. As far as I'm concerned, the story was not quite as good as "Angst," but the artwork—! Van Horn's art was a perfect tribute to George Herriman, the creator of "Krazy Kat" and the man who gave life to archy and mehitabel.

The starry plains and abstract designs Van Horn used were reminiscent of the bizarre backgrounds Herriman created as the backdrop for *Krazy Kat*. I enjoyed "Krazy Kat" very much, as I did "Angst." I hope to see Mr. Van Horn's characters around again. As for him paying tribute to Mr. Herriman, "What's old is new again," eh?

The "Watchdogs" covers were great, both of them! I even bought one copy of each other. (*Snickers*. —KT) The story was the best "Blue Beagle" yet. "Gnuff" and "Fission Chicken" were very good, too. All in all, a great issue. Too bad "SpeakingStone" isn't in yet. Hopefully by the time *Critters* #23 rolls around Kate and Reed will be on schedule.

I'm looking forward to future issues, and I laud you for what you've done for the world of funny animals. Boy, I really *end* a letter when I *end* a letter, don't I?

● Not only that, you end the letters column with it. Thanks for the Herriman tribute.

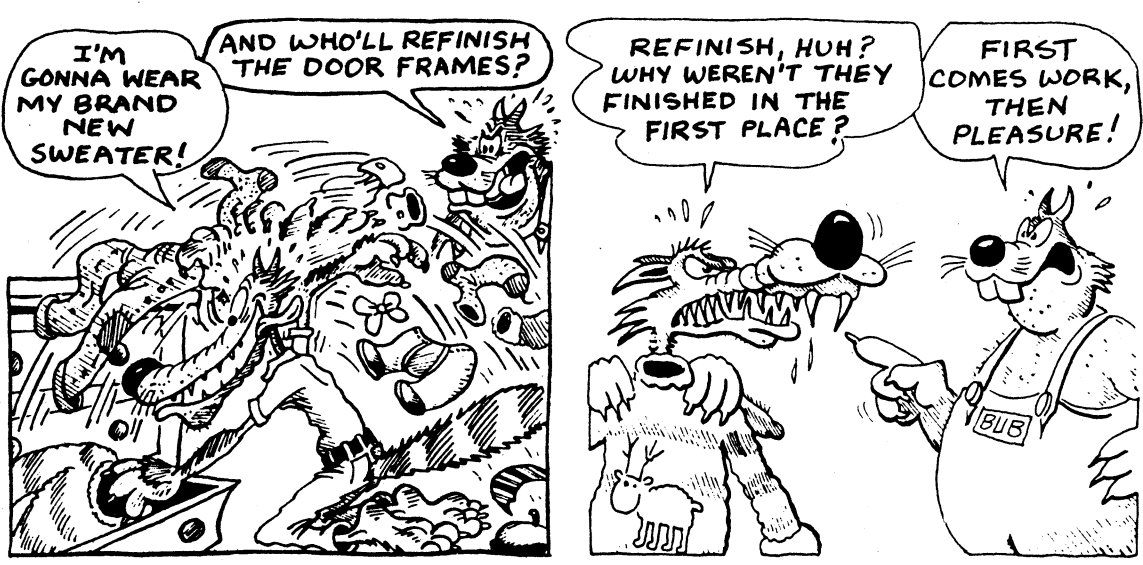
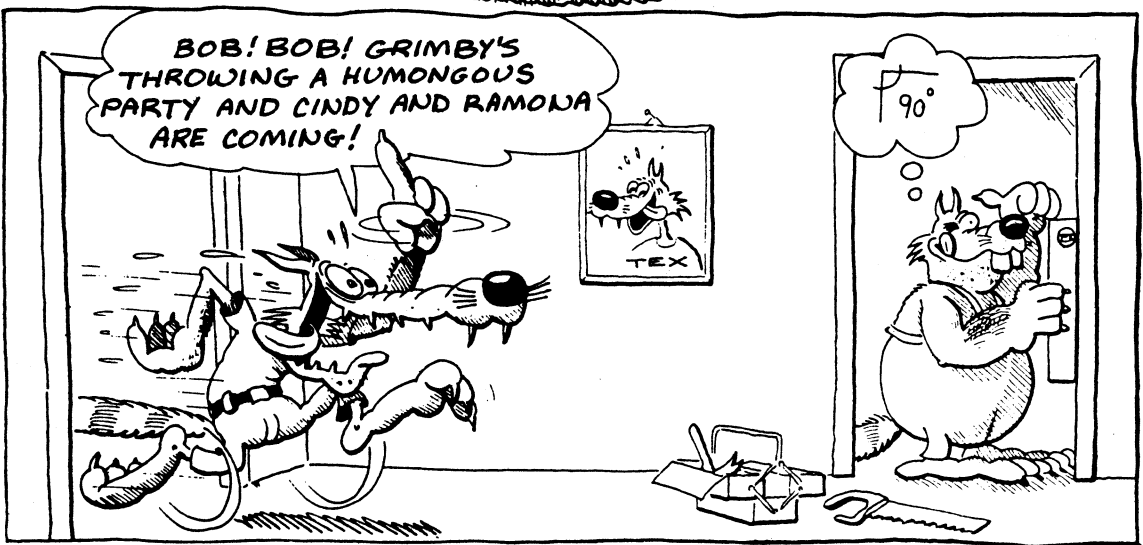
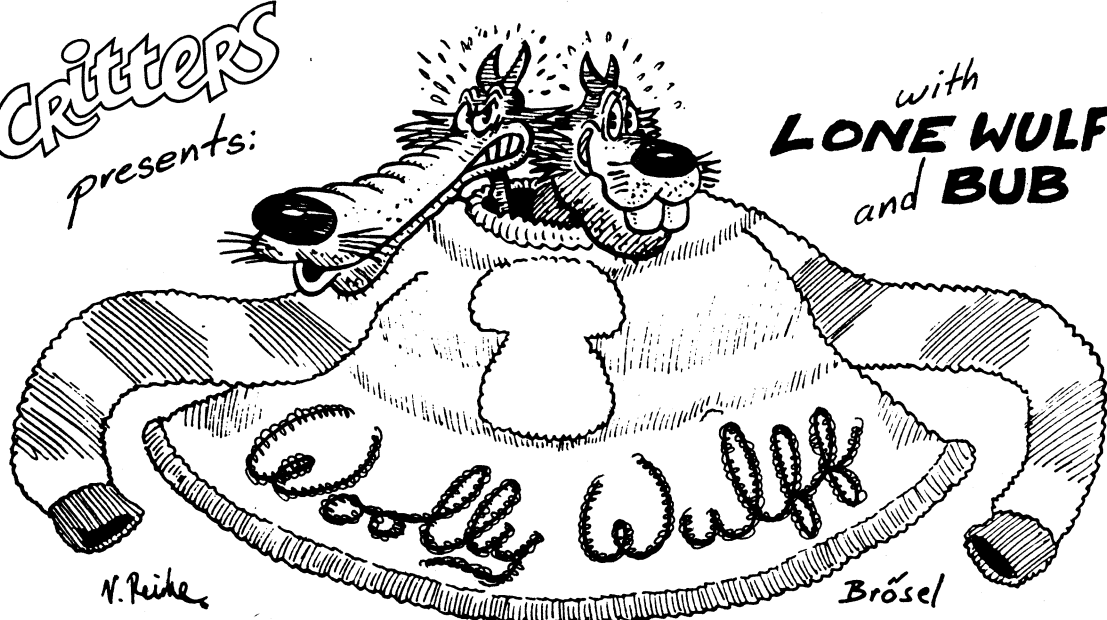
That's it for this issue! See you next month! And J.P... get back to work! —KT



• IN SPITE OF ALL THERE IS A SOUL MADE "HAPPY" IN THE END.

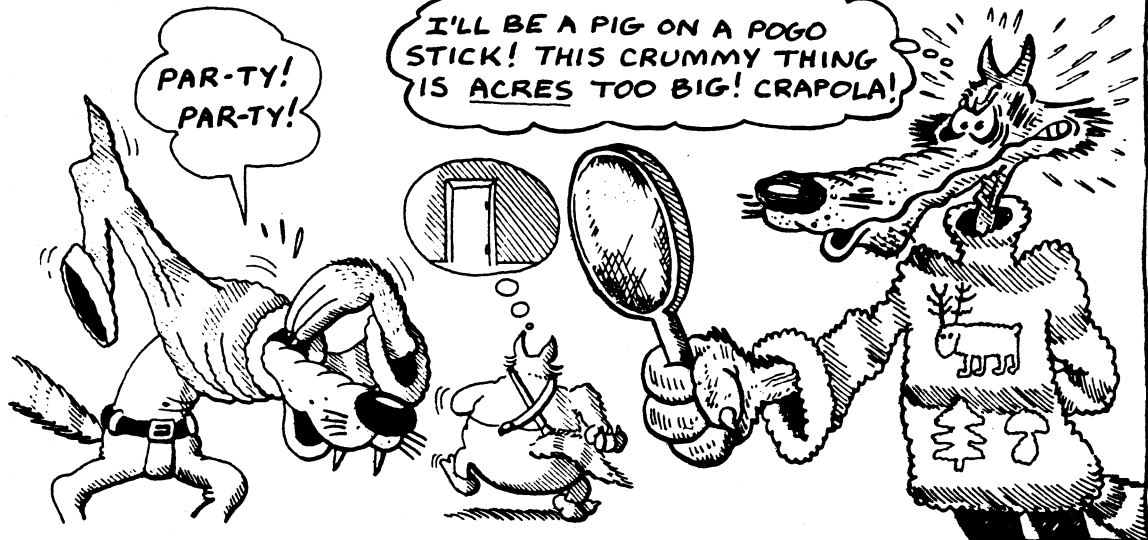
Critters
presents:

with
LONE WULFF
and **BUB**



PAR-TY!
PAR-TY!

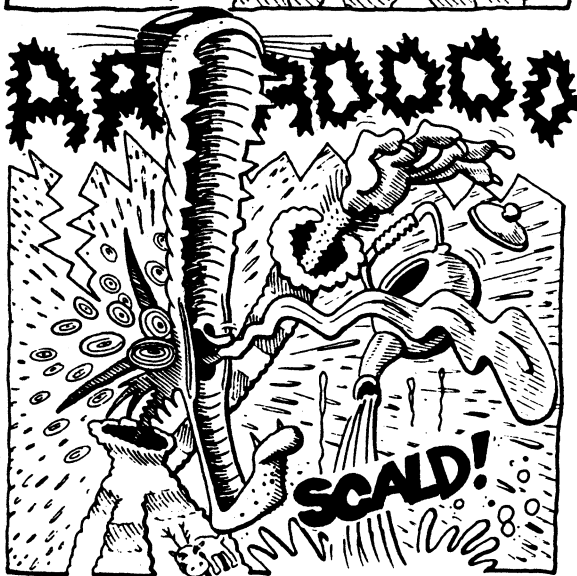
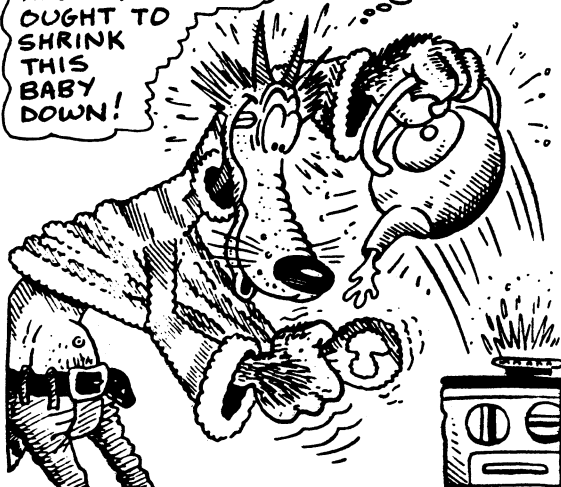
I'LL BE A PIG ON A POGO
STICK! THIS CRUMMY THING
IS ACRES TOO BIG! CRAPOLA!



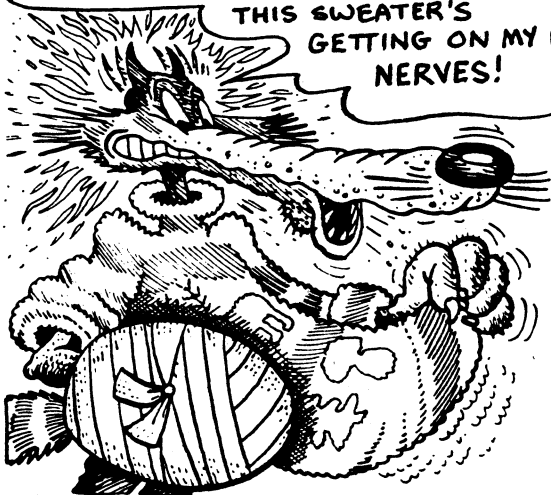
I'M RUNNING OUT OF TIME...
GOT TO THINK THIS
THROUGH!



BOILING WATER FROM THIS
RED-HOT KETTLE
OUGHT TO
SHRINK
THIS
BABY
DOWN!



SCREW THE 3RD DEGREE BURNS!
THIS SWEATER'S
GETTING ON MY
NERVES!



MAYBE I CAN TAKE
IT IN A TAD WITH
SOME NEEDLE AND
THREAD!

SHRILL

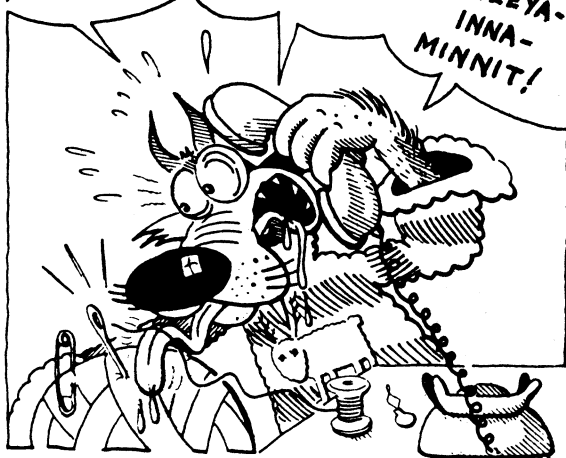
?



WHA'?
ALREADY?

YEAH YEAH
I'SH ME!

SHEEYA-
INNA-
MINNIT!

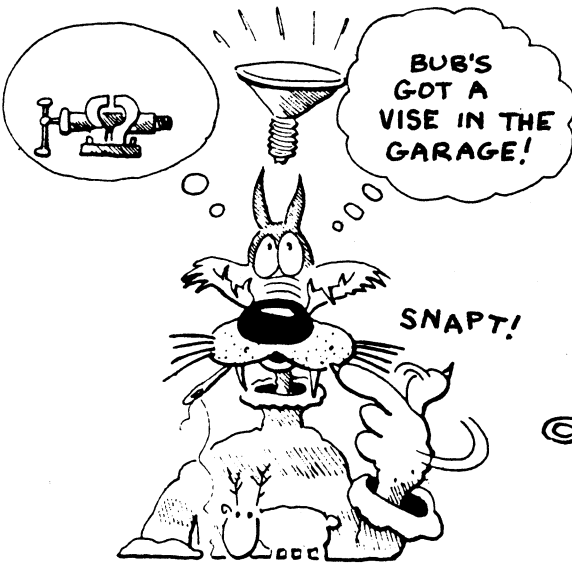


CRUD ON A CRACKER!
HOW'M I GOING TO DO THIS
WITH ONLY ONE
HAND?!



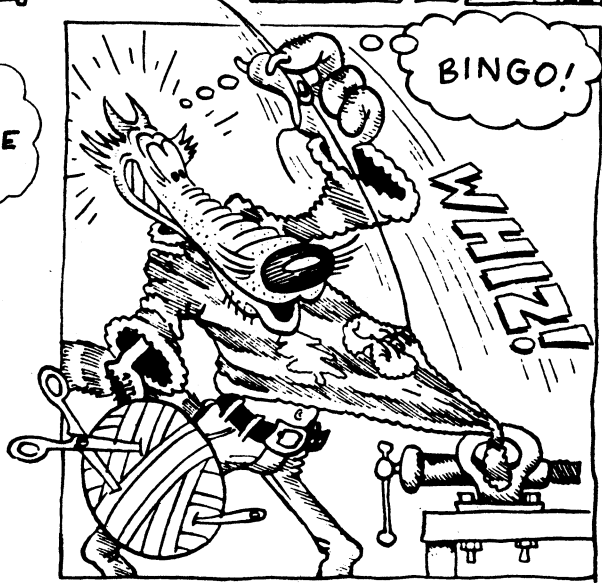
BUB'S
GOT A
VISE IN THE
GARAGE!

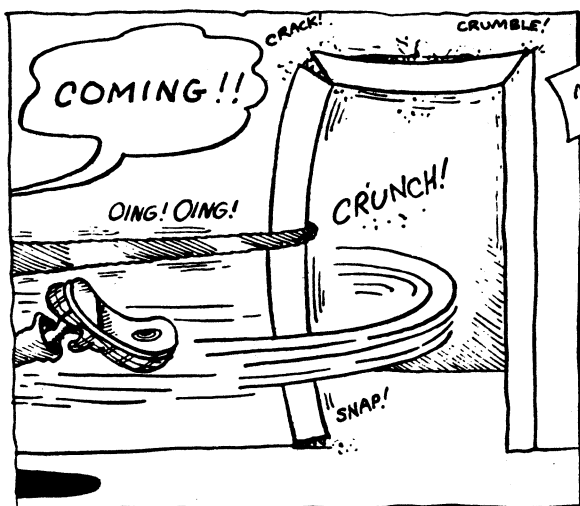
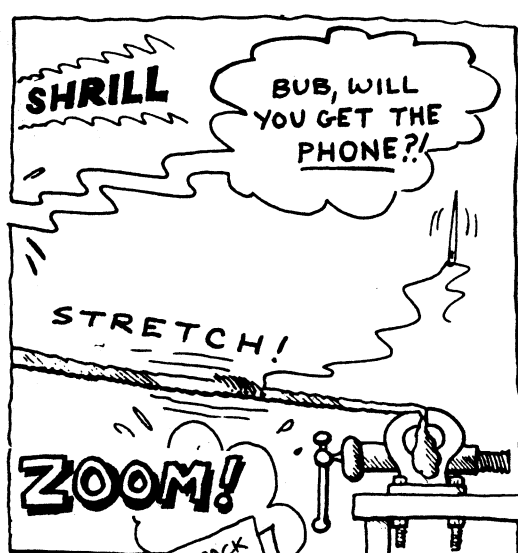
SNAPT!



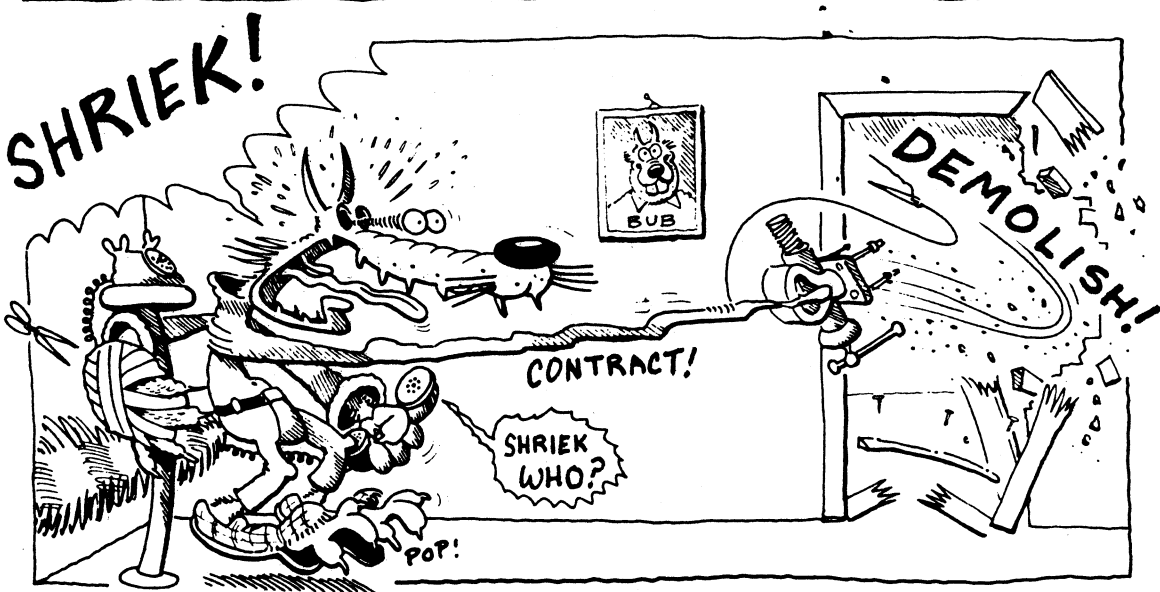
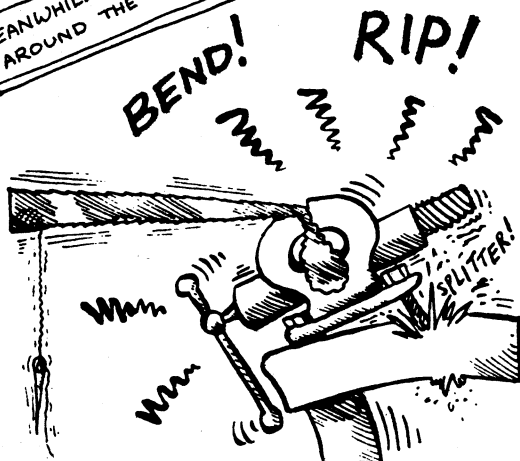
BINGO!

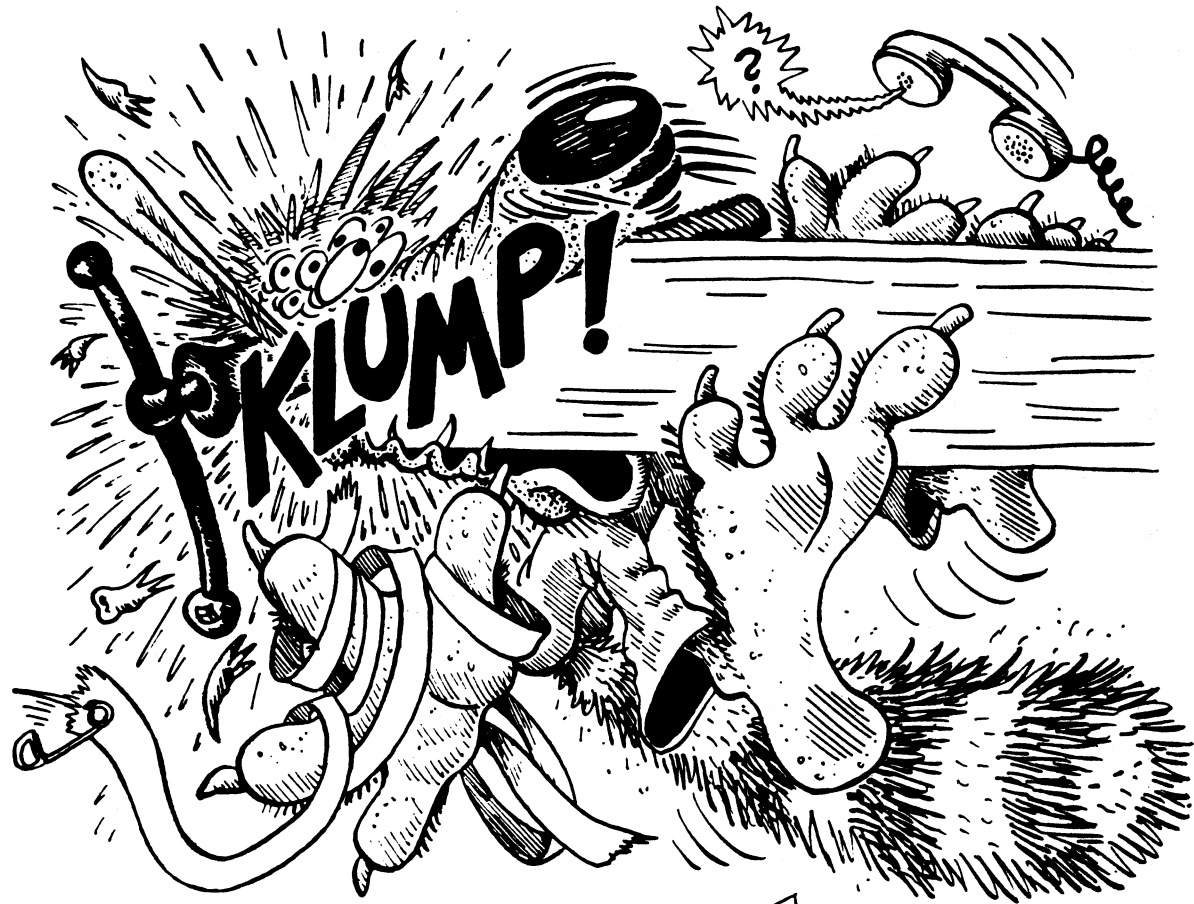
WHIZ!





MEANWHILE, 50 FEET BACK
& AROUND THE CORNER...

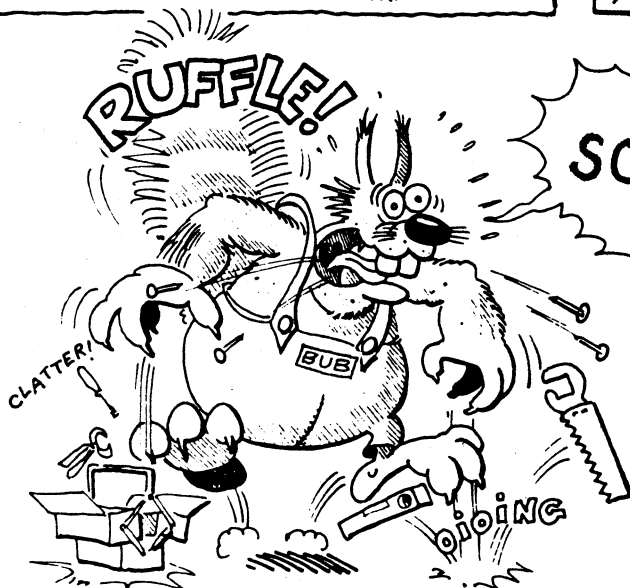




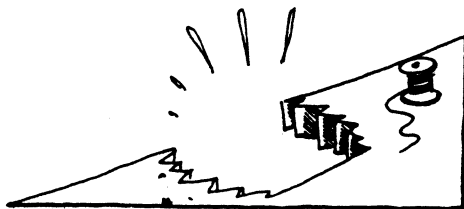
NOW I JUST HAVE
TO CLEAN UP THE -



RUFFLE!



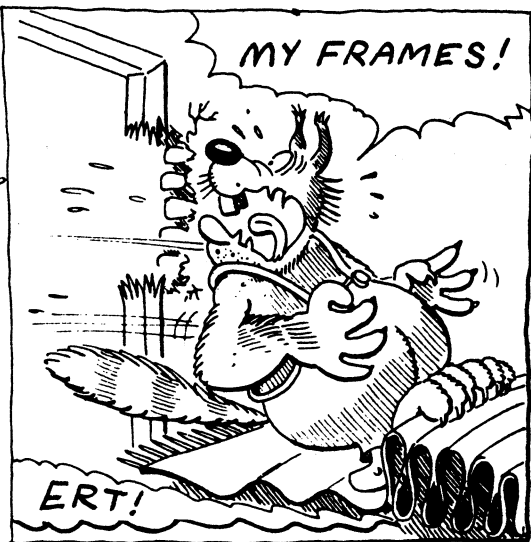
**SOMEONE STOLE
MY VISE!!!**



**CALL THE POLICE!
(CLEARLY A JOB FOR
THE VICE SQUAD!)**



MY FRAMES!



HEAVENS!
THE WALL!

THUD!

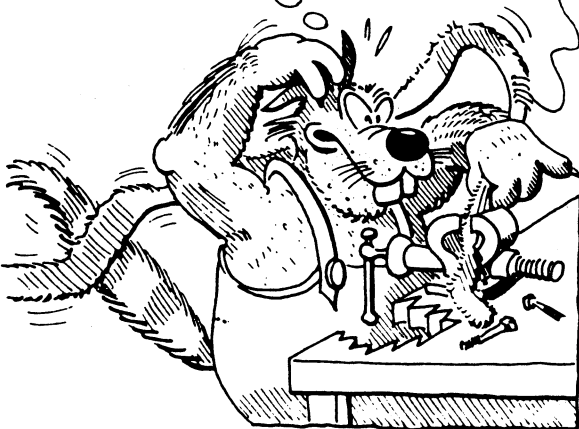
LONE?

YOU FOUND MY VISE!

ZIPPY DO DAH
ZIPPY DO DAY

DRAG!

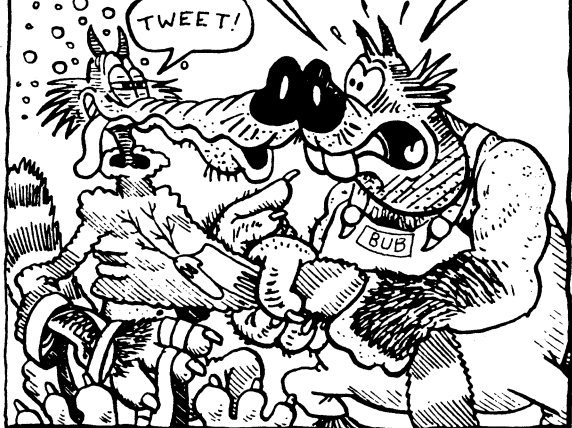
HM? WHAT'S THIS THING
DOING IN MY VISE?



LONE? WHAT
ARE YOU DOING HERE?

WHY AREN'T
YOU AT THE
PARTY?

TWEET!



THE NEEDLE, BUB!
GIMME THE NEEDLE!



SEW SEW SEW SEW
SEW SEW SEW SEW

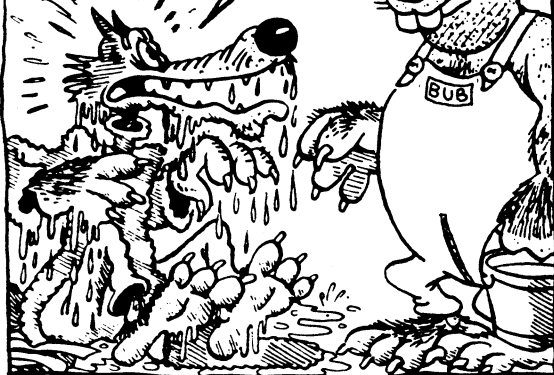
OBVIOUSLY
SOME HIDEOUS
SEIZURE!

SPLASH!

SNAP OUT OF
IT, BUDDY!



ARE YOU OUT OF
YOUR MIND!?

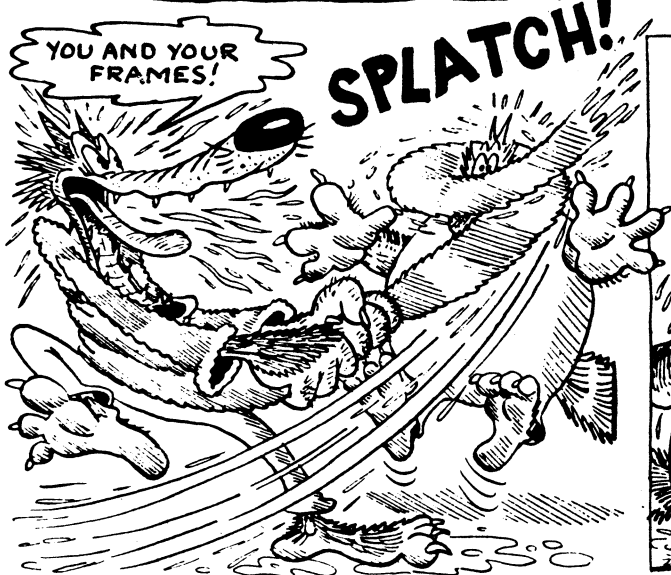


YOU DRENCHED MY BRAND NEW
SWEATER! WHAT'S THE BIG,
FAT, HAIRY IDEA?



YOU AND YOUR
FRAMES!

SPLATCH!



I DIDN'T DO IT,
ON PU-URPOSE!
WEEP! WAIL!
SNIVEL!

SHADDAP!

BLUB-
BERING WON'T
GET US
ANY-
WHERE!



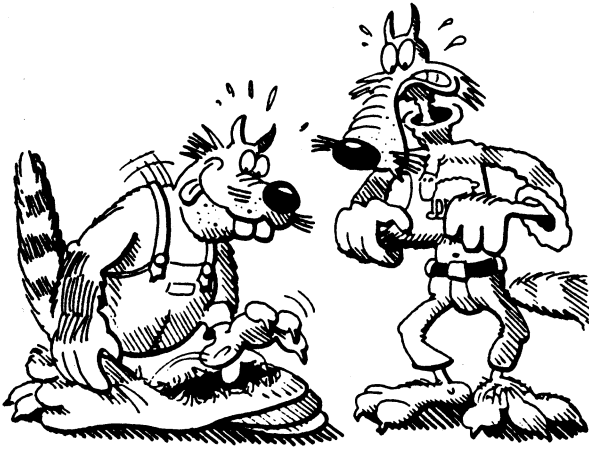
WILL YOU JUST LOOK
AT THIS SWEATER NOW?!

RAD!



CAN I
HAVE IT,
HUH?





HMM... NOT
HALF BAD
AT THAT!



AND HOW
ABOUT
ME?

ALL RIGHT, I'M OFF!
YOU COMING, BUB?



END
(OF THE YARN)

Welcome to the Fantagraphics MENAGERIE

ADVENTURES OF CAPT. JACK

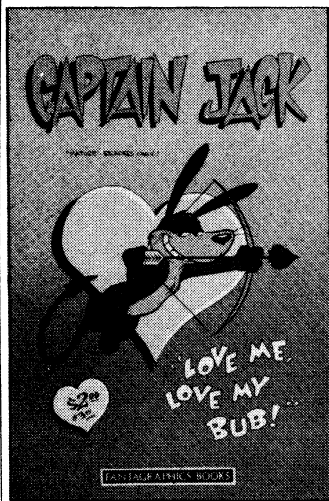
Adventures of Captain Jack #3: Part 2 of "Sat. Night": Herman and Beezlebub visit the netherworld.

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!

Adventures of Captain Jack #10: Jack and the crew return to Detroit and discover lots of unpaid bills.

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.

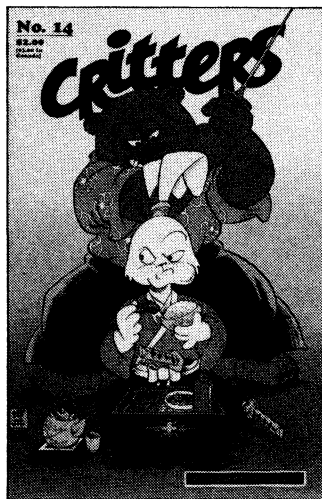
Critters #9: Hallowe'en issue with *Gnuff* behind a mask, *Lionheart*'s nightmare, and *Dog Boy*.

Critters #10: *Usagi Yojimbo* cover! story, plus *Gnuff* and *Lionheart*.

Critters #12: *Birthingright* returns, plus Waller/Worley, and Sam Kieth!

Critters #13: *Gnuff* cover, plus *Birthingright* and Mark Armstrong.

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



Critters #15: *Blue Beagle* and *Fission Chicken*, and *Birthingright* races on!

Critters #16: *Gnuff* ends, another *Nilson Groundthumper* story by Sakai, and *Birthingright*!

Critters #17: *Lionheart* returns, plus the conclusion of *Birthingright*.

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

Critters #19: *Gnuff* returns, plus *Sam and Max*, *Freelance Police*, *Lizards*, and *Fission Chicken*.

Critters #20: *SpeakingStone* by Waller/Worley, *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 Marc

Schirmeister, Sam Kieth, Tim Fuller, Mike Kazaleh, Bob Conway, Ty Templeton and Anthony Van Bruggen—plus a flexidisc with songs performed by Templeton & Alan Moore!

Critters #24: *Gnuff* continues, plus *Lizards* and *Fission Chicken*.

Critters #25: The return of *Lionheart*, plus *Gnuff* and *Angst*.

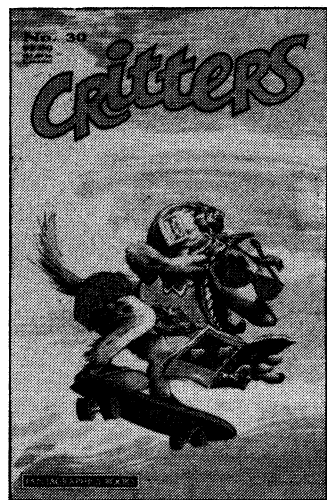
Critters #26: *Angst* cover by Van Horn, plus *Gnuff* and *Lionheart*.

Critters #27: Stan Sakai cover and Nilson Groundthumper story, plus *Lionheart* and *Fission Chicken*.

Critters #28: *Blue Beagle* in a Miami Vice/Coke parody, plus *Lionheart* and *Fission Chicken*.

Critters #29: The climax to *Lionheart*, plus *Lizards* and *Fission Chicken*, and a one-page *Captain Jack*.

Critters #30: Mark Martin cover and story, plus *Angst*, and *Gnuff* returns in the "The Big Sneeze."



Critters Special #1—Nilson Groundthumper and Herm: 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.

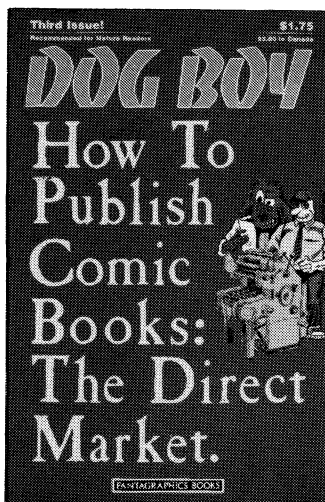
Dog Boy #3: Dog Boy shows how to publish your own comic book.

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!

Dog Boy #10: The epic conclusion of the saga! Breathtaking lunacy!

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 snot jokes, plus parodies of Dr. Seuss and Uncle Wiggly books.

Myron Moose Funnies #2: Parodies Batman, Mickey Mouse, Spirit, more.

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

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 vs. a water elemental, plus two more Usagi tales!

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

Usagi Yojimbo #8: A difficult assignment for Usagi, plus Tom Luth's "Rockhoppers."

Usagi Yojimbo #9: The return of the Blind Swordspig, plus a tale by Todd Kurosawa.

Usagi Yojimbo #10: "Blade of the Gods," plus a Usagi/Leonardo the T-M-N-Turtle tale by Peter Laird!

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 Carot* 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.

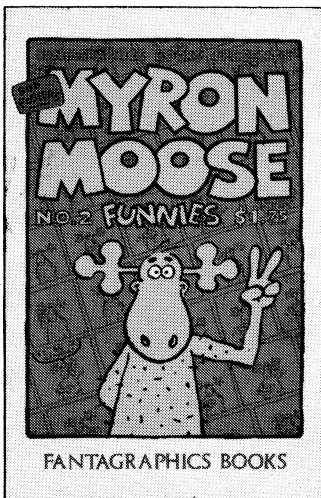
Amazing Heroes #129: Interviews with Steven A. Gallacci and Freddy Milton, "Why I Draw Funny Animals" by various, the new *Mighty Mouse* show, plus more!

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.

The Comics Journal #120: Disney issue; interviews with Floyd Gottfredson, Ward Kimball, and Art Babbitt.



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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☐ #14 ☐ #15 ☐ #16 ☐ #17 ☐ #18 ☐ #19 ☐ #20 ☐ #21
☐ #22 (parody cover) ☐ #22 (normal cover) ☐ #23 (\$4.25)
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Myron Moose (\$2.00): ☐ #1 ☐ #2 ☐ #3

Usagi Yojimbo: ☐ #1 ☐ #2 ☐ #3 ☐ #4 ☐ #5 ☐ #6 ☐ #7
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NEAT STUFF

"I can't help but laugh out loud every time I read Bagge's stuff." —**JAIME HERNANDEZ**

Peter Bagge, erstwhile editor of R. Crumb's magnificent *Weirdo* magazine, has turned into the foremost comics satirist of the '80s with his solo book **Neat Stuff**, its lunatic cast of characters includes:

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- * **Junior**, a pathetic loser who is scared of his own shadow and still lives with his mom;

- * **The Bradleys**, the ultimate suburban nightmare family, comprising Mom, Pop, big brother **Buddy**, big sister **Babs**, and kid brother **Butch**;

- * **Studs Kirby**, a pig-headed reactionary maniac who happens to be a disc jockey;

- * **Chet and Bunny Leeway**, a neurotic modern couple trying to survive the horrors of modern mall culture.

... And that's not even counting such bizarre one-shot and occasional characters as **The Goon in the Moon**, **The Reject**, and **"Groove" Zooover**, the most opportunistic pop singer ever.

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