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# CRITTERS



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# Critters

## EDITORIAL

Time for some discombobulation, faithful Critters readers: This issue is the first in close to a year in which we repeat not a single feature from the previous issue. This wasn't entirely intentional—J.P. Morgan sort of precipitated it by skipping an issue with his "Fission Chicken" serial—but we hope the resultant discontinuity won't frazzle too many faithful readers—especially since it's, in my humble and prejudiced opinion, a really strong issue. (And the "Fission Chicken" episode was well worth the wait, no?)

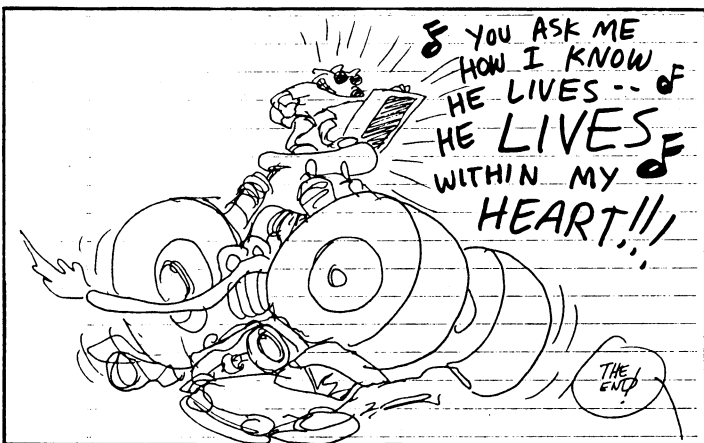
I've always loved Mark Martin's work, but feel it's often ended up in places that don't necessarily spotlight it to its best effect—genre parodies like Gnarat, back-ups in titles like Trollords. (Which isn't inteded as a slur against either book, I hasten to add.) Oddly enough, my favorite piece of his is an advertisement he wrote and drew for Comics Buyer's Guide a year or so ago. But "Radical Dog," which leads off this issue, is some of the freshest and funniest work of his career. In fact, even the preliminary sketches he sent for the story are wonderful—I've taken the liberty of printing one over the contents listing, complete with the lines from his notebook paper.

I'm also glad to welcome back William Van Horn and Freddy Milton, now frequent visitors to the Gladstone line of comics. (And check out Bill's Tracker series from Blackthorne Press, which should be in your local comics shop soon.)

Finally, the letters section this issue yields to the "NAME THAT CRITTER" contest results, which begins on page 33. You guys did great—the contest was a lot of fun to read and judge, and we hope you'll be as entertained by it as Stan Sakai and I were.

Next issue (below): The continuation of the current "Gnuff" epic (with, finally, the introduction of Gargantua); the return of Holland and Wilber's "Lizards" in their first two-parter; and another chapter of "Blue Beagle."

—KIM THOMPSON



NUMBER 30 NOVEMBER 1988

## C O N T E N T S

### Radical Dog by Mark Martin

"Oh, That Radical Dog"

Mark Martin has always been a generous cartoonist, and here he gives you more panels a page than anyone!.....1

### Fission Chicken by J.P. Morgan

"They Saved Walt's Brain, Part III"

One month late but still great comes the conclusion to Fish's latest mind—or brain—shuffling adventure.....5

### Angst by William Van Horn

"Thousand Dollar Bill"

From rags to riches to rags with those two loveable lowbrow philosophers, Ratface and Louie.....17

### Gnuff by Freddy Milton

"The Mysterious Letter"

A career disaster for Gnuff and a sporting rout for Gnicky and Albert set them off on what might be their wildest adventure.....22

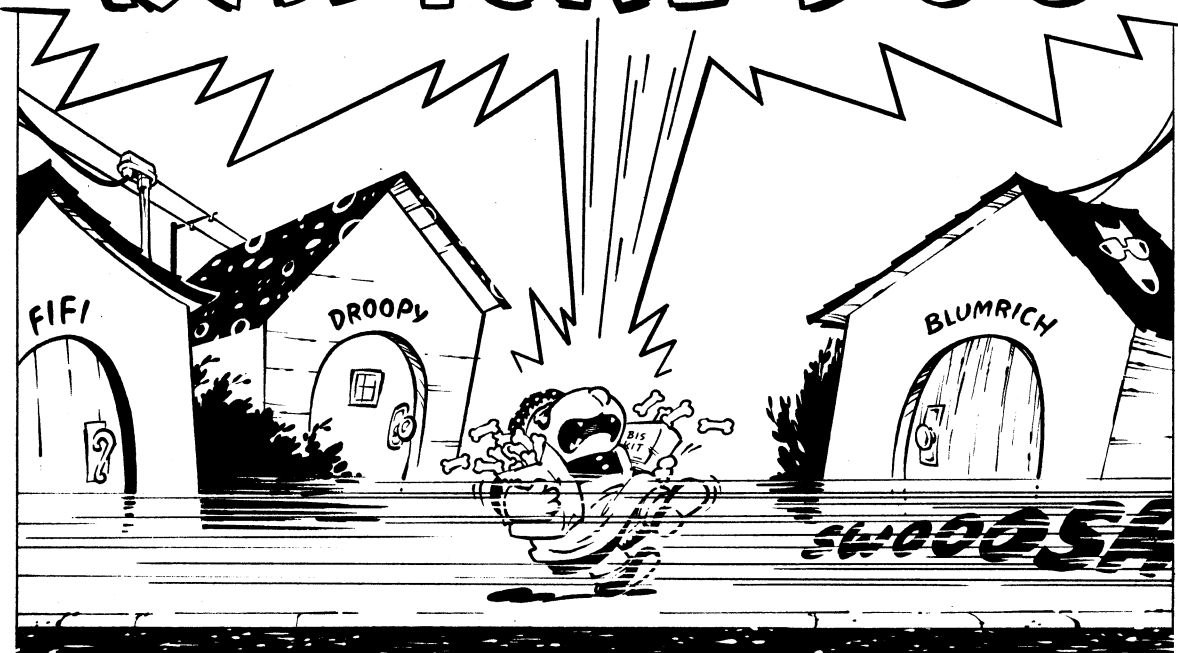
### Name That Critter Contest Results

Stan Sakai chooses a winner.....33

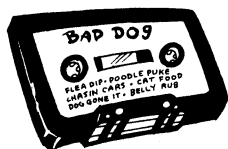
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# OH, THAT RADICAL DOG

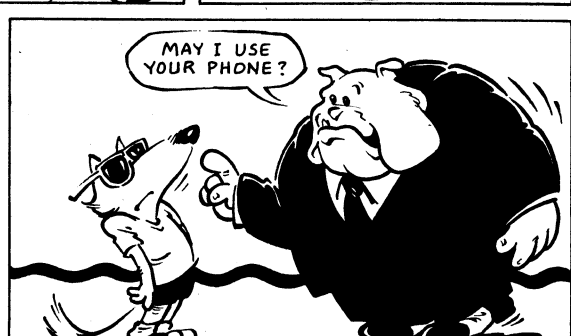
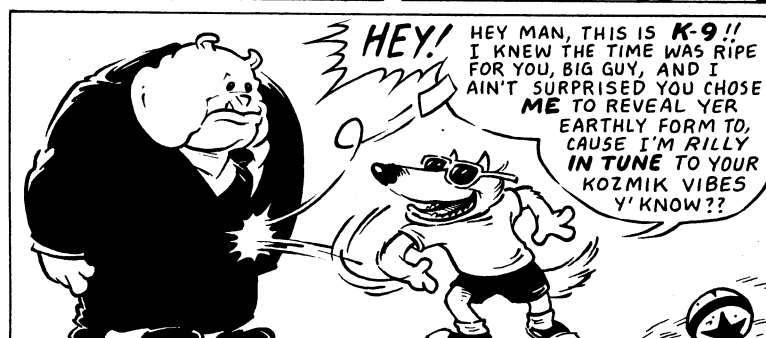
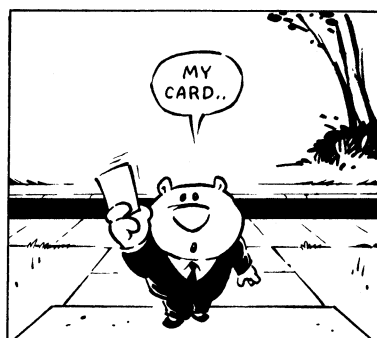
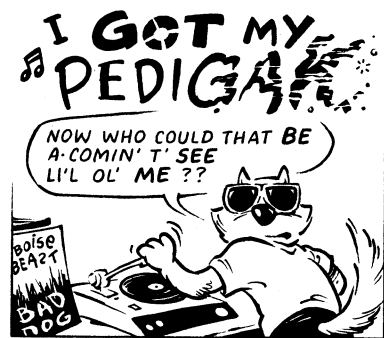


I'M YO' HOT DOG BABY  
DON' WAN' NO QUICHE  
THAT RADICAL DOG  
OH, THAT RADICAL DOG  
SUS! WANNA NUTHER  
LINK ON MY LEASH



WAS A FREE-WHEELING DUDE  
HE WENT WITH THE FLOW AND FLEW WITH THE MOOD  
THAT RADICAL DOG WAS A ONE-MAN CROWD  
HE'D PROUDLY PLAY HIS RUNT ROCK LOUD  
BUT THAT WAS THEN-- THAT WAS BEFORE  
HIS RUNT ROCK WAS STOPPED BY A KNOCK ON HIS DOOR

by MARK  
MARTIN ©88







USE THE PHONE?  
BUT-- BUT YOU--

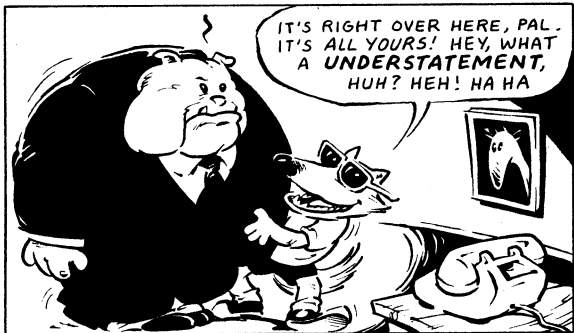


C'MON, I'M **JUST GOD!**  
I'M NOT THE PHONE COMPANY!

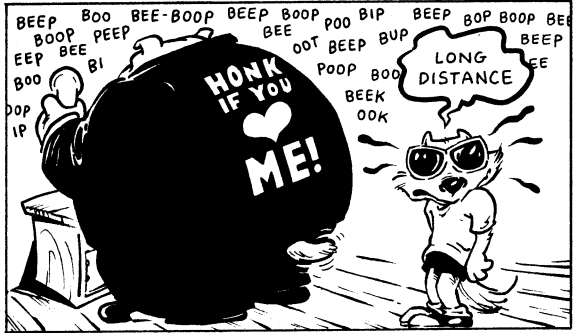


OKAY OKAY OKAY!!!  
DON'T GO FLINGIN' NO PLAGUES  
ON ME OR NOTHIN'-- I WAS JUST  
--I JUST THOUGHT--

GULP!



IT'S RIGHT OVER HERE, PAL.  
IT'S ALL YOURS! HEY, WHAT  
A UNDERSTATEMENT,  
HUH? HEH! HA HA



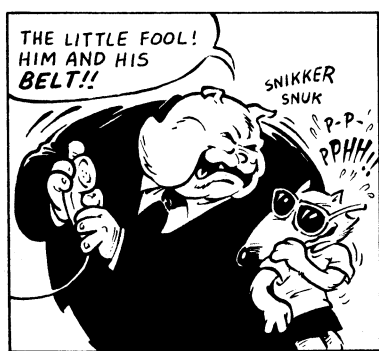
BEEP BOO BEE-BOOP BEEP BOOP POO BIP BEEP BOP BOOP BEE  
BOOP PEEP BEE BEE OOT BEEP BUP BEEP  
EEP BEE BI POOP BOO BEEK  
DOP IP HONK IF YOU LOVE ME! LONG DISTANCE



HEAR ME, **WEENIE ROAST!**  
HEAR ME **NOW** 'N HEAR ME **GOOD!!**  
YOU CAN RUN BUT YOU **CAN'T**  
HIDE 'CAUSE I'M COMIN' TA  
**GIT YA!**



COME AHEAD, YOU OVERGROWN  
EGO TRIP! I GOT THE **BELT**  
AND I'M **KEEPIN' IT**, SEE??  
YOU JUST **TRY** TO TAKE IT!!

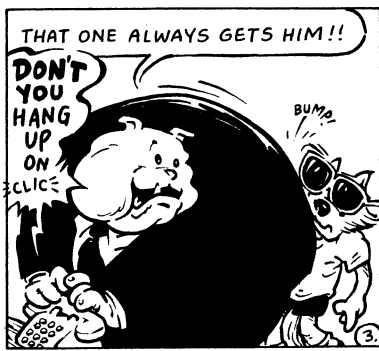


THE LITTLE FOOL!  
HIM AND HIS  
**BELT!!**

SNIKKER  
SNUK



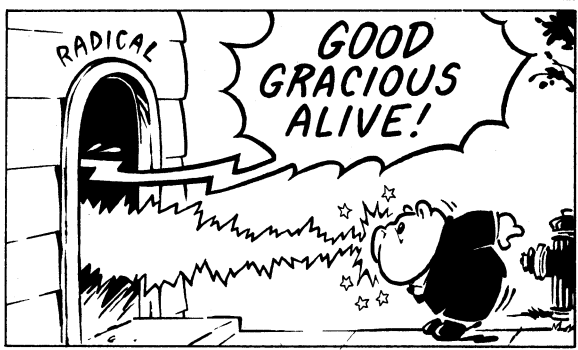
OH LUCY, ONE MORE THING...  
YOU'RE FIRED!



THAT ONE ALWAYS GETS HIM!!

DON'T  
YOU  
HANG  
UP  
ON  
CLICE

BUM!



**THE  
LIVIN'  
END**

# FISSION CHICKEN

IN: "THEY SAVED WALT'S BRAIN!" PART THREE!

...JUST WHO'S BODY DO YOU PLAN TO TRANSPLANT YOUR BRAIN INTO? NOT DICKEY'S, I SUPPOSE...

(HEH) HECK NO, OF COURSE NOT... WE'RE BOTH HAVIN' AN EXTRA-SPECIAL DOUBLE OPERATION HERE TODAY...

YOU ARE, ARE YOU! I'D LIKE TO SEE THE LUCKY RECIPIENTS!

YOU'LL NEVER GUESS WHO THEY ARE...!

THEN TELL ME!!

AW C'MON, JUST TAKE A GUESS...

I DON'T WANT TO GUESS!

OH ALL RIGHT, HERE!! GRUMBLE

CLICK WHRRRRR

HELP ME!! HELLLLLLLLLP!!

J.P. MORGAN @ '88

MICHAEL JUKESON AND STEVEN SPIELBIRD???

...WANT A DIET DYSPEPSI?!

FISSION CHICKEN!! THANK GOD YOU'RE HERE... GET ME OUT OF THIS THING!

OH, HELLO MICHAEL...

OKAY, OUT YOU COME!... YOU DON'T SEEM TOO ENTHUSED ABOUT THIS SET-UP!

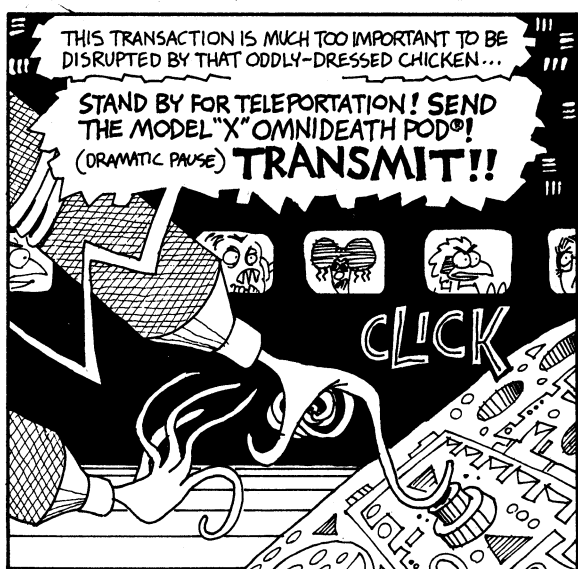
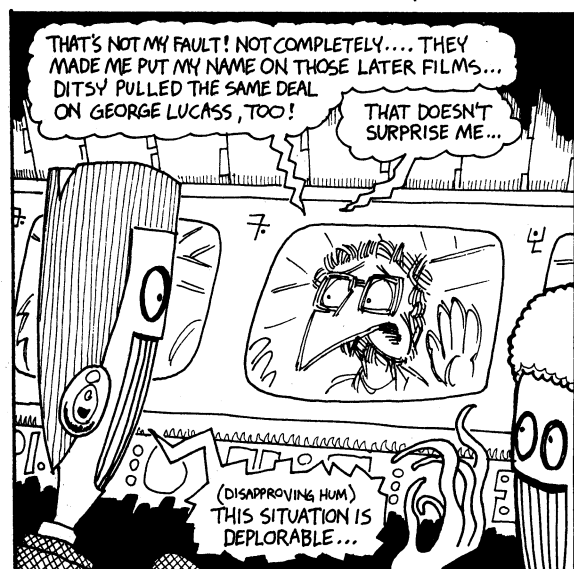
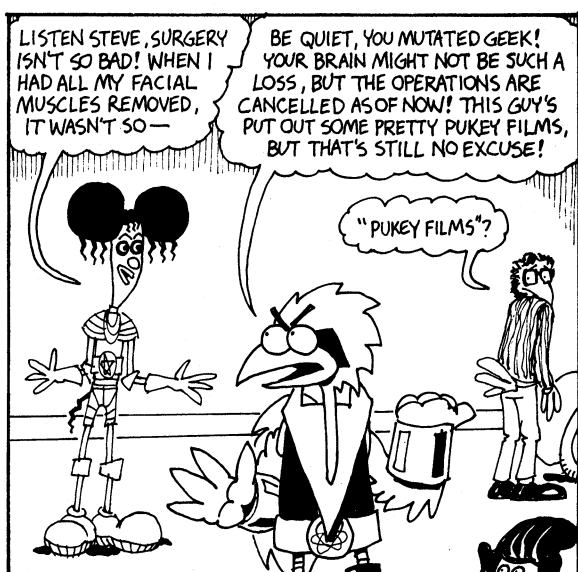
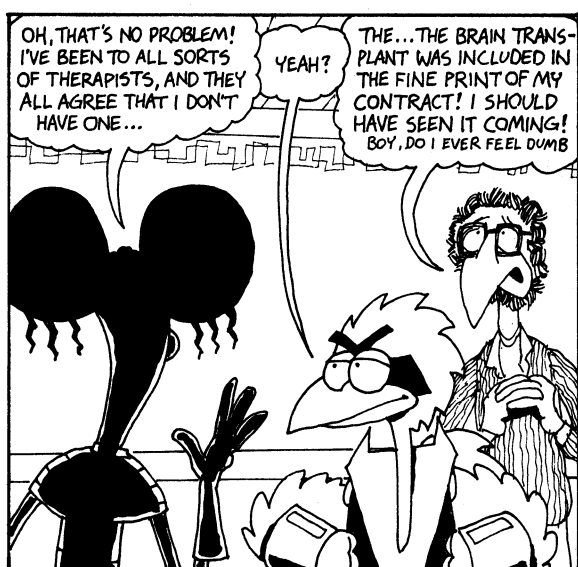
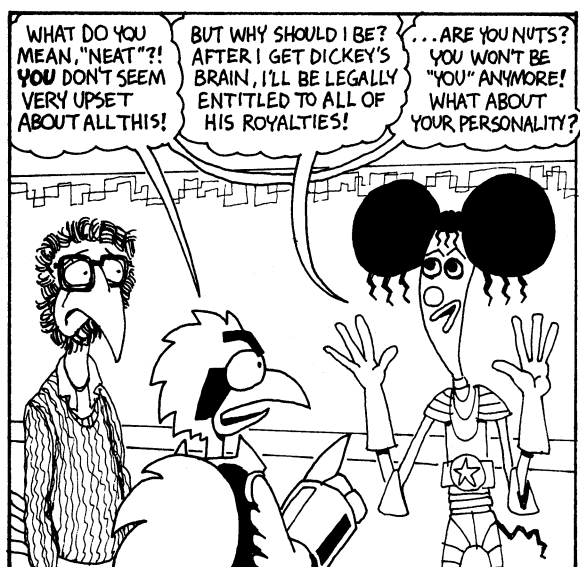
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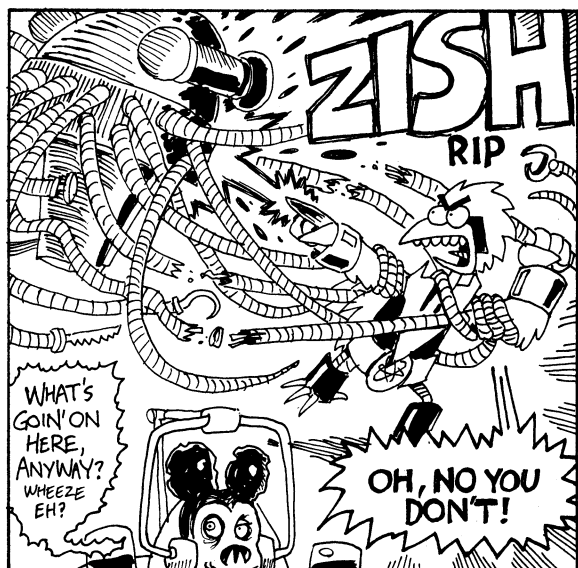
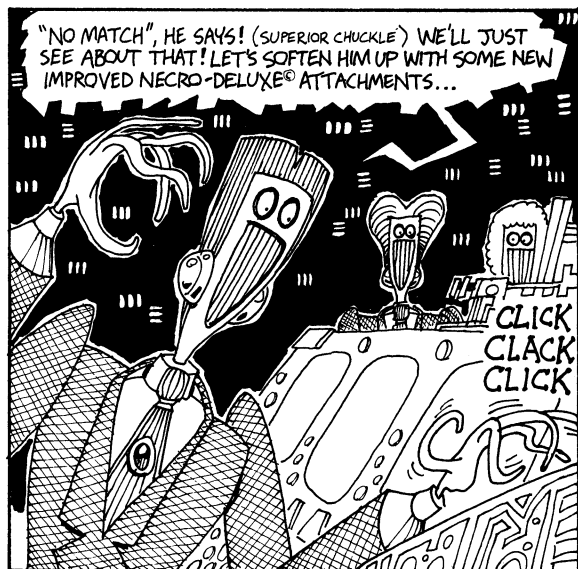
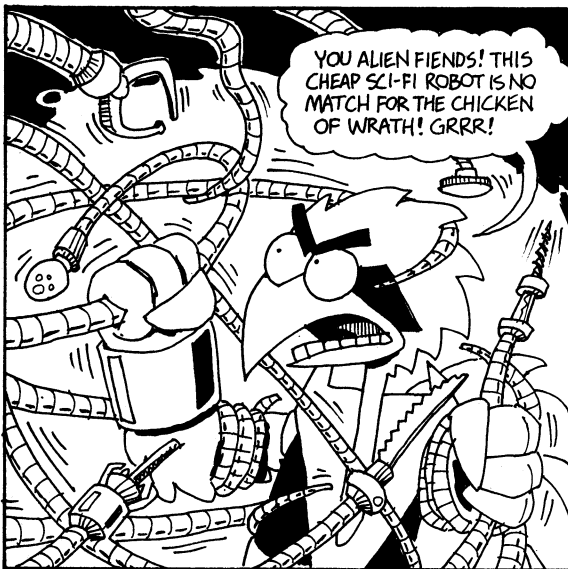
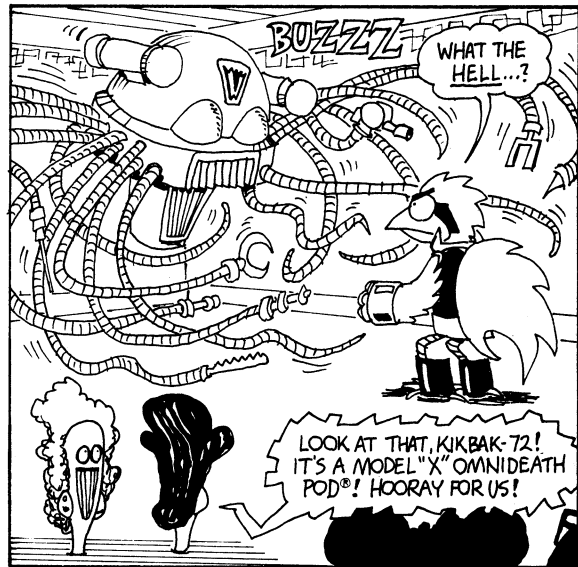
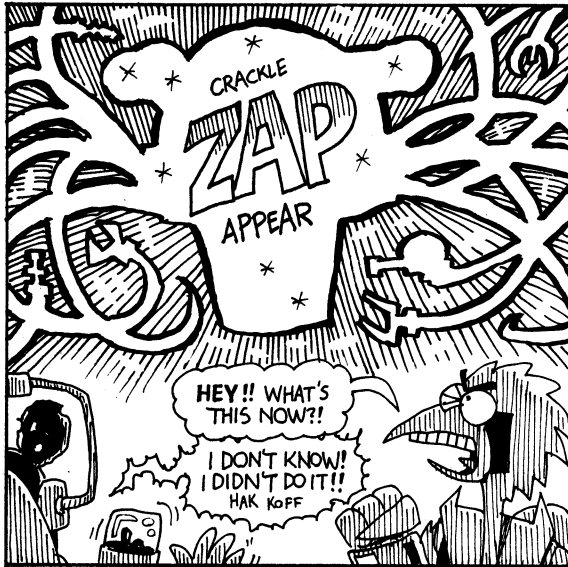
ARE YOU KIDDING?

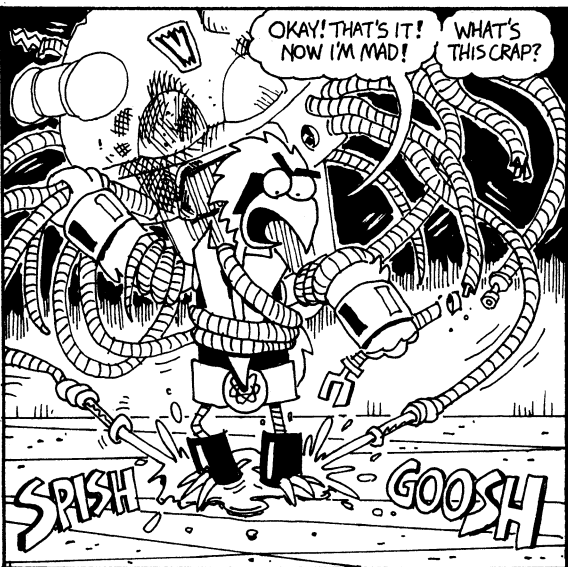
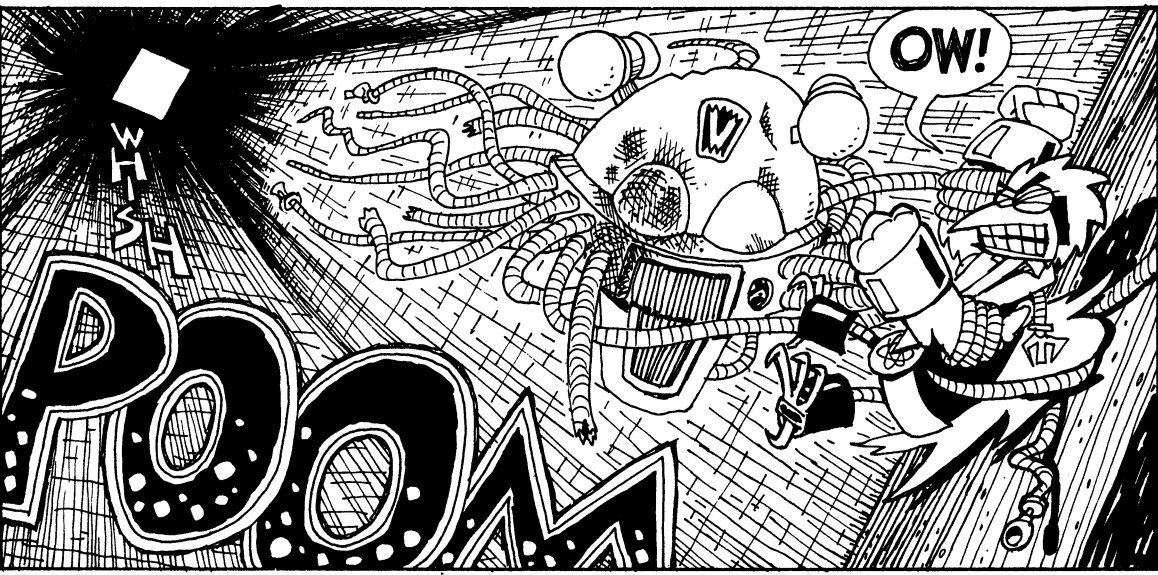
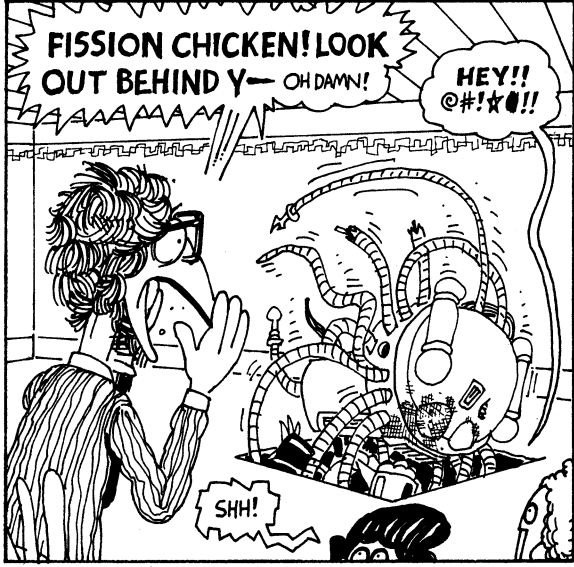
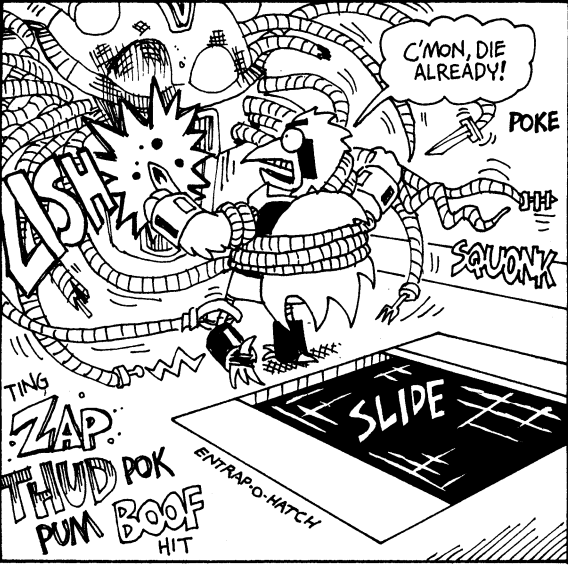
TSK! MORE DESTRUCTION!

IT... IT ALL STARTED WHEN DITSYLAND® SIGNED ME ON AS A 'CONSULTANT'... THEY SAID THEY WANTED ME TO SHOW THEM SOME STYLISTIC TRICKS! BUT THEY STARTED "BORROWING" MORE AND MORE THINGS FROM MY FILMS — A-AND NOW THEY WANT TO PUT DITSY'S BRAIN IN MY BODY!!

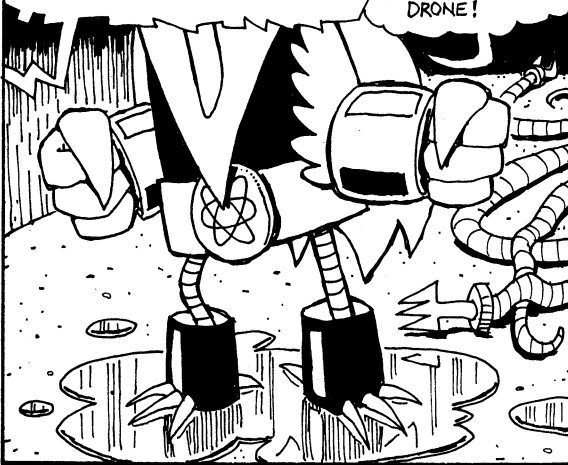
...AND I'M GOING TO GET DICKEY MOUSE'S BRAIN! NEAT, HM?



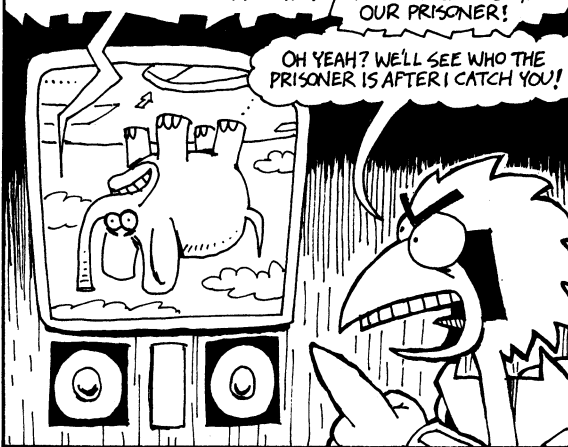




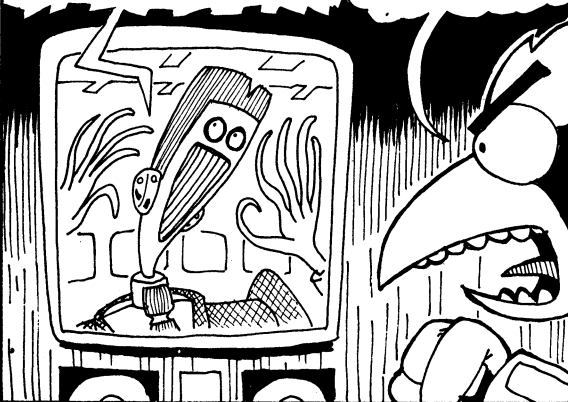
"GOOGOLPLEX GLUE"?  
WHAT THE HELL  
ARE YOU TALKING  
ABOUT, YOU PLASTIC  
DRONE!



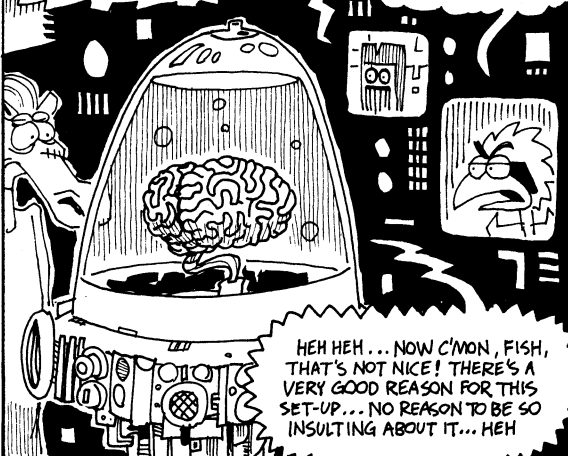
BUT I'M BEING RUDE!  
LET ME INTRODUCE  
MYSELF: I AM CASHFLO-  
103 ... AND YOU,  
FISSION CHICKEN, ARE  
OUR PRISONER!



YOU DEPRAVED VINYL  
MANIAC! YOU WON'T  
GET AWAY WITH THIS!  
...WHEN I GET HOLD  
OF YOU, YOU'LL BE  
LAUGHING ON THE OTHER  
SIDE OF YOUR FACE!



HE DOESN'T COUNT AS A "DISTINGUISHED CITIZEN"...HE'S JUST A PICKLED BRAIN!!



BUT I'M STILL HERE!

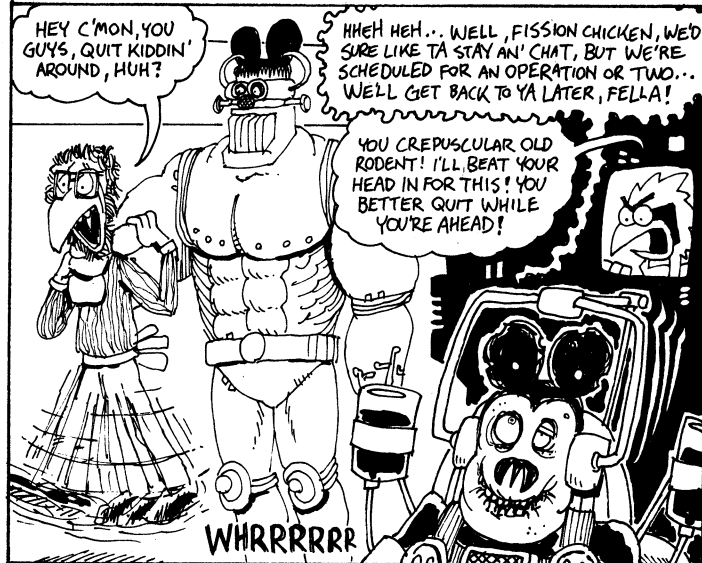


A cartoon illustration of a brain with sound effects. The brain is depicted with a jagged, spiky outline, suggesting a seizure or intense mental activity. To the right of the brain, there are several instances of the text "HA HA HA HA" and "HAHAHA" in a bold, stylized font, indicating laughter or a manic state. The background is white with some faint, scattered dots.





UHH... SAY! I JUST REMEMBERED A REALLY IMPORTANT DENTAL APPOINTMENT!! I'LL JUST POP RIGHT OUT AND COME BACK IN A LITTLE —

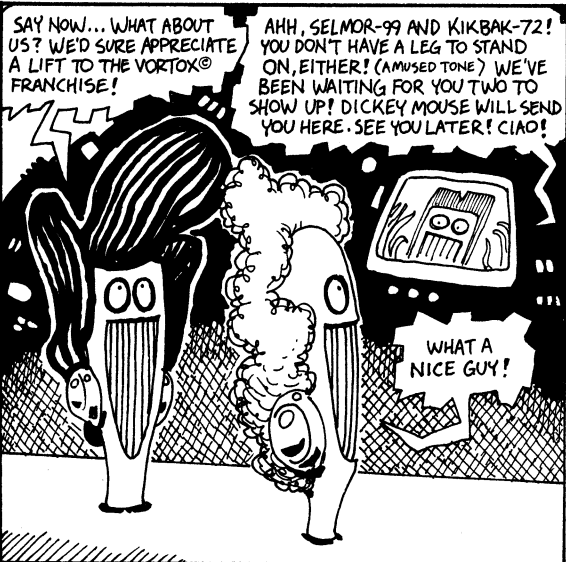


HEY C'MON, YOU GUYS, QUIT KIDDIN' AROUND, HUH?

HHEH HEH... WELL, FISSION CHICKEN, WE'D SURE LIKE TA STAY AN' CHAT, BUT WE'RE SCHEDULED FOR AN OPERATION OR TWO... WE'LL GET BACK TO YA LATER, FELLA!

YOU CREPUSCULAR OLD RODENT! I'LL BEAT YOUR HEAD IN FOR THIS! YOU BETTER QUIT WHILE YOU'RE AHEAD!

WHRRRRRR

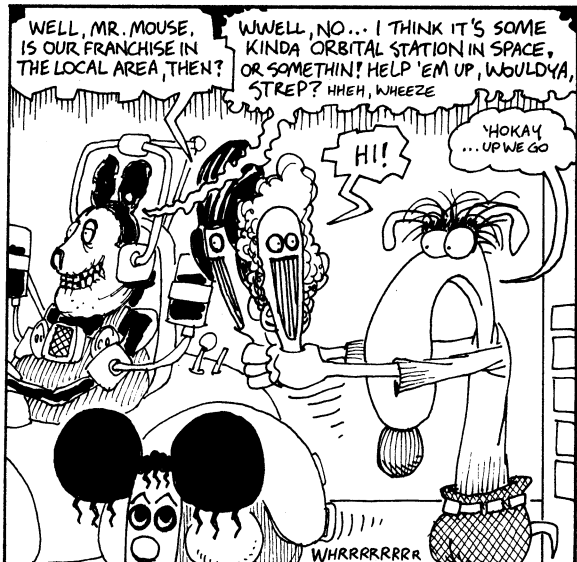


SAY NOW... WHAT ABOUT US? WE'D SURE APPRECIATE A LIFT TO THE VORTOX® FRANCHISE!

AHH, SELMOR-99 AND KIKBAK-72! YOU DON'T HAVE A LEG TO STAND ON, EITHER! (AMUSED TONE) WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU TWO TO SHOW UP! DICKEY MOUSE WILL SEND YOU HERE. SEE YOU LATER! CIAO!



WHAT A NICE GUY!



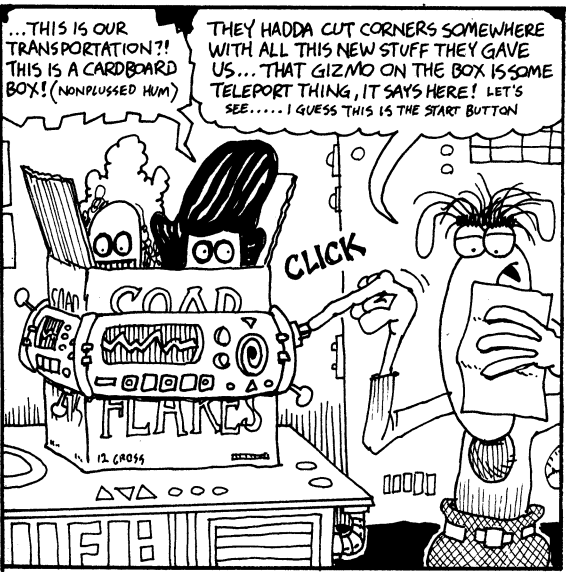
WELL, MR. MOUSE, IS OUR FRANCHISE IN THE LOCAL AREA, THEN?

WELL, NO... I THINK IT'S SOME KINDA ORBITAL STATION IN SPACE, OR SOMETHIN! HELP 'EM UP, WOULD YA, STREP? HHEH, WHEEZE

HI!

YHOKAY... UP WE GO

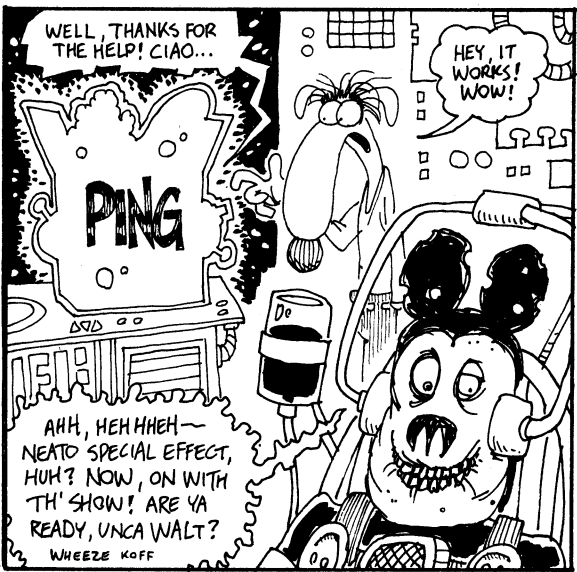
WHRRRRRRRR



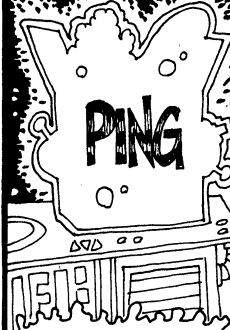
...THIS IS OUR TRANSPORTATION?! THIS IS A CARDBOARD BOX! (NONPLUSSED HUM)

THEY HADDA CUT CORNERS SOMEWHERE WITH ALL THIS NEW STUFF THEY GAVE US... THAT GIZMO ON THE BOX IS SOME TELEPORT THING, IT SAYS HERE! LET'S SEE..... I GUESS THIS IS THE START BUTTON

CLICK



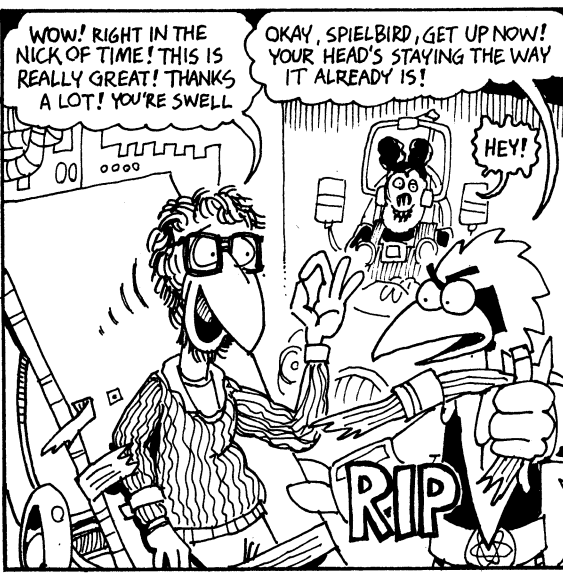
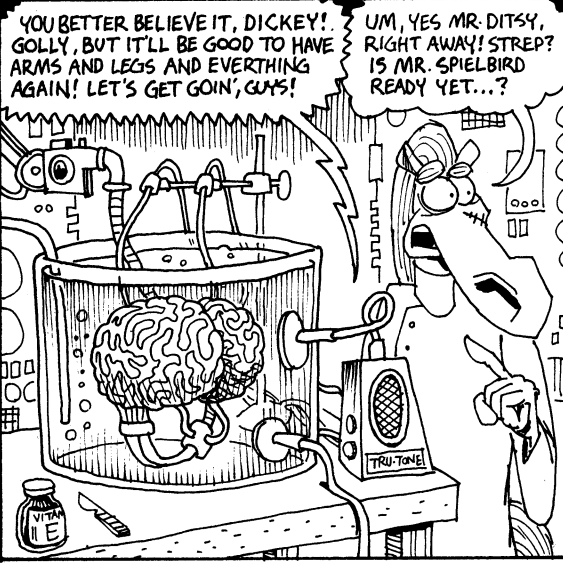
WELL, THANKS FOR THE HELP! CIAO...

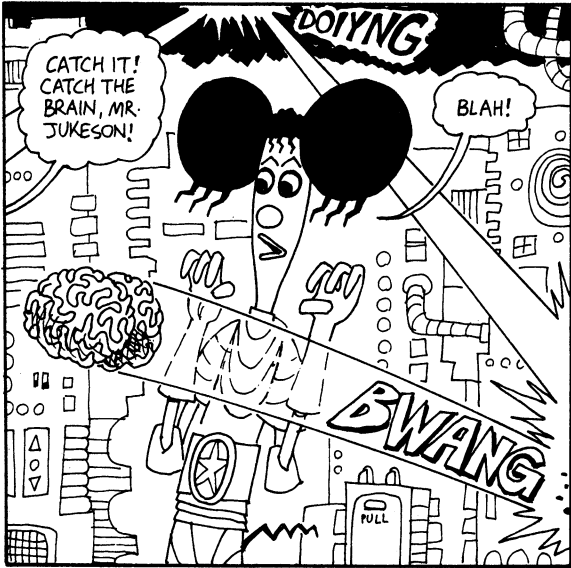
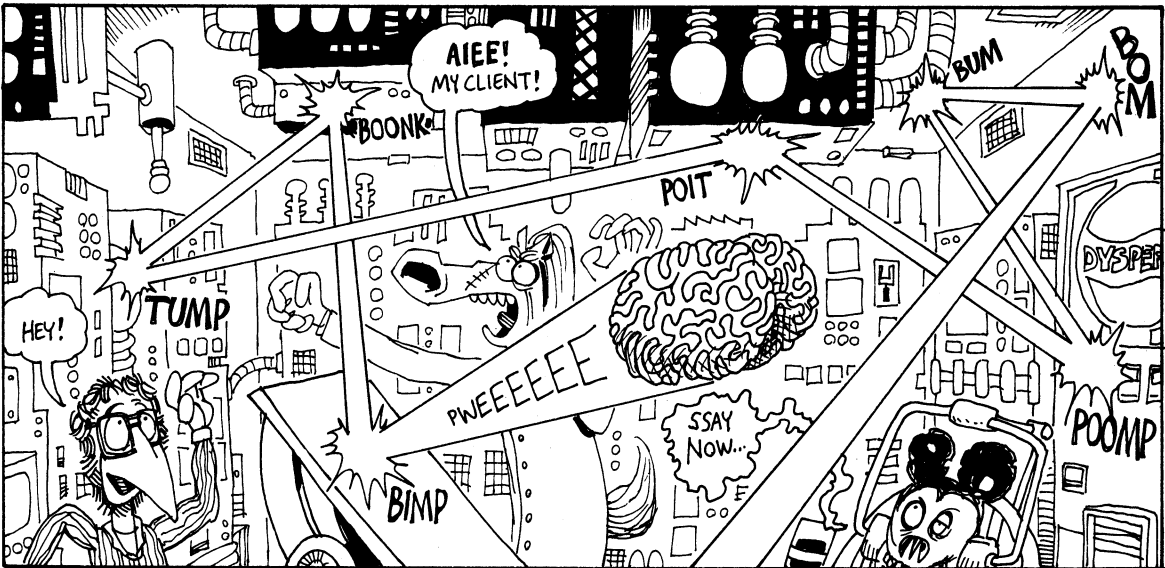
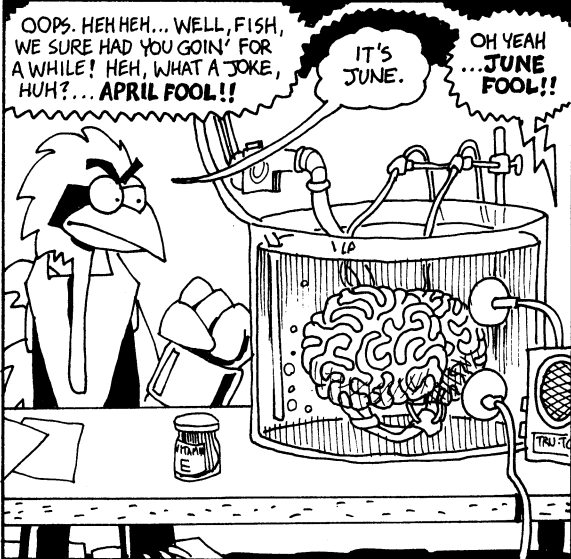


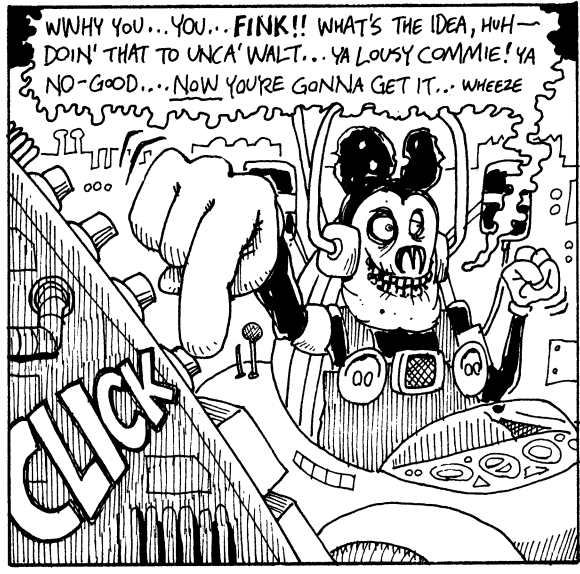
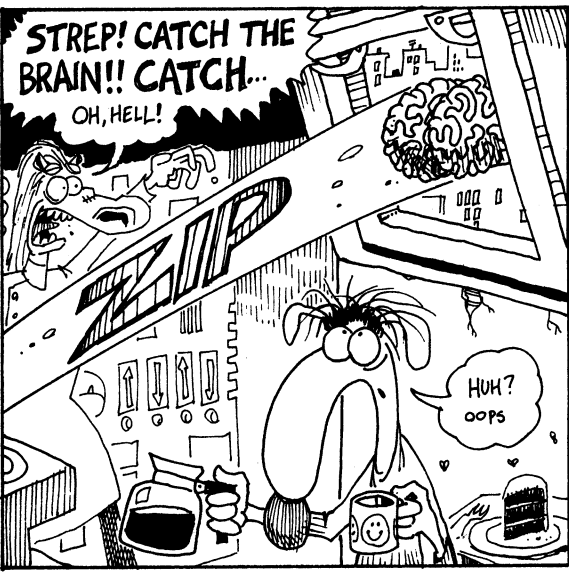
AHH, HEH HHEH — NEATO SPECIAL EFFECT, HUH? NOW, ON WITH TH' SHOW! ARE YA READY, UNCA WALT? WHEEZE KOFF

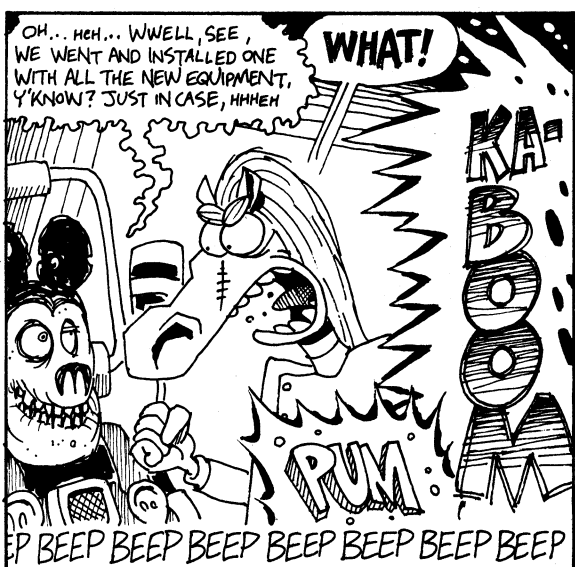
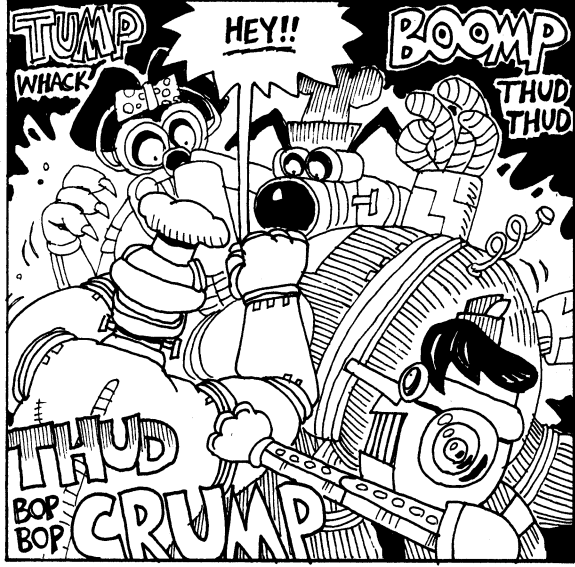
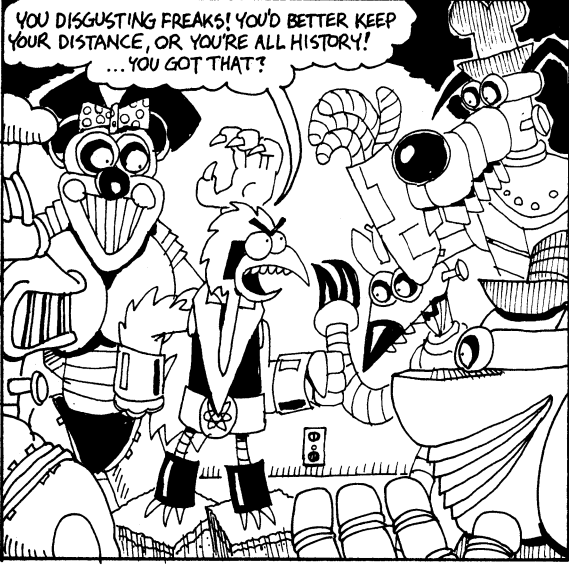
HEY, IT WORKS! WOW!

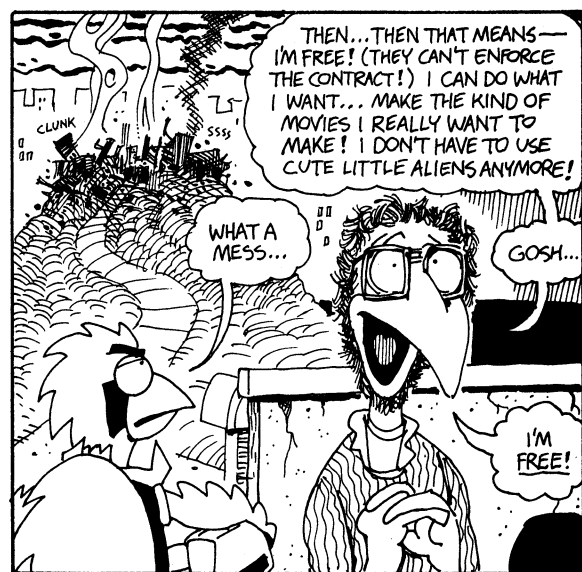
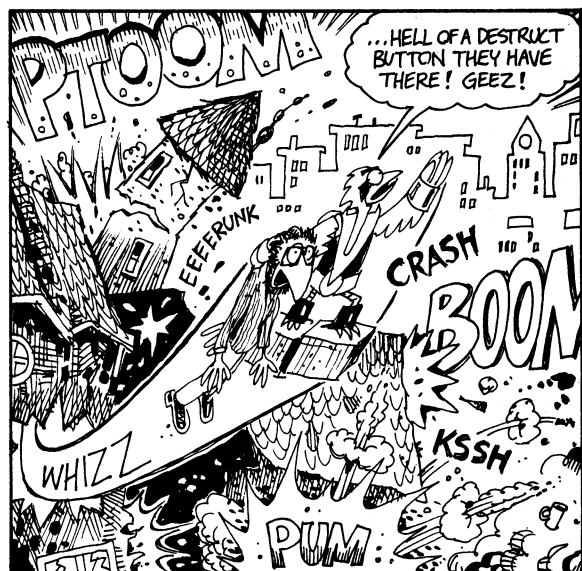






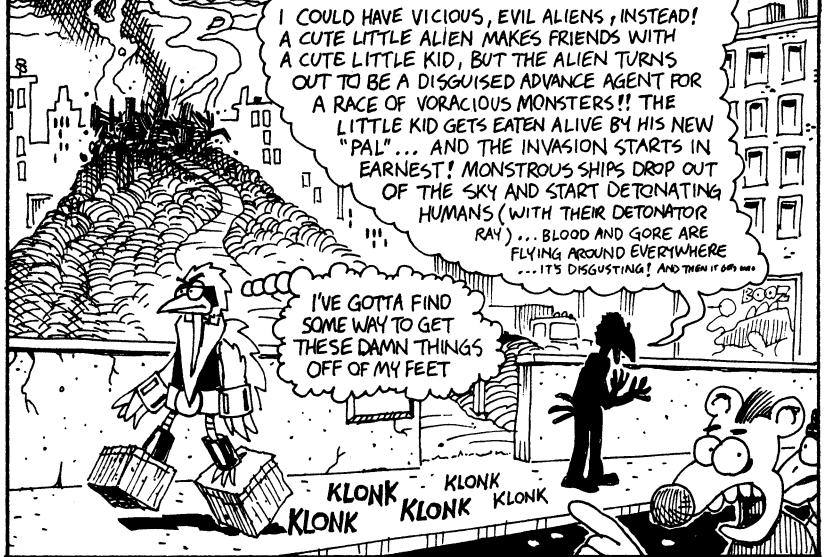








...I CAN MAKE MOVIES AS GROSS AS I WANT!! WITH BLOOD AND GUTS AND EVERYTHING!... I CAN USE SHARKS—NO WAIT, THEY SPOILED THAT WITH THE SEQUELS... WHAT ELSE? ZOMBIES? NO... TOO MANY ZOMBIE FLICKS AS IT IS... SAME THING WITH VAMPIRES! WHAT TO DO?... LET'S SEE...



I COULD HAVE VICIOUS, EVIL ALIENS, INSTEAD! A CUTE LITTLE ALIEN MAKES FRIENDS WITH A CUTE LITTLE KID, BUT THE ALIEN TURNS OUT TO BE A DISGUISED ADVANCE AGENT FOR A RACE OF VORACIOUS MONSTERS!! THE LITTLE KID GETS EATEN ALIVE BY HIS NEW "PAL"... AND THE INVASION STARTS IN EARNEST! MONSTROUS SHIPS DROP OUT OF THE SKY AND START DETONATING HUMANS (WITH THEIR DETONATOR RAY)... BLOOD AND GORE ARE FLYING AROUND EVERYWHERE... IT'S DISGUSTING! AND THEN IT GOES BOOM!

I'VE GOTTA FIND SOME WAY TO GET THESE DAMN THINGS OFF OF MY FEET

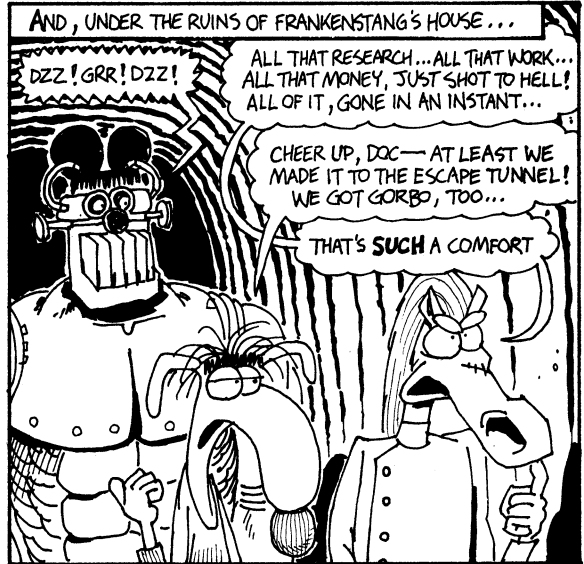


AND, SOMEWHERE ELSE... (OUT THERE)

WELL, THAT DEAL CERTAINLY TURNED OUT TO BE A BOTCH! (ANNOYED SIGH)... WHAT WERE YOU TWO DOING DOWN THERE, ANYWAY? YOU COULDN'T BE INVENTORIED ON OUR SCOPE...

IT ISN'T OUR FAULT! SOME OF THE CONSUMEROIDS® DOWN THERE ARE PSYCHOTIC!

...ESPECIALLY THAT CHICKEN! CAN WE HAVE OUR REAL WIGS?



AND, UNDER THE RUINS OF FRANKENSTANG'S HOUSE...

DZZZ! GRR! DZZZ!

ALL THAT RESEARCH... ALL THAT WORK... ALL THAT MONEY, JUST SHOT TO HELL! ALL OF IT, GONE IN AN INSTANT...

CHEER UP, DOC— AT LEAST WE MADE IT TO THE ESCAPE TUNNEL! WE GOT GORBO, TOO...

THAT'S SUCH A COMFORT



AND, SOMEWHERE ELSE UNDER THE RUINS...

(SIGH)... WHAT A DAY... GOOD THING WE PUT THIS EXTRA ESCAPE TUNNEL IN LAST WEEK! WHEEZE KOFF

SAY... DOES THIS MEAN I DON'T GET YOUR ROYALTIES NOW?

YES, MR. JUKE SON... THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT IT MEANS

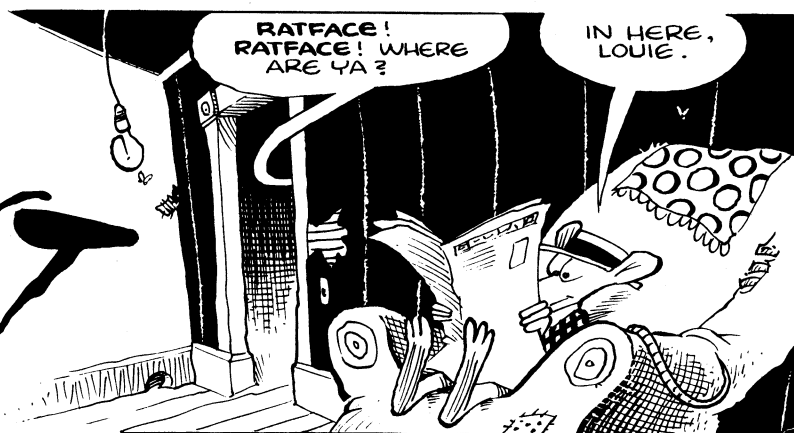


AND, A SHORT DISTANCE AWAY FROM THE RUINS...

HEY MOM, LOOK WHAT I FOUND IN THE BACK YARD!!



# ANGST

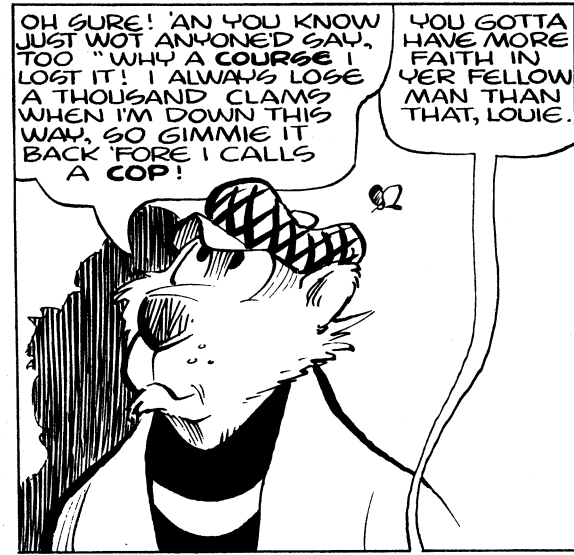
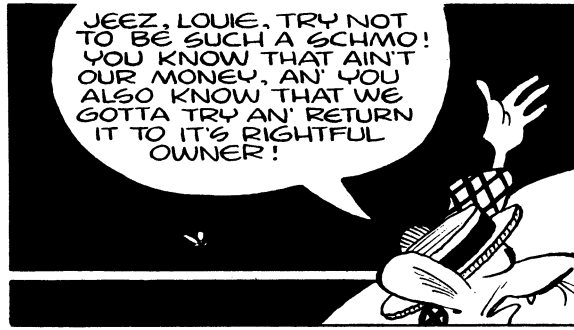


WHOA, LOUIE!  
HOLD ON! THAT  
MONEY—AS  
LOVELY AS IT  
IS—IT DON'T  
BELONG TO  
US!

AW, YOU AIN'T GONNA  
GO AN' SPOIL ALL  
THE FUN BY GETTIN'  
MORAL ON ME. ARE  
YA? BESIDES—IT'S  
FINDERS KEEPERS!

LOUIE—HOW  
WOULD YOU  
FEEL IF  
YOU LOST  
A THOUSAND  
BUCKS?

I DUNNO—  
LET'S GO AN'  
FIND OUT!







THAT LADY LOOKS LIKE SHE'S LOOKIN' FER SOMETHIN'!

SHE'S GOT AN INQUIRIN' EYE, ALL RIGHT, BUT THAT DON'T MEAN -



QUIET! WE GOTTA BE SUBTLE ABOUT THIS, SO JUST LEAVE THE CHIN MUSIC TO ME!



AHEM. COULD IT BE THAT YOU ARE LOOKIN' FER SOMETHIN', MA'AM?



YOU BET YOUR SOCKS I AM! AND I'M GOIN' CRAZY TRYING TO FIND IT, TOO! IT'S SOMETHING VERY VALUABLE!



AH - IS IT BY ANY CHANCE A SMALLISH PIECE OF GREEN PAPER WITH A WHOLE LOTTA NUMBERS ON IT?

YE GODS, YES! DID YOU FIND IT?



WELL, SORTA. YA SEE -

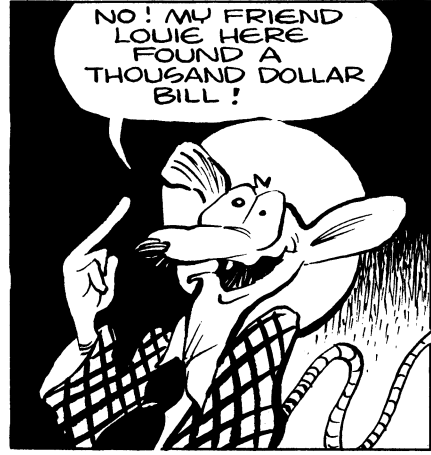


THEN GIMMIE IT!



I BEEN LOOKING ALL OVER TARNATION FOR THAT SIMPLE MINDED LOTTERY TICKET!

LOTTERY TICKET? WE DIDN'T FIND NO LOTTERY TICKET, DID I, RATFACE?



NO! MY FRIEND LOUIE HERE FOUND A THOUSAND DOLLAR BILL!



CHICKEN FEED! MY LOTTERY TICKET IS WORTH A MILLION!

A MILLION! WHOEEY!  
IT SORTA MAKES  
THIS HERE THOUSAND  
LOOK KINDA MEASLY,  
DON'T IT, RATFACE?

REEL IN YER  
GREED, LOUIE.  
WE'RE GONNA BE  
GOOD CITIZENS,  
AND THAT'S  
THAT!

YA KNOW, RATFACE, YOU'RE  
BEGINNIN' TA PUGH ME RIGHT UP  
TA TH' BRINK OF HAVIN' A REAL  
GRADE A SPASM OF CONTEMPTABLE  
ORNERINESS!



AN' WHEN  
I GET -

YOU THERE!  
COME TO  
ATTENTION!



WHAT'S  
YOUR  
BEEF,  
BUDDY?  
?

I AM EXACTO J. GLEAN -  
GOVERNMENT AGENT SUPER  
DELUXE - AND I SEE THAT  
YOU HAVE IN YOUR  
POSSESSION A ONE THOUSAND  
DOLLAR BILL!



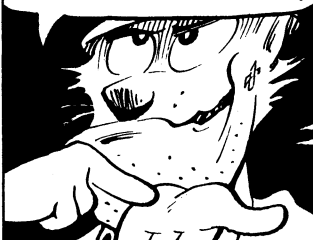
YEAH?  
SO WOT?

IT IS MY SACRED DUTY  
TO INFORM YOU, SIR,  
THAT THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE UNITED STATES  
WAS AMBLING THROUGH  
THIS NEIGHBORHOOD  
EARLY THIS MORNING  
AND LOST A ONE  
THOUSAND DOLLAR BILL!



YOU  
GOTTA  
BE  
KIDDIN'!

THE GOVERNMENT  
NEVER KIDS! I MUST  
FURTHER INFORM YOU  
THAT UNDER SECTION  
P.U. OF THE JUSTICE  
CODE - IT IS YOUR  
SACRED DUTY TO  
RETURN SAID ONE  
THOUSAND DOLLAR BILL,  
TO ME, PERSONALLY,  
IN MY HAND - PRONTO!



FAILURE TO DO SO  
WILL RESULT IN  
MASSIVE PROSECUTION  
AND LIBERAL  
INCARCERATION FOR  
A TERM OF NOT LESS  
THAN 300 YEARS,  
NOR MORE THAN 75!





# Freddy Milton's Gnuff

## "THE MYSTERIOUS LETTER"

ART & STORY  
FREDDY MILTON

GNICKY AND HIS FRIEND ALBERT KEEP PIGEONS AT ALBERT'S HOUSE... CARRIER PIGEONS!

I HOPE SPITFIRE CAN DO IT!

HE HASN'T FAILED YET!



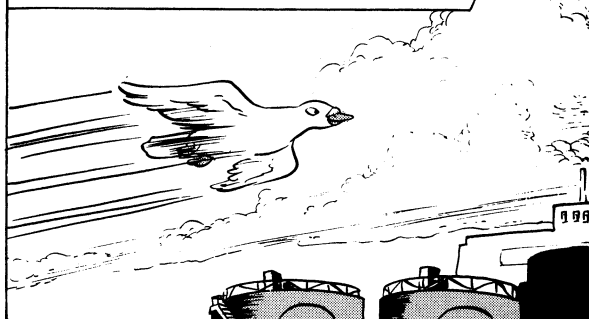
© Milton

SOMETHING MUST HAVE HAPPENED - OR HE'D BE BACK BY NOW!

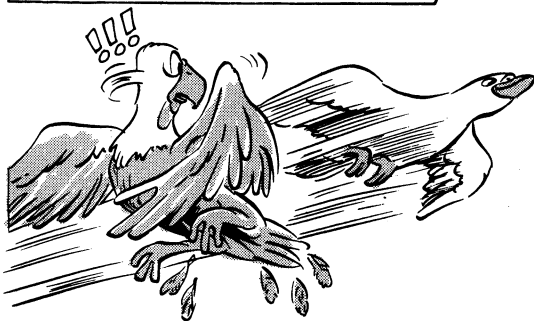
AND TODAY OF ALL DAYS!



WHO IS SPITFIRE? WHY, IT'S THE BOYS' CARRIER PIGEON - AND TODAY HE HAS WORK TO DO...



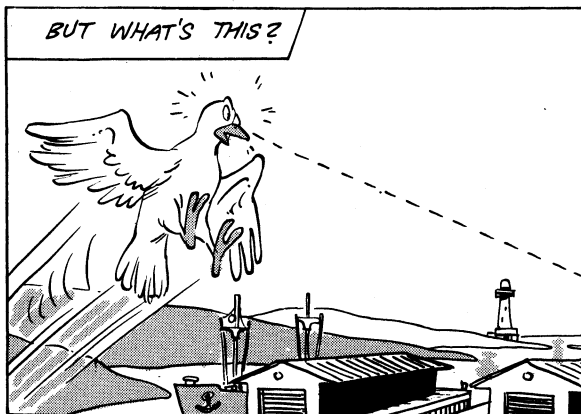
NOTHING CAN MAKE HIM STRAY FROM DUTY'S NARROW PATH...



COME ON, SPITFIRE! DON'T LET US DOWN!

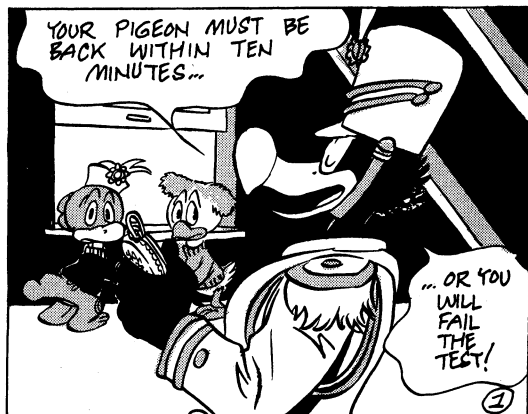


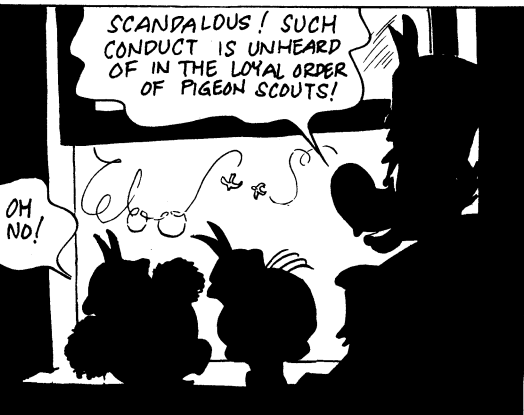
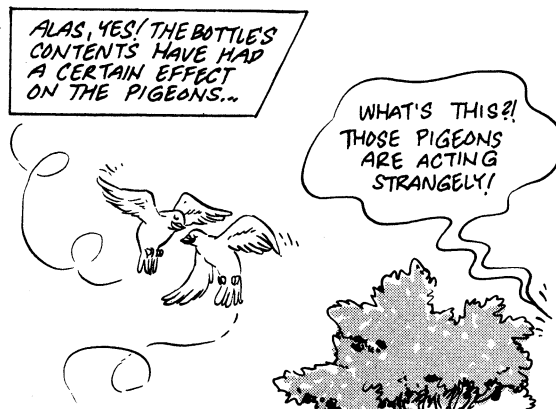
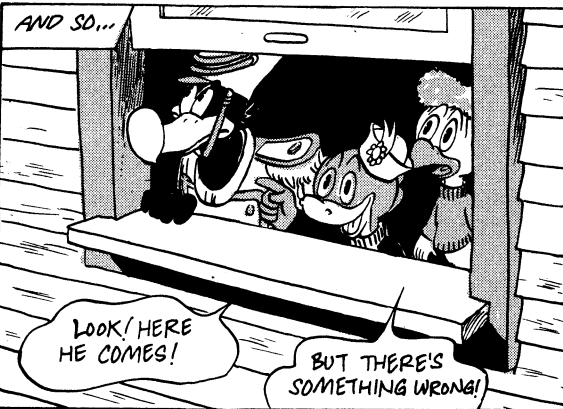
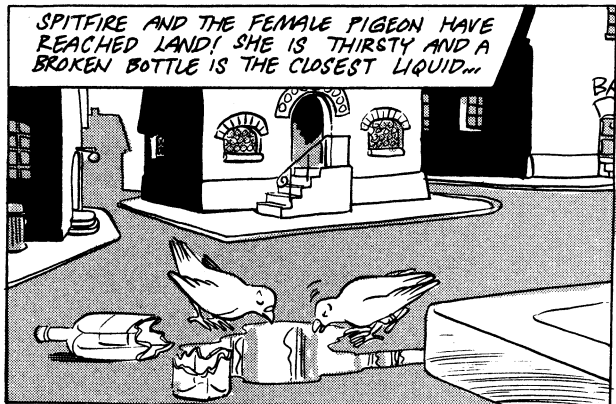
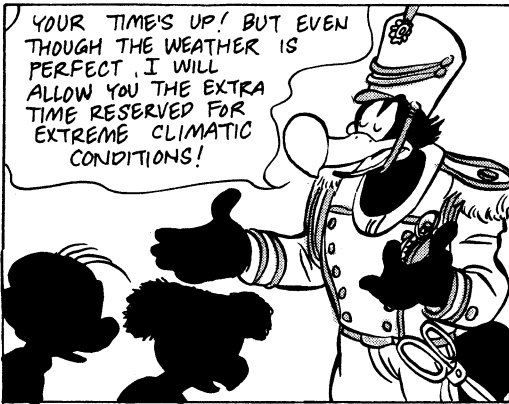
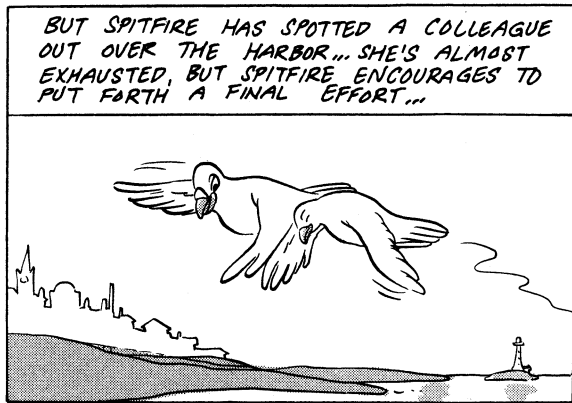
BUT WHAT'S THIS?

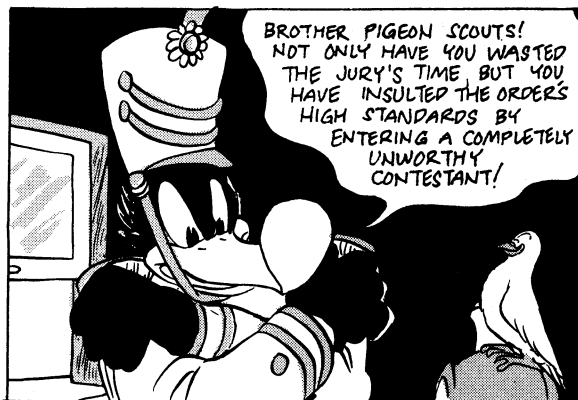


YOUR PIGEON MUST BE BACK WITHIN TEN MINUTES...

... OR YOU WILL FAIL THE TEST!





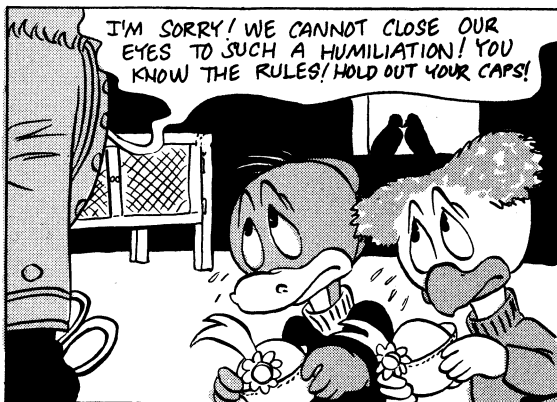


BROTHER PIGEON SCOUTS!  
NOT ONLY HAVE YOU WASTED  
THE JURY'S TIME, BUT YOU  
HAVE INSULTED THE ORDER'S  
HIGH STANDARDS BY  
ENTERING A COMPLETELY  
UNWORTHY  
CONTESTANT!

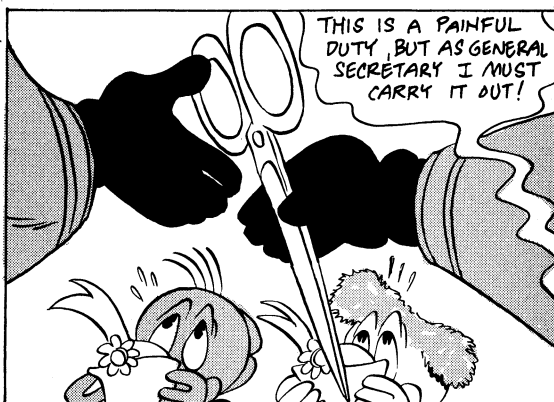


OH NO!  
NOT THAT!

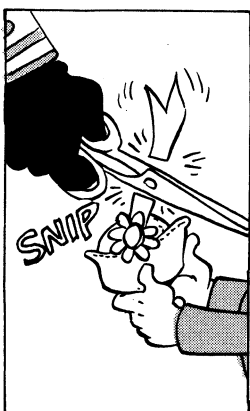
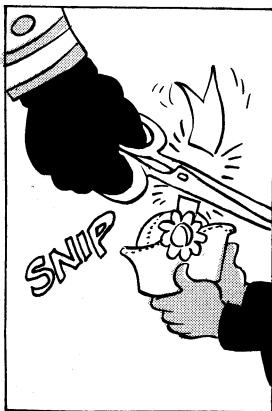
NEVER BEFORE IN THE ORDER'S  
HISTORY HAVE I WITNESSED  
SUCH A DISGRACE! IT  
MUST BE PUNISHED TO  
THE FULL EXTENT OF  
THE RULES!



I'M SORRY! WE CANNOT CLOSE OUR  
EYES TO SUCH A HUMILIATION! YOU  
KNOW THE RULES! HOLD OUT YOUR CAPS!



THIS IS A PAINFUL  
DUTY, BUT AS GENERAL  
SECRETARY I MUST  
CARRY IT OUT!

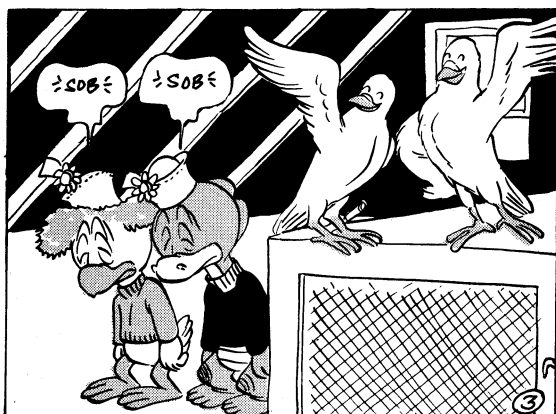


OF COURSE YOU REALIZE  
THAT FROM NOW ON  
YOU HAVE BEEN REDUCED  
TO "3-M" RANK! \*

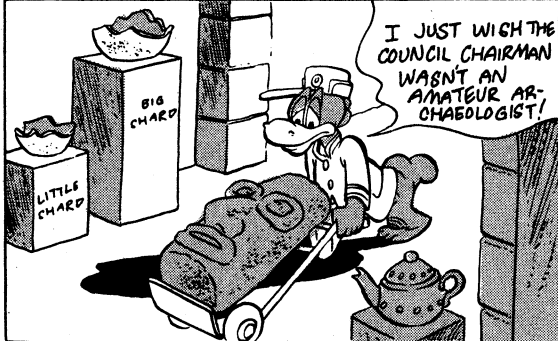
\* MERELY  
MIDDLEGRADE  
MEMBERS



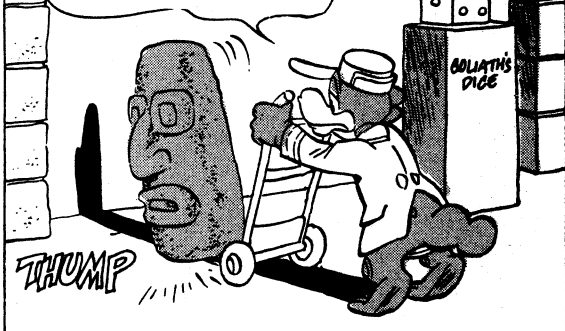
FAREWELL,  
3-M'ERS!



MEANWHILE, AT CITY HALL, WHERE GNUFF IS TENDING AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXHIBIT...



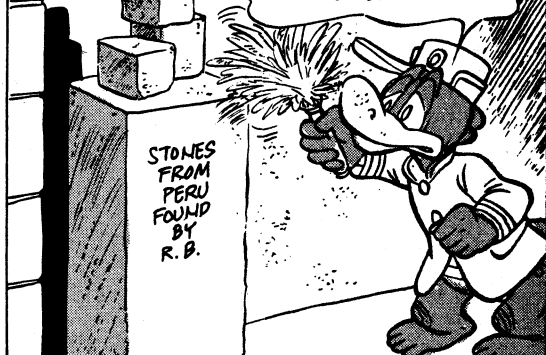
THEN MAYBE I COULD GET OUT OF THE ENDLESS BOTHER OF MESSING WITH THIS DUMB EXHIBIT!



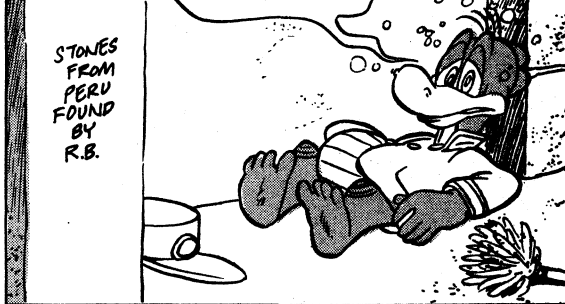
WHEN! I GET TIRED SO FAST! FACE IT...I'M NOT AS YOUNG AS SPRINGTIME ANY MORE!



EVERYTHING'S SO DUSTY IN THIS SECTION...

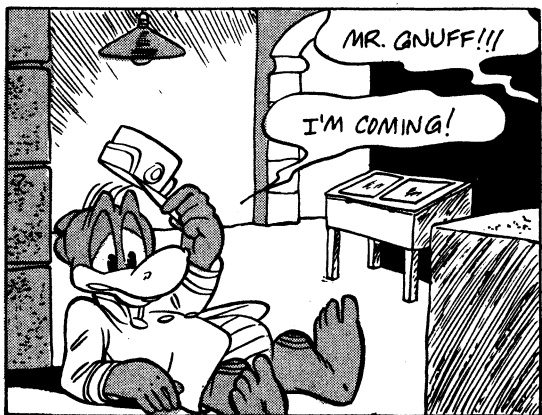


MAYBE THAT'S WHY I DON'T HAVE ANY ENERGY... ALL THAT UN-HEALTHY OLD AIR IN HERE!

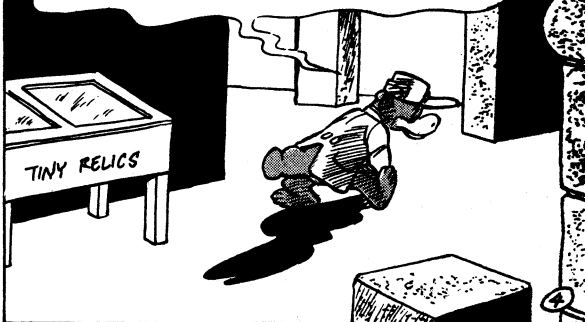


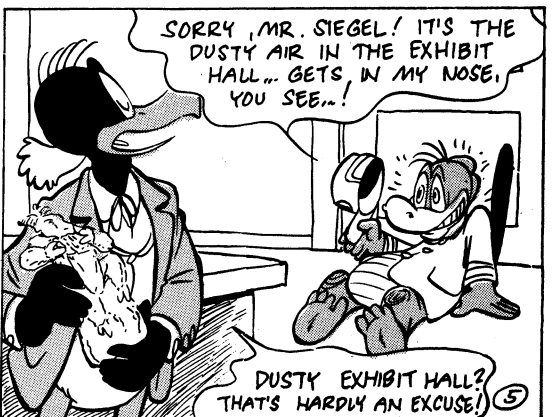
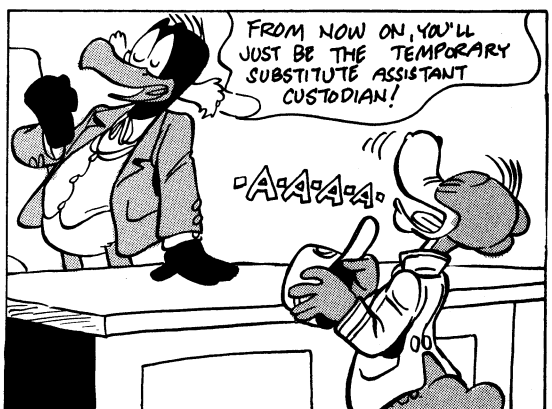
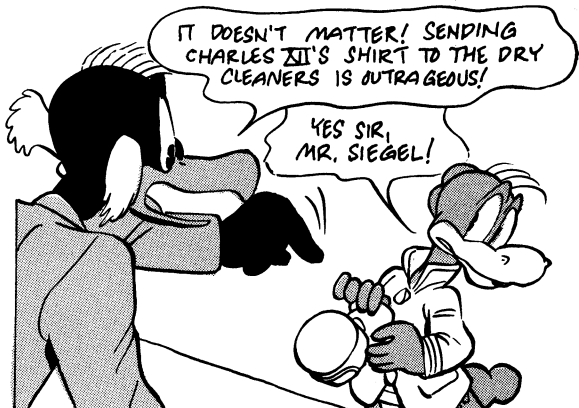
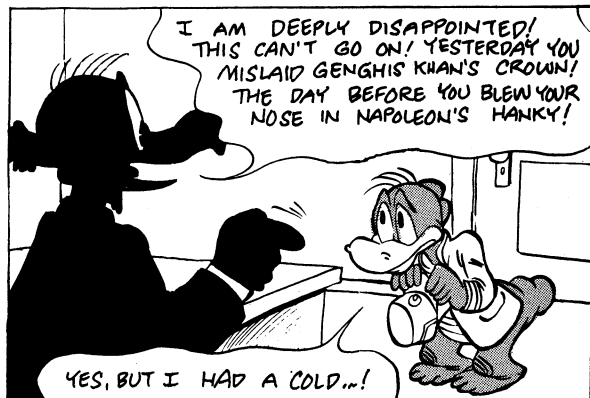
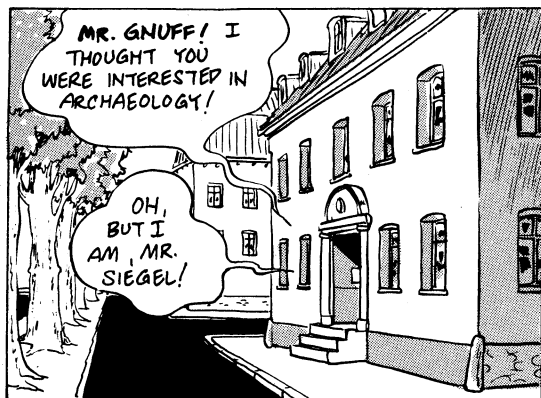
MR. GNUFF!!!

I'M COMING!

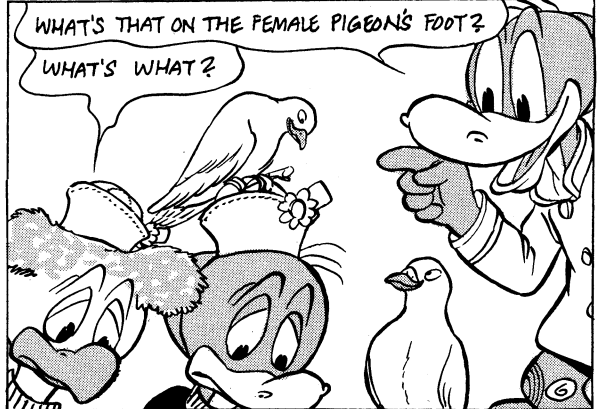
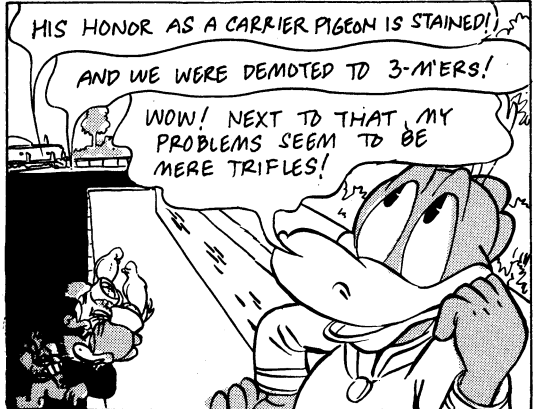
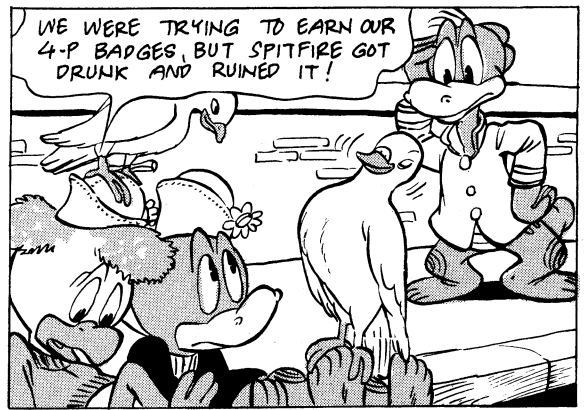
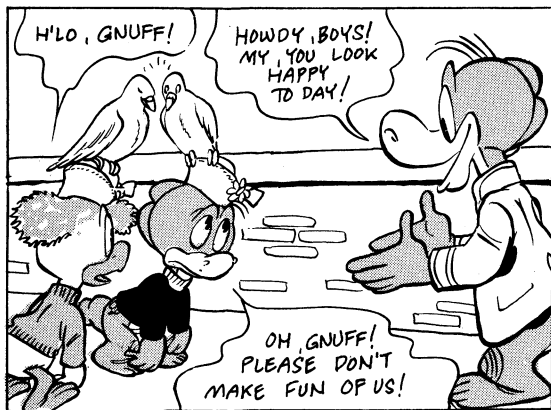
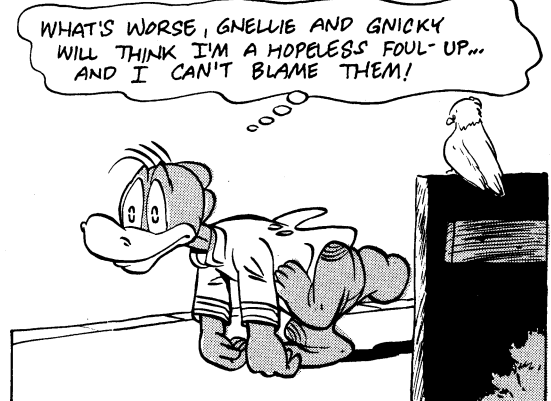
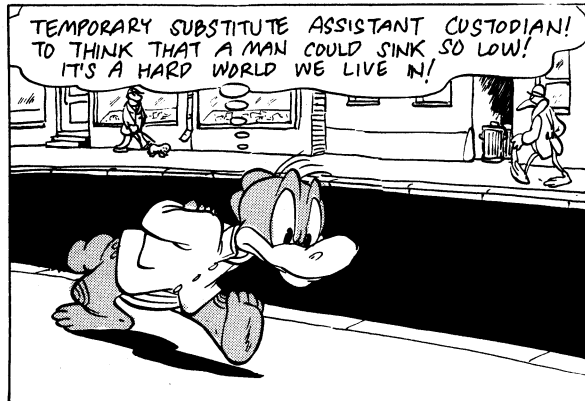
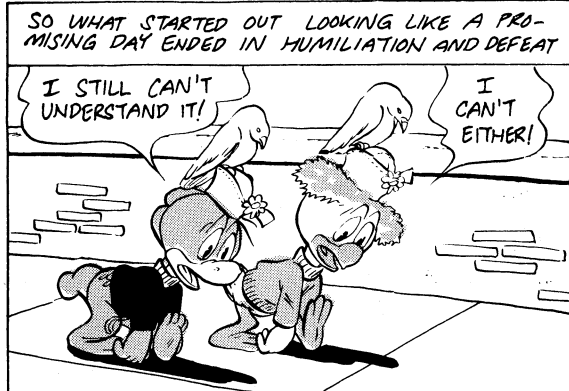


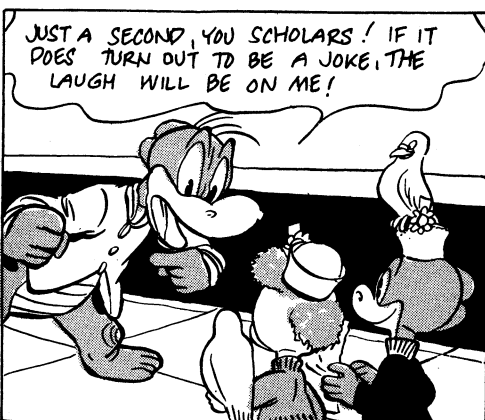
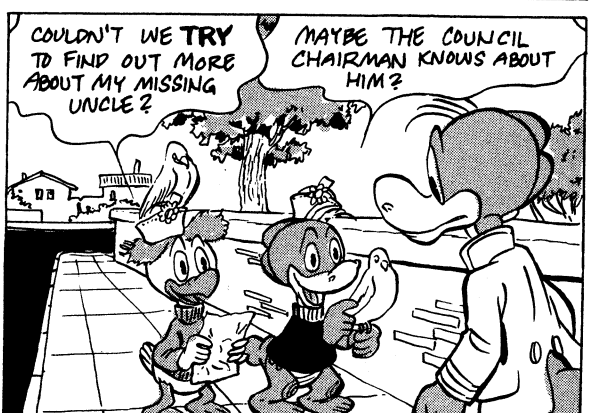
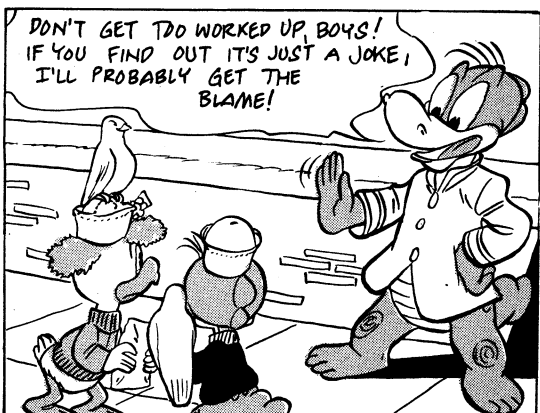
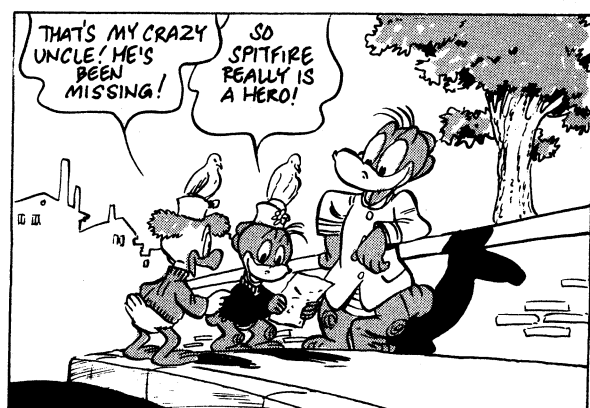
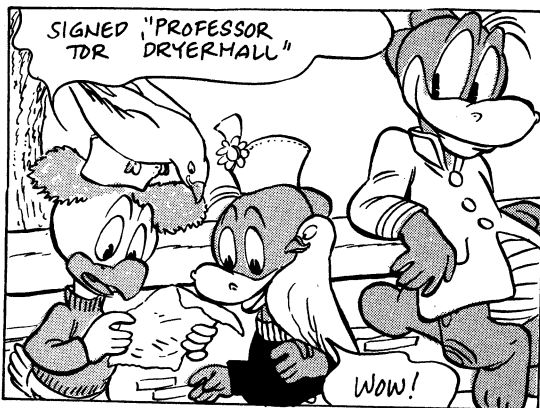
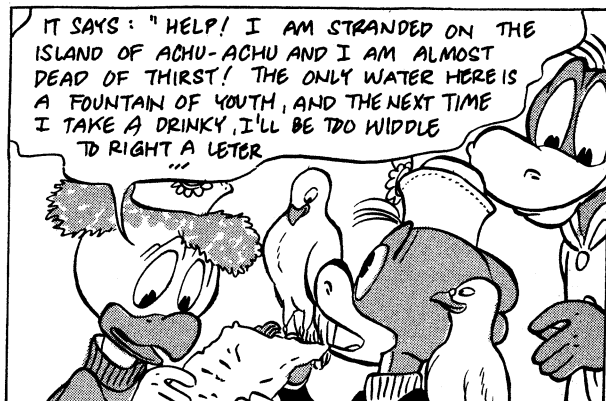
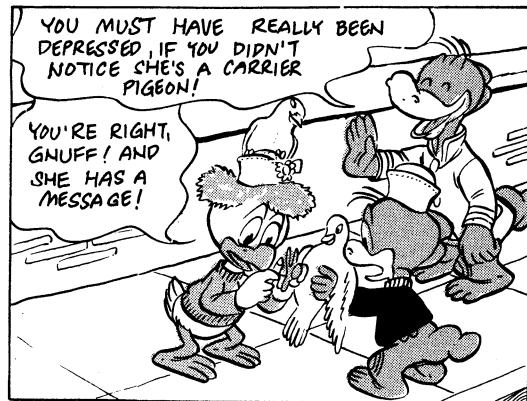
I'M STARTING TO FEEL LIKE A RELIC OF THE PAST MYSELF... IF ONLY I COULD GET OUT OF HERE FOR A WHILE!

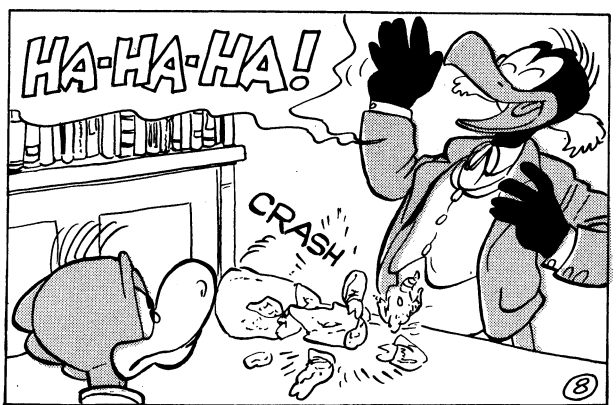
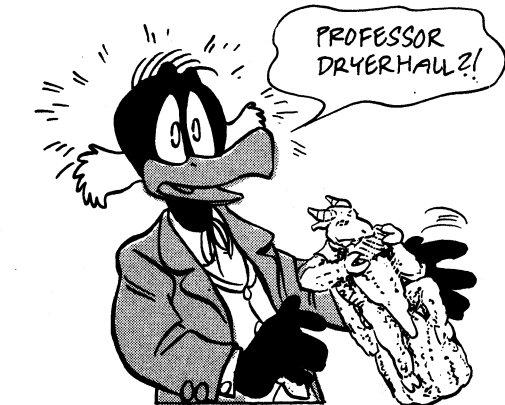
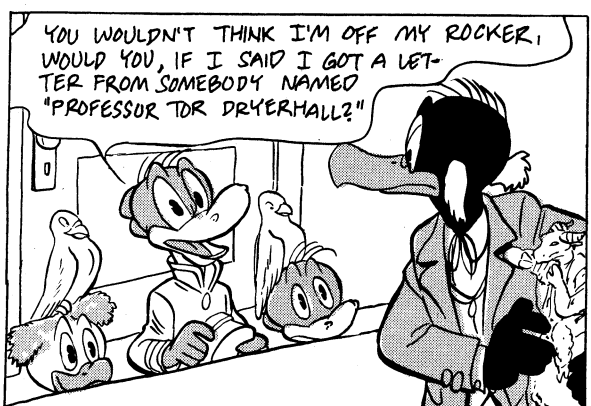
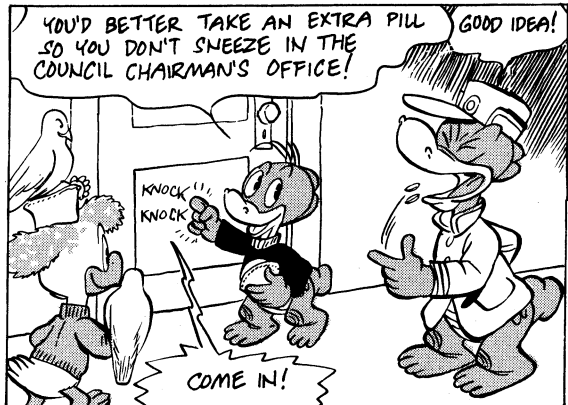
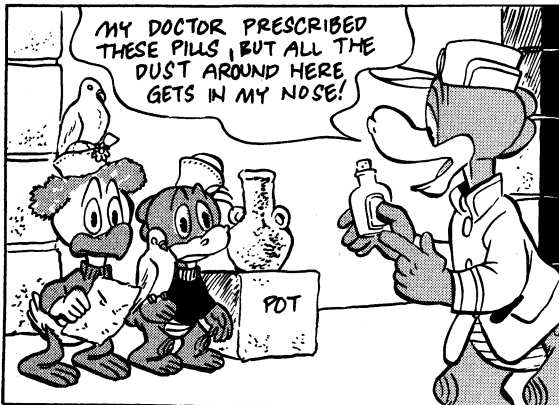
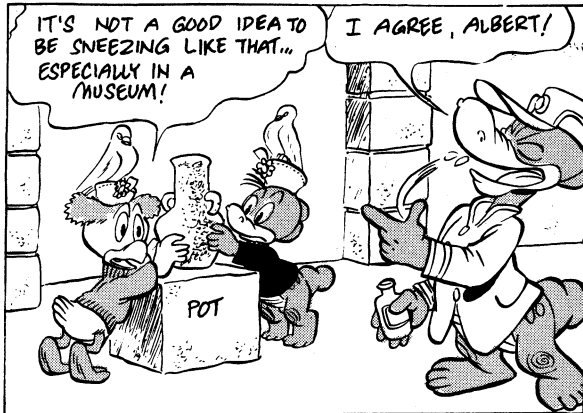


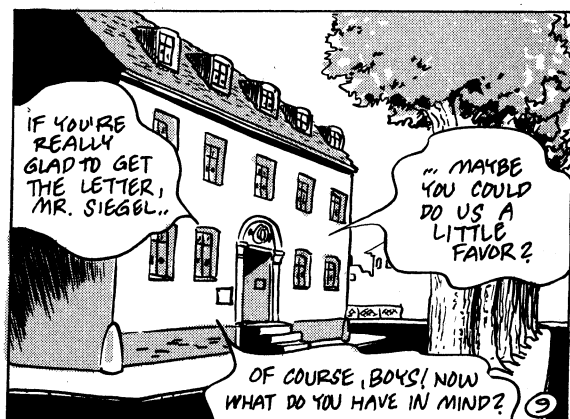
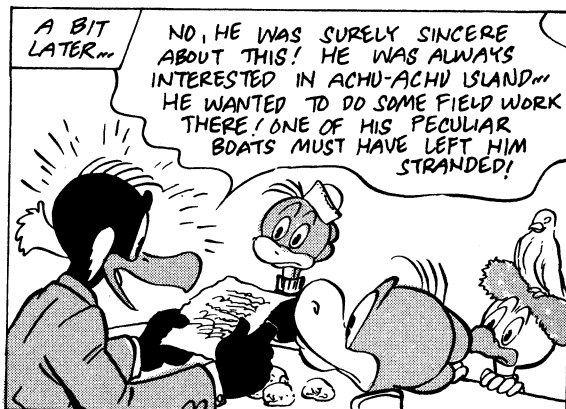
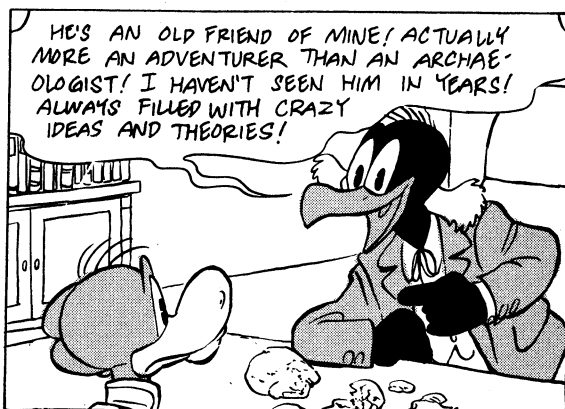
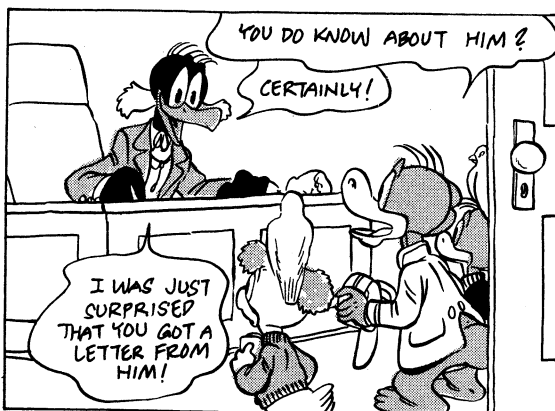
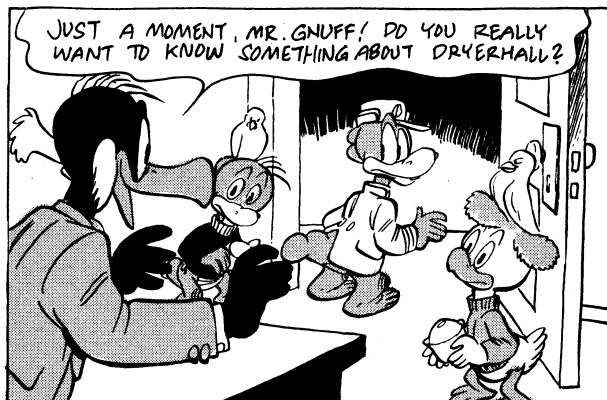
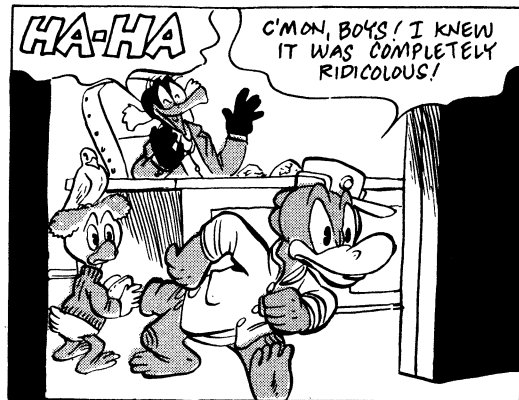


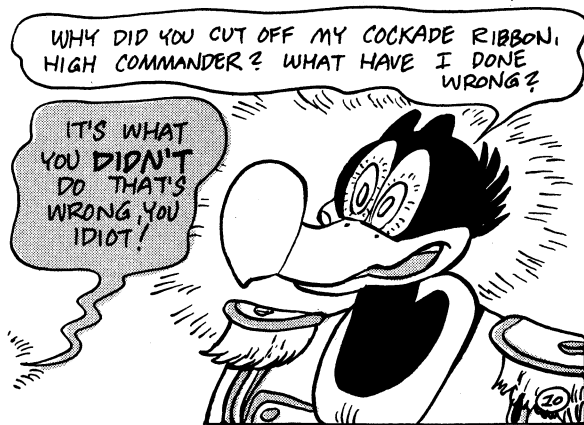
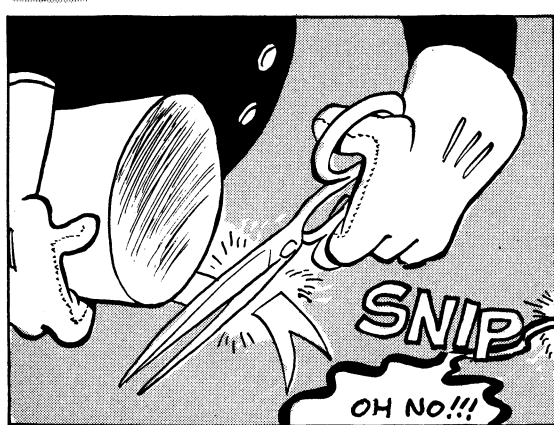
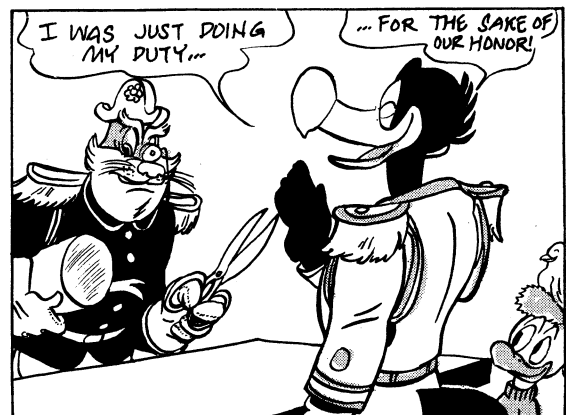
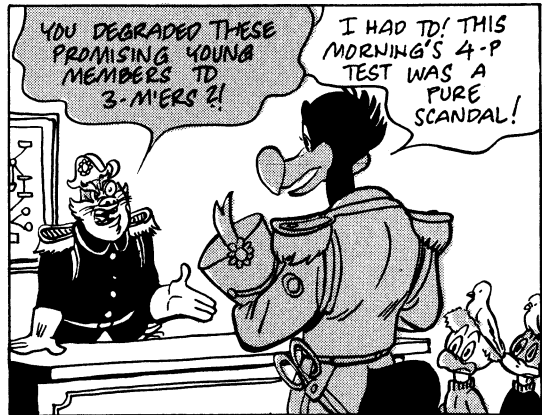
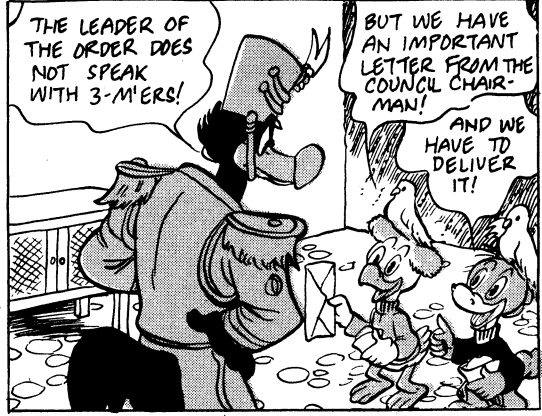
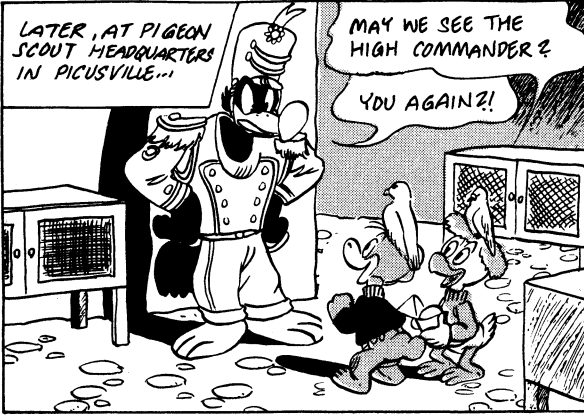


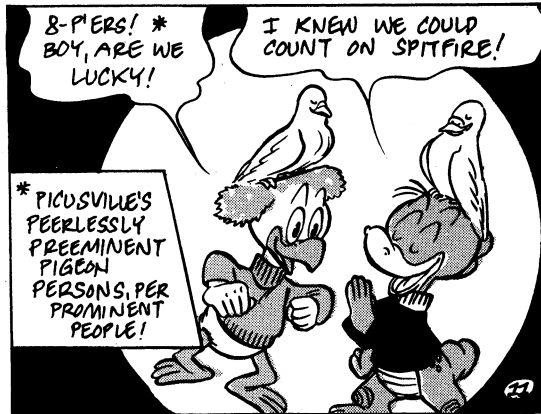
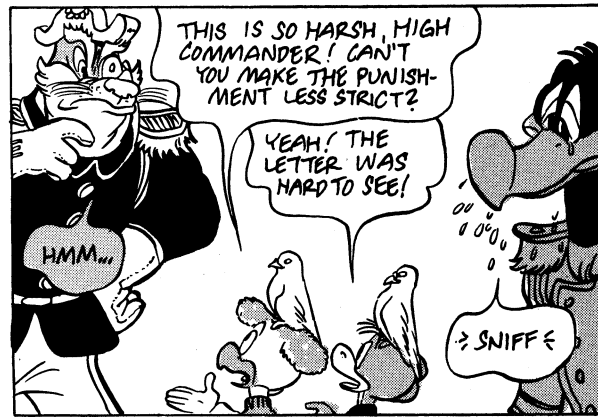
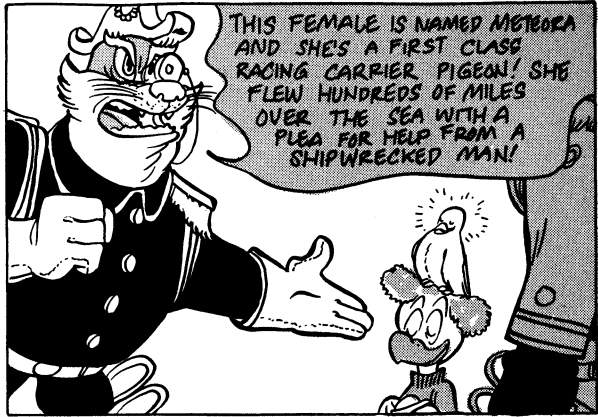
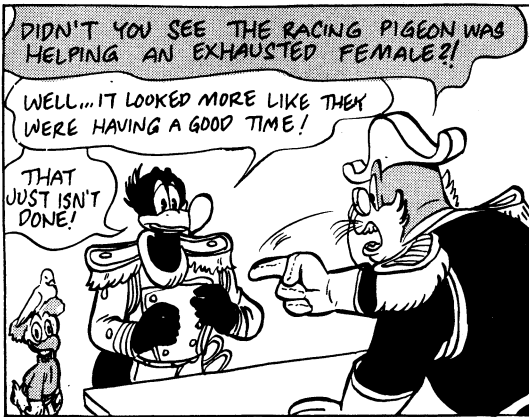














# C O N T E S T

**We got tons of entries (33 in all) in the "Name That Critter" contest. And they were all so good we had to print every one of them. Here they are—and don't peek at the results (inside back cover)! —KIM THOMPSON**

Dear Stan:

I think Hermy is part hamster and part mole. So he is a "**Mamstole**."

"Hermy the Mamstole."

Thank you.

**DAVE EDWARDS**

Westland, MI

Dear Stan:

I think Hermy is a **hamster** because he is like a hamster and to me he looks like one.

Sincerely,

**CHRIS MISTRETTA**

Salem, MA

Dear Stan:

I personally think that Hermy is a **gopher**!

Sincerely,

**DAVID SAUNDERS**

Salem, MA

Dear Critters:

When I found out that *Critters* was having a "Name That Critter" contest, the first thing I thought was, Hermy's a mole! I then looked through my back issues of *Critters* and realized that the Mogura Ninja in *Critters* #10 were moles and they didn't look anything like Hermy. This had me worried because for some reason I was so sure that Hermy was a mole. Then it came to me. I quickly took out *Critters Special* #1, "The Adventures of Nilson Groundthumper and Hermy" and reread the first chapter. Hermy is called a mole three times on pages 2 and 3. I guess that's why I thought he was a mole.

So here's my answer. Hermy doesn't look like the Mogura Ninja because he's a **baby mole**. The reason he has the mind of a two-year-old is because he is one.

Sincerely,

**ALEXANDER SCHWARTZ**

Palo Alto, CA

Dear Kim:

I saw your contest column, and I think I just may have solved poor old Stan's problem. I know just what little Hermy is; he is an **it**. In other words, he is not a living being, but a **Golem**, an automatic given life by the use of great magics. Born from the hands of an Irish wizard who had a bit too much of the bottle, poor Hermy was shaped from over-ripened potatoes, with a "brain" of rag and assorted toenail clippings. It is no great wonder that Hermy has trouble "thinking." Due to certain circumstances Hermy was set free by his master, and managed to soak in

a bit of the world he was born into. Perhaps—probably not—Nilson shall some day realize just what it is he calls his friend. Let us all hope that they don't have a run-in with the King of Burgher; it might prove a frightening experience. 'Til then I shall remain a blind follower of "The Adventures of Nilson Groundthumper and Hermy" (I'd have to be blind—Ooops! You guys weren't supposed to hear that. Sorry.)

Best always,

**ALFONSO DJ ALFONSO**

Miami, FL

Dear Stan:

I well understand creation without knowing what you've created. After watching Hermy in action for the few episodes I've seen him in, I am most certain that his likeness is that of a turnip. Problem is, we need to assume that he is an animal, not a vegetable, so I sat in my office thinking (throwing pencils into the roof/ceiling.) An obnoxious squeaking yanked me out of my thinking. Damn if it wasn't Buckwheat (my hamster) spinning his wheel. I went over and was about to strangle him when it hit me. Hermy, hamster; Hermy's a **hamster**. His innocence, his look, his "sharp" wit. Hermy must certainly be a hamster. Right?

P.S. Love the books. *Usagi* as well!

**BARRY OSSER**

North Coast Roleplaying

Eureka, CA

Dear "Name that Critter":

It's obvious that "Hermy" is a **mole**. This was established in "The Adventures of Nilson Groundthumper" in the meeting of Nilson and Hermy. How can he be anything else?

Please take this into consideration.

Thanks.

**ROBERT D. WOOD**

Upperville, VA

Dear Mr. Thompson:

I would say Hermy is a **hamster**. "Hermy the Hamster" . . . It's catchy, the word association seems right, and I like it! That's good enough for me!

Okay, some people will argue, "Hermy doesn't look like a 'real' hamster," but so what? As long as Stan Sakai continues drawing well as usual and writing exciting and engaging storylines for "Nilson and Hermy" and *Usagi*, his characters can be any animal he wishes. From my standpoint, I really

don't care what animal Hermy is supposed to be as long as Hermy is well-drawn and appealing. I would enjoy *Usagi Yojimbo* the same whether he is a rabbit or a turtle or a fox. Ditto for "Birthright" whether the ruling (now deposed) family of Shartoa were a pride of lions or a flock of geese or a skulk (yes, it's a collective noun) of foxes, or if "Fission Chicken" has an identity crisis. I like any anthropomorphic series, no matter what species the main characters are supposed to be. As long as the art, storyline, and characters are all rendered well and interesting to read and look at. Sometimes, if "funny animals" are drawn *too* realistically, it would destroy the mood (and whimsy) of certain humorous and offbeat stories ("Fission Chicken" and "Krazy Kat" come to mind) as well as taking away the imagination (and potential contests!) of the reader to guess what animal they are looking at when they read such stories. Exaggerated character styles and a knowing feeling of "Well, they're animals but I don't know what kind" shouldn't interfere in reader enjoyment if the story content and artwork of "animalistic" comics should be enough to satisfy readers of such titles by itself.

I will be awaiting your "Nilson" rating on this entry.

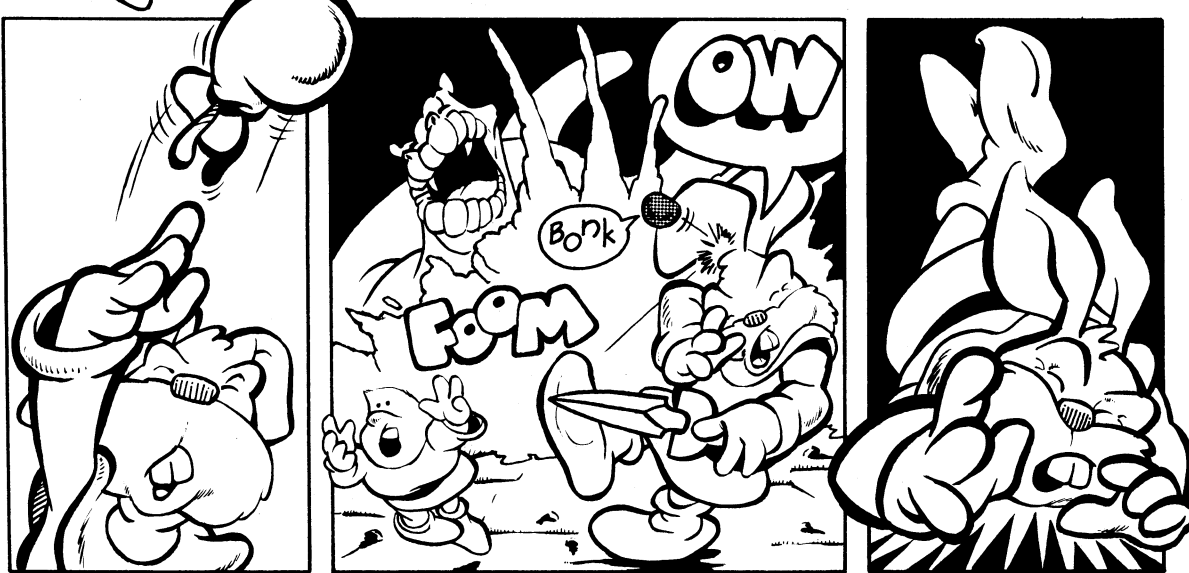
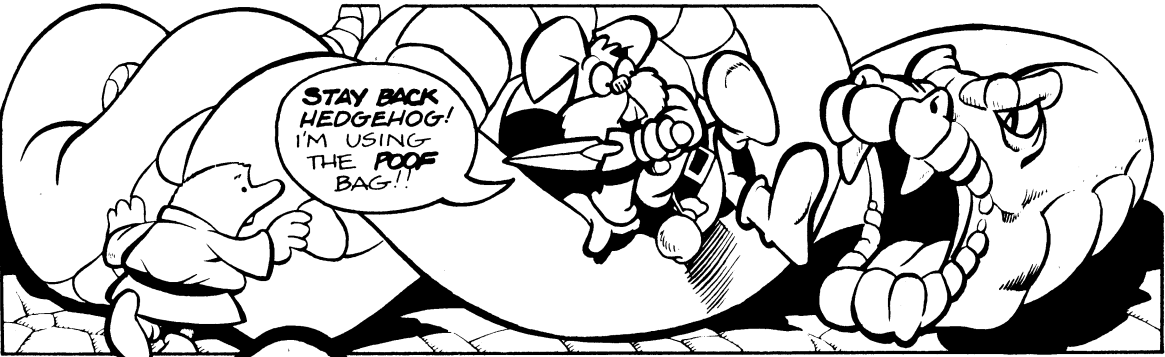
Thank you!

**THOMAS K. DYE**

Venice, CA

Dear Mr. Sakai:

First of all I'd like to let you know how much I love Nilson and Hermy. I think they are two of the best "funny animals" in comicdom. Anyway, on to more important things. I believe Hermy is a (drumroll please) . . . **gopher**. Yes, a gopher. Here's why. First of all, the obvious is eliminated. He is not a mole because his eyes are much too big at times. Moles generally squint. Also, Hermy has chubby cheeks. Gophers have pockets in their cheeks for storing food. And while we're in the vicinity of the mouth, the gopher has developed incisors as Hermy is occasionally seen to have. Gophers don't have especially long tails, which would make it fairly easy to keep it tucked under his garments. Gophers are small animals, as is Hermy. Now here's the clincher. It was my knowledge, and is confirmed by my Funk & Wagnalls encyclopedia, that gophers are *extreme pests*. They cause extensive damage to trees and gardens; still, when you look at them, they aren't exactly ugly animals. They are actually kind of cute,



A PAGE FROM AN UNPUBLISHED NILSON GROUNDTHUMPER STORY (CIRCA 1979) IN WHICH HERMY IS CALLED (AND LOOKS A LOT MORE LIKE) A HEDGEHOG. BUT DON'T TAKE STAN'S WORD FOR IT, SINCE...



which makes it a very hard animal to hate. And that is why I think Hermey is a gopher. And until something goes right for Nilson and Hermey, make mine Critters.

Sincerely,  
**STEVE FINNEY**  
Park Ridge, IL

Dear Stan and the Critters Creators:

Submitted for your approval: A critter named Hermey. Family—unknown. Occupation—unknown. Species—unknown. (Do-dee-do-dah do-dee-do-dah)

Actually, Hermey's species is fairly easy to tell. After all, what sort of creature, a puny runt at first glance, would try to underbid seasoned mercenaries three times his size? Or who would willingly enter a duel to the death with his best friend? Only one who is unself-consciously brave to the point of suicidal insanity. Only one species fits that description:

Hermey is a lemming.

As a final proof, a mental picture if you will, again submitted for your approval: A countryside filled with Hermys. Millions of Hermys, as far as the eye can see. Considering how much mayhem just one can cause, can you imagine what a whole army would do? Critter civilization as we know it could not survive unless they were occasionally driven into the sea.

Yours for more Hermys.  
**TROY P. KLINGLER**  
Longmont, CO

Dear Name that Critter:

I'm surprised at the confusion—!

Hermey is a **hemster**. Not so much a *hem'n-hasser*, certainly not one of the halfway half-bred, *hatari hamsters*, but one of the rarer,

albeit nobler, breed, "Hamster" (*Hemster hemster fabulousis*). Not so much a *hemster* (such as I), nor *dumpster*, *h.h.-fabulousis*, known as the "utterly self-fulfilled selfless" Hermey, called "mole" by Groundthumper forcefully enough at their meeting, adopts the erroneous distinction ("mole") with whole-heart and unconcern.<sup>1</sup>

It may be argued that no less a personage that King Kilburn speaks of the hemster Hermey as a mole—"The mole goes free."<sup>ALSO 1</sup>

However, it is clear at the time this is a casual remark by a disinterested and disdainful Monarch, and serves, really, rather than to define the situation, to point up the confusion instead.

That Hermey is *not* a mole is brought forward later by Groundthumper himself, who apparently clarifies or disregards his own initial assessment, referring directly to Hermey as "hamster-pig," and "ground-hog."<sup>1</sup> as well.

It is of little surprise that hemsters, *per se*, have figured so slightly into the story as it is, so far, a relatively short story, and we have not even yet baldly been told that the leading figure, Nilson Groundthumper, himself, is a Coney or a *Lepus cuniculus* or a *Lepus hispidus* (which seems more likely), though quite possibly, he's an angora.<sup>2</sup>

Hemsters are described as puny little creatures, yet hardy, possessing a healthy appetite, a tunic and boots, often a boot. Hemsters are notoriously courageous in the absence of danger, reasonably articulate, particularly regarding provender, and are known in some quarters as the "pudge."<sup>3</sup>

The particular hemster under discussion,

- (1) Critters Special #1, Fantagraphics Books Inc. 1987
- (2) The Encyclopedia Americana, "Rabbit," v. 23 (Pumps to Russellville)
- (3) unattributable common knowledge

Hermy, also described as "mendicant," apparently begging reference to his response to what arises from mulch ("face-flowers").<sup>1 AGAIN</sup>

Largely omnivorous, the hemster itself is prey for many larger species, much as wolves and dragons, and for many of the more aggressive smaller creatures, such as weasels and cats. Hemsters are known to co-inhabit with most herbivores, and create "mutual-pet" relationships with the *tokage*, though it has never been clearly demonstrated which, hemster or *tokage*, is "pet" and which "master."

In conclusion, one is compelled to conclude the confusion arising concerning the species of which Hermey holds membership is confusion arising largely from the widespread, casual ignorance and indifference greeting *hemster-hemster-fanulouis*, the good-hearted, omni-voracious yet near-utterly harmless hemster.

Common-folk epigrams concerning *h-h-fab* appended.

"Keep secret from the hemster that which you wish kept secret." "Open not your lunchpail near a hemster's ear." "No hemster knows." "Hemsters at play?—Cat's away!" "Hemsters in hiding, cat's abiding."<sup>3</sup>

I hope this contributes to the amusement surrounding this uninhibitedly *tabla-rosa* little creature. Soon we will discover the "tabla-rosa" to be our Rosetta Stone, but that's geology, or philosophy, and this, taxonomy.

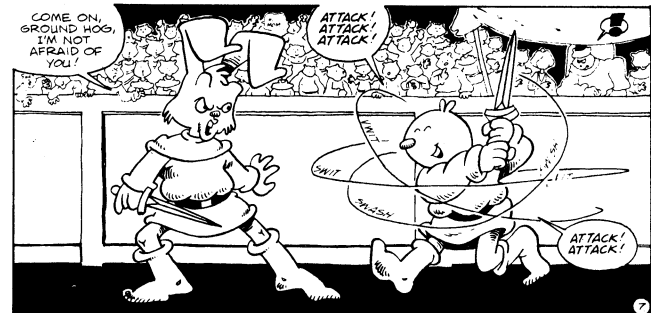
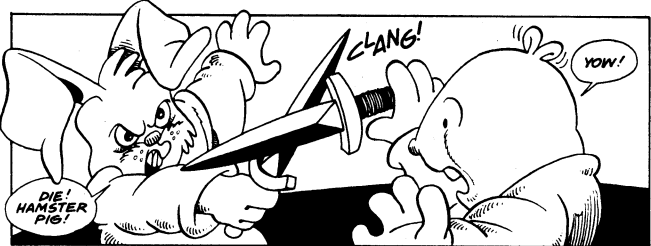
**MATTHEW-LEWIS M. LEVIN**  
Northampton, MA

Dear Critters critters:

I always figured Hermey was a mole, since that's what Stan Sakai thought he was



...CRITTERS SPECIAL #1 INCLUDES SEPARATE REFERENCES TO HERMEY AS "MOLE," "GROUND HOG," AND "HAMSTER PIG" (WHATEVER THAT IS).



originally. But if Stan rules out his own testimony, I'll say Hermy is a **glutton**. Granted, "glutton" is another word for "wolverine," and the wolverines we know and love have rather different personalities, but Nilson and Usagi aren't your basic timid rabbit either.

Always carry a grapefruit,  
**PHILIP M. COHEN**  
Boulder, CO

Dear Editors, etc.:  
Re: What's a Hermy?

First, all efforts to consult the World's foremost Consulting Detective, and any of his lesser compatriots, have met in dismal failure. Therefore, I must solve this problem on my own.

**Clues:**  
1) Nilson Groundthumper's own name. Obviously European...quite probably Norwegian. Since their adventures appear to be happening early on in Nilson's career, I'm assuming neither is well travelled.

2) Hermy's size. Quite small, especially in comparison to other species. Quite possibly a mole, but most likely not, for Hermy does not appear blind. No, definitely not a mole, but definitely rodentlike.

3) Hermy's disposition. Hermy is definitely a follower, and not a leader. He likes large crowds. Foremost, though, is his suicidal tendencies. Blindly moving to his own death, willingly.

I must therefore conclude, and submit to you, that Nilson Groundthumper's pal is a **lemming** who somehow has survived the migration to the fjords.

P.S. You do realize if Nilson Groundthumper and Hermy had their own book, I'd be buying it as well? I really enjoy *Usagi Yojimbo* and Stan Sakai's work.

**CHARLIE COCKETT**  
Cheyenne, WY

Hello, Editor and Mr. Sakai:

I think Hermy is a slightly chubby mole. He seems a little "short-sighted" (pardon the pun), because he seems preoccupied with only what pertains to him at the moment, and he is oblivious to his surroundings, except for Nilson Groundthumper. He also seems to have to open his eyes real wide to see things—like maps. His eyes are also very small and dot-like, and heat bothers him like it would a real mole.

I think these are evidence that he has been in the dark too long, or is it the "dark ages"?

A fan of the Great Stan,  
**ROBIN NUNEZ**  
Odessa, TX

Dear *Critters* People:

At work a few days ago, while looking for the spelling of pagination (whether it has a

"sion" or a "tion") in good old Webster's, a depiction of a rodent caught my eye. "Hey, that looks like Hermy, small eyes, tiny ears and all!"

So my strenuous argument is that I lucked out and found Hermy by accident. Hermy is a **Paca**!

P.S. Pagination is spelled with a "t."  
P.P.S. Congrats on a thoroughly fun issue of *Critters*. I especially liked the "Lionheart" chapter.

**SCOTT DAVIS**  
Manchester, NY

Dear Kim:

In the few stories I have read about the exploits of Nilson and Hermy, it has been clear (at least to me) that Hermy is a member of the Ochtonidae family—yes, a **pika**.

Please do not confuse him with typing machines or members of the Cricetidae family—not to say that rodents, specifically lemmings, are uncouth; they just aren't Hermy.

Since a contest has been declared I am sure some folks will think (mistakenly in my opinion) Hermy is a lemming. Therefore I have collected some data to show the validity of my conclusion.

The first and most physically obvious similarity of Hermy and other pikas are the ears, rounded and sticking out in plain sight. Although the lemmings also have rounded ears, they lay flat to the head and are seen only as tips above the fur.

An important, but rarely seen, similarity are the small pair of incisors directly behind the large gnawing teeth. This is the trait that separates all lagomorphs (including Nilson and Miyamoto) from those of the order Rodentia, e.g., lemmings.

Another, but less critical, point is the friendship of Nilson and Hermy. It has been said "birds of a feather flock together," so it stands to reason, "Lagomorphs of an order hang out together," or something like that.

Whether you call him a whistling hare, coney, or pika, he'll always be Hermy.

F.Y.I. comparison chart:

Kingdom	Animalia	Animalia	Animalia
Phylum	Chordata	Chordata	Chordata
Class	Mammalia	Mammalia	Mammalia
Order	Lagomorpha	Lagomorpha	Lagomorpha
Family	Ochtonidae	Leporidae	Cricetidae
Genus	various	various	various
Species	various	various	various
	PIKA	RABBIT	LEMMING

I hope this clears things up for those in doubt as to Hermy's identity.

Yours for accurate classification,  
**ADAM W. LANDAU**  
Plattsburgh AFB, NY

Dear Fantagraphics:

When I look at Sakai's Hermy, the first thing that comes to mind is a Potato Head

Kid. And when you guys announced a contest to figure out what kind of critter Hermy actually is, I almost choked! But I quickly recovered and began to take this thing seriously. So I began to write down all the possibilities. A groundhog? No...they're usually portrayed with buckteeth. There goes woodchuck, gopher, and an undeveloped rabbit. Then I remembered a school report that I had to do...now, what was it about? Oh yeah...a lemming. I seriously doubt Stan would write a story about a creature with suicidal tendencies. Then my little sister recommended a mouse. Not all mice have big ears, she reminded me. But then it occurred to me that Hermy doesn't have a tail...or if he does, it's just a little stub. So there went mouse and rat. Then I thought of gerbil. But the ones that I've seen were all furry little critters. Hermy doesn't look all that furry. All of a sudden, it hit me like a lightning bolt (well, maybe just a mild shock) that Hermy must be a **hamster**! Hamsters aren't all that furry, they have little ears, stubby tails, and are pretty quiet. There you have it! Even though "Hermy the Hamster" sounds kind of funny at first, it's the best I could come up with. So do I get the Sakai artwork or not?

Best of luck in the comics field,  
**STEPHEN STEGELIN**  
Florence, KY

Dear Stan and Kim:

A contest to identify Hermy, eh? You're on.

Let's see. With any project like this, research comes first. *Encyclopedia Americana*, *World Encyclopedia of Animals*, *Illustrated History of Zoology*. That should do nicely. Oops. Just in case, better try this one first.

Ahhh, *Barlowe's Guide to Extraterrestrials*, Volume 387, Part 2, Omnivore, biped, furry.

What's that? You only have the single volume? The digest? Better beck with your local bookstore. Have them check Books in Print, Galactic. They usually keep it in the back. A full set of Barlowe's is worth the price.

Now, where was I? Oh, biped, furry, under 100 kilos. Hmnm. Nope, no luck. Just a shot in the dark, anyway.

OK. Hermy is young, so his features are still sort of rounded and tough to categorize. The ears are rather distinctive, though. And they wiggle.

He is naive, inexperienced, eager to please, a bit awkward. All to be expected of youth. Wait a minute. Eager.

Crack open the books. In a couple of panels, his teeth seem quite prominent. Try Rodentia. Yeah, getting warm. The oval head shape is distinctive, as is the round nose. Almost...Bingo. The ears are placed a bit differently, but the shape nails it down.

Here in the top drawer is the rare Peruvian

name sticking. Tapping Hermey gently but firmly between the eyes, I named him *Castor Canadensis*. A beaver.

Welcome to the family, kid.

DAVID D. WHITE  
Cupertino, CA

Dear Stan:

Upon reading "The Adventures of Nilson Groundthumper and Hermey" (in both *Critters* and *Albedo*), I'd felt for some time that Hermey was some form of hamster (or a short-haired guinea pig), who is generally energetic in his actions, even though his best intentions go askew somehow.

Being a physically shorter animal than Nilson, Hermey can't help but look up to his master as some sort of hero, and probably has dreams of being a hero himself (when he's not dreaming about food). In short (no pun intended), Hermey is a blind (or slightly nearsighted) optimist whose ineptitude is sometimes overshadowed by his positive outlook, even in the darkest of situations (not the least of which is the search for his identity as some sort of anthropomorphic being).

Needless to say, I'm almost certain that I'm not the first individual to label Hermey as a hamster, but it would be interesting to find out what other responses were given in this contest. When the final tally comes in, why not list the top ten choices of what animal Hermey is (and the number of people who made each choice), along with the names of the winner and runners-up?

I wish all the best to Nilson and Hermey, as they look towards a brighter tomorrow just down the road...but please, watch where you're stepping! Ditto Stan!

JED MARTINEZ  
Elmont, NY

Dear People:

I have come to the decision that Hermey is, indeed he *has* to be, a hamster. I have based this conclusion on careful observation of and comparison to my own hamster "Rocky" (a name chosen by my second graders last year in spite of her being female).

Here are the reasons:

1. Rocky is brave. Hermey is a coward.
2. Rocky is a fighter. Hermey is a runner.
3. Rocky is the most belligerent, evil-tempered, quick-to-bite-the-hand-that-feeds-her rodent ever sold to a poor, unsuspecting teacher looking for a cute, small, easy-to-care-for classroom pet.
4. Rocky eats anything edible. Hermey eats anything edible.

As you can see, reason number 4 is proof positive of Hermey's "zoological classification," the clincher as it were. Indeed, based on #4 alone it is with great confidence that I state once again, that Hermey is a hamster!!

And thank you very much for having him and Nilson back in your comic and I hope you have them more often.

Sincerely,

CYNTHIA FLUHARTY  
San Diego, CA



ILLUSTRATION BY TOM YEO.

Dear Stan:

In response to your "Name that Critter" contest, I have written to tell you that Hermey is a **pocket gopher**. I used the Nilson and Hermey adventure in *Critters* #27 and an Audubon Society book to reach this conclusion.

After acting on a few initial hunches, I read some info on pocket gophers and found the following: "... (gophers) have thick-set bodies with short necks, short fur, small eyes and ears..." Gophers are also mainly underground dwellers, which would give them poor sight in daylight. Upon referring back to the Nilson story, I found that, on page five, Hermey had to lean forward and finally step right up to get a good look at the Mother Pearl.

One aspect of Hermey's gopher physiology that you have yet to show readers are the large cheek pouches in which gophers store food. Perhaps Hermey is very conscious of proper etiquette and never talks with his mouth full.

Also, unlike other gophers, Hermey's front teeth don't protrude in "buck-toothed" fashion. Since Nilson's chompers don't stick out either (a la Bugs Bunny) this anomaly is perhaps due to artistic license on your part. Or maybe they both wore braces as teenagers to straighten out a rather acute overbite.

Anyway, I just thought I would write in order to clear up your confusion (and perhaps win a prize!!) You can now get on with more *Usagi Yojimbo* and Nilson and Hermey stories and your various lettering chores (whew!) with the knowledge that poor Hermey's identity crisis is over.

Sincerely,

TOM YEO  
Ontario, Canada

Dear Stan:

Your question was a blast to answer. As I was flipping over my comic books I came upon my *Albedo* section by Thoughts & Images. It then hit me that Hermey has the same color skin tone as Erma Felna in issue 10 of *Albedo*. I thought and thought until this idea came to me what Hermey really is, so here it is.

Hermey is the son of Erma Felna and Usagi Yojimbo. It's so obvious with the facts about these two love birds. Hermey has the same color skin tone as Erma has. Also, Hermey's ears are a cross between Usagi's and Erma's. They're short like Erma's, but close together like Usagi's. Also, Hermey has a head round as a coconut, as does Usagi.

Then there is his name. Hermey was named after Erma. Say them together and they sound very close to each other. H-E-R-M-Y-E-R-M-A.

Usagi and Erma lost Hermey by having a divorce over the difference in their job fields. The judge awarded custody to Usagi because of Erma's long trips in space into combat areas. As Hermey traveled with Usagi throughout the land, they ran into a corrupt king who kidnapped Hermey to get Usagi to kill an opposing king. In prison, Hermey met Nilson Groundthumper, who was planning an escape. Hermey escaped with Nilson and is now traveling with him secretly looking for his father, Usagi.

In truth, Erma and Usagi are glad to get rid of him. It ruined their image as "innocent" critters who didn't fool around.

Also, it hurt their comic royalties by having crossed into each other's issues.

Sorry for getting carried away, but I had a rush of ideas. The bottom line is that Hermey is the son of Usagi Yojimbo and Erma Felna of *Albedo*. All your problems have been solved for you.

CHRIS STEVENSON  
El Paso, TX

Dear Stan:

I think Hermey could be any of the various critters of the animal kingdom. He couldn't be a platypus because it has a beak as well as webbed feet. I'd say the logical, such as a mole, rat, or some other sort of rodent, but the logical always makes an extremely base story. A bear might be acceptable, but judging Hermey's appearance to that of other bears drawn by the ever-talented Stan Sakai, I'd vote against it. Any animal resembling a horse, zebra, or deer has been axed before my brainstorming even began. (I hope you might have already expected that!) That leaves the insect kingdom and a small but reliable group of small and unusual, so-to-

TO FIND OUT WHAT HERMY IS,  
WE MUST FIRST SEE WHAT HE ISN'T:



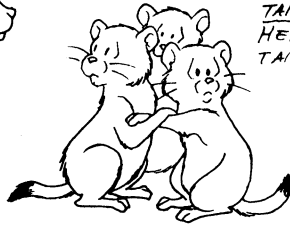
IF HERMY WAS  
EVER A MOLE,  
HE ISN'T ONE  
NOW...



HAMSTERS (AND  
GERBILS) ARE TOO  
SMALL IN PROPOR-  
TION TO RABBITS...



WHILE WOODCHUCKS  
(AKA GROUNDHOGS)  
ARE TOO LARGE.



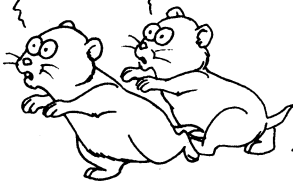
PRAIRIE DOGS ARE CLANNISH,  
NEVER LEAVING THE SECURITY  
OF THE FAMILY GROUP.

NOTE:  
ALL THESE  
CRITTERS HAVE  
TAILS, WHILE  
HERMY IS  
TAIL-LESS.



GOPHERS AND  
SHREWS ARE TOO  
AGGRESSIVE.

THE SEA... MUST GET TO  
THE SEA... THE SEA...



LEMMINGS HAVE ONLY  
ONE THING ON THEIR  
MINDS...



PIKAS ARE INDUSTRIOUS  
HAYMAKERS, WHILE HERMY  
IS ALLERGIC TO HAY!\*

FOR VARIOUS REASONS  
HERMY IS ALSO  
NOT A MUSKRAT  
OR A VOLE  
OR A HYRAX  
OR A CONEY  
OR A CHINCHILLA  
OR A NUTRIA  
OR A CAPYBARA  
OR A PHENACOMYS  
OR AN APLODONTIA  
(GASP!)

ALL ARE VERY REAL  
RODENTS, BUT NONE  
OF THEM SEEMS TO  
MATCH HERMY.

THEREFORE...

\*AS INDICATED IN CRITTERS 27

... THROUGH PROCESS OF ELIMINATION, I HAVE DETERMINED  
THAT HERMY CAN ONLY BE A GUINEA PIG!



SMALL,  
TWITCHY  
EARS → TINY EYES  
← ROUNDED  
FACE



LOOK!  
NO  
TAIL! →

GUINEA PIGS ARE PLUMP,  
TAILLESS, GOOD-NATURED  
RODENTS WITH HEARTY  
APPETITES.

BUT THE CLINCHER IS THAT  
THEY ARE OFTEN FOUND IN  
THE COMPANY OF RABBITS!



PET RABBITS HAVE BEEN  
KNOWN TO FIGHT OFF  
HOUSECATS TO PROTECT  
THEIR GUINEA PIG PALS...

MY  
HERO!

AND WHEN YOU CONSIDER  
THE FACT THAT YOUR  
AVERAGE GUINEA PIG  
HAS THE I.Q. OF A  
CUCUMBER, WHAT ELSE  
COULD HERMY BE?



HUH?

...AND TRACY HORTON OF LA HABRA,  
CALIFORNIA SUBMITTED THIS ELABO-  
RATE ENTRY. FOR A LIST OF THE WIN-  
NERS, JUST TURN THE PAGE: ►►►

... speak, animals. Meriting the insects right off, only three mammals resemble Hermý: the naked mole rat, the Proboscis monkey, and the sloth.

My first choice was the naked mole rat, but since two of the words in the animal's name were in my "what never to choose" paragraph (mole and rat), I'm afraid I can't. Even if I'd sold myself on "mole" in the beginning of my paper, the color of Hermý's hair implies that he does have some kind of hair while the naked mole rat is indeed naked.

My second choice was the Proboscis monkey because he resembles Hermý in color, size and shape of head (that is, if you could call that a reason). The biggest turn-off was this animal's nose, which is famous for being quite large and out of proportion. Hermý's nose is small and delicate, so I decided to lay the ax on the monkey bit as well. I went to my third, final, and entry into the contest.

After a long study of Hermý in a few comic books I have containing him, I came up with the only logical animal, the sloth. Not only does the sloth match Hermý in skin color, size, shape of head and nose, but also in the way Mr. Sakai positions him in his books. My final decision came when looking at the cover of *Critters* #27. He's clinging like a sloth to the tail of a dinosaur and thus came up with my contest entry. I hope my reasoning qualifies.

With the greatest admiration,  
**MATTHEW W. CRAIG**  
 Dayton, OH

Dear Stan:

I think that Hermý is an extremely rare species of dinosaur called a "Brontomina-saurus." They were basically the same as their larger cousins, only very aggressive. They acted as a sort of "watch lizard" by nipping at the heels of the large predators while their cousins ran away. The sad part of the story is how they became extinct. (With the exception of Hermý, of course, and we will come to that later.)

It was because of their aggressive nature that they became extinct. Because of their fearlessness in the face of danger, they tended to be stepped on and squashed. And with the large number of predators, the species didn't last very long. (They bred rarely.)

Now we get to Hermý and how he survived. Hermý was also one of those fearless "watch lizards." One day while he was nipping, he was stepped on. But fortunately, there was a hole in the ground that led to an underground snow cavern. Hermý fell into the hole and landed softly in the snow below. He quickly froze and laid there for eons in a state of suspended animation until the climate changed and he was released

from his snow coffin. Then one day, Usagi came along. . .

**ROBERT R. LaFLEUR**  
 Tampa, FL

Are you sure you're reading the same stories as everyone else? —KT

Dear "Name that Critter" contest:

Actually, I thought that Hermý was a hedgehog, but he couldn't be since hedgehogs have spiney hair like porcupines. I also thought that he was a mole, but he couldn't be since he doesn't resemble the "mogura" ninja in *Critters* #10 and 11. He might be a hamster, but I won't go for it. Hamsters are much smarter. I think Hermý is a **guinea pig**. Yes, a guinea pig. Why? Why not? He fits the basic character of a guinea pig. He's round and chubby like a guinea pig. He's as silly as a guinea pig, and he's as dumb as a guinea pig. I, an expert in zoology, have done research on trying to find out what Hermý is. And, I have done sketches of both a hamster face, a guinea pig face and Hermý's face. Hermý fits the guinea pig description more than the hamster description. I know not of any animal with the ears actually connected to each other, so this may be a difficult contest.

Hermý, although he was referred to as a "hamster pig" in *THE ADVENTURES OF NELSON GROUNDTHUMPER AND HERMÝ*, is neither;



He is, in fact, a form of plant. It is known as the "Upsie-Paisy", and is very rare.

How can he be a plant, you ask, he looks nothing like one. That's the point!

This clever ruse insures survival as shown:



When it first sprouts from its seed... it grows two small leaves above the ground... it then relies on a hungry predator to pull it up... the predator is shocked by its appearance... ...and flees! Leaving the plant to go its merry way.

Hermý's name comes from the fact that there are no real males or females of the species, they're **HERMÝAPHRODITES!**

Nilson should be happy to have such a rare example of flora as a friend, I wonder why he isn't?!



P.S. Notice how when you go into a pet store which sells rabbits, you may find guinea pigs sold in the same cage as rabbits!

**TODD BUSTILLO**  
 Cypress, CA

Dear Critters:

Concerning the animal identity of Stan Sakai's Hermý is a relatively simple task. All one must do is to look at the *Critters Special* #1: "Nilson Groundthumper and Hermý." If you will open this wonderful volume to page 2, panel 4, you will see that Nilson Groundthumper clearly calls Hermý a mole. . . or if you wish to hear the exact quote:

"Nay, mole, get up! The danger's gone!" And then Hermý says: "HA! Run beastie, run! Sweet Hermý safe again!"

Or something stupid like that as he hurls mushrooms (!?) at the fleeing wolf.

Now, if the statement which has been made by Nilson Groundthumper himself is not truthful, then I demand to know why Mr. Stan Sakai would make one of his his characters lie (perhaps at knife-point. . . or would that be penpoint?).

**SAM KOSKELA**  
 Granada Hills, CA

THE ILLUMINATED ENTRY FROM JON (BEAN) HASTINGS—ADDRESS, ALAS, UNKNOWN.

Dear Kim:

Hermly is so unusual that it is difficult to determine what kind of animal he is. Are you sure that he isn't his own species of animal which has, through the years, become extinct (for obvious reasons)? Well, anyway, I assumed that he isn't an extinct species. I believed at first that Hermly is a prairie dog. But then, I thought that "Hermly the Prairie Dog" doesn't sound right. So I've come to the conclusion that Hermly is in fact a **groundhog**. Besides, wouldn't you agree that *Hermly the Groundhog* has a certain ring to it? Well, my guess is that he is a *groundhog* (even though I've never seen him burrowing through the ground).

Somewhat of a Hermly fan,

**HAROLD CHOW**

Los Altos, CA

Gentlebeings:

It is so obvious that Hermly is a **hamster**

ANOTHER ILLUSTRATED SUBMISSION, FROM KJARTAN ARNORSSON, OF ALLSTON, MA.

## HERMY'S IDENTITY

HANDILY SOLVED BY  
MAX SOLOMON - ALL  
AROUND BOY GENIUS!



Sincerely,

**BARK FURIOUSLY**

Agent of H.O.U.N.D.

(Hunters Of Uniquely Nice Discrimination)

El Cerrito, CA

Dear Stan:

Prepare yourself for a shock, everybody, for it has just been determined—the *only* possibility as to what the mysterious Sakai creation by the name of Hermly actually is.

Drumroll please. . .

Hermly is unmistakably a walking, talking, perambulatory **turnip**!

No doubt about it, ladies and germs. Think back, way back to *Albedo #1*, or for those of us who aren't quite millionaires, back to *Critters Special #1*, "Adventures of Nilson Groundthumper and Hermly." Well, as you will remember, it was a bright spring day, when Nilson first stumbled upon his bosom buddy. Spring usually follows winter, and like all turnips, Hermly had sprouted during the cool season. For some odd reason, though, he had put all of his fellow turnips to shame that season, growing about 22 times their size. However, like all astral gifts, there is always a gray lining. Alas, while Hermly's body grew beyond all recorded turnip proportions, his mind got forgotten in the embryonic stage. Everyone knows your average turnip is much smarter than Hermly!

Ever notice how, at least once in each adventure, Nilson gives Hermly a bizarre, sidelong look? Rabbits are rabbits (what else can they be?) and Nilson will no doubt succumb to his stifled passion one day, transforming Hermly from best friend to midnight snack. Rabbits love turnips, and there's only so many times a rabbit like Nilson will stand for his turnip-slave screwing up before patience is lost.

Boy, I can't wait for that one.

Here's hoping I've muddled your mind, cracked your funny bone and made your day a little more surreal. Thanks for being a good sport, Stan, especially when it comes to kooks like me.

**SCOTT HORTON**

La Habra, CA

Dear Stan:

So what is Hermly? Well, I thought that is was a mole. What other animal look so homely? What other animal will walk up to say H1o? Only Hermly has a face only a mother could love. (A mother mole, that is!) What other animal has a I.Q. same as his shoe size: 8½? So I have to say that Hermly is a **mole**, pure and simple, not very pure and heavy on simple.

P.S. But I like the little guy anyway.

**ZACK MAYS**

Griffin, GA

## STAN SAKAI DECIDES:

*It was a difficult decision, but, Tracy Horton, you've convinced me. Hermy's a guinea pig.*

*I've had guinea pigs as pets and when you compare their intelligence to cucumbers, you're doing vegetables an injustice. I knew a particular guinea pig, Rosie, who lived with a rabbit, Thumper (yes, they do get along great), who thought she was a rabbit herself. She would jump down from the hutch to the ground (a good 12-inch drop) the way Thumper did instead of scampering down the ramp. She could never jump back up, though.*

*So it's official—"Hermy the Guinea Pig."*

—STAN SAKAI

## THE WINNER:

### TRACY HORTON (guinea pig)

*Tracy will receive the original pictured below, colored and signed by Stan Sakai.*

## THE RUNNERS-UP:

### (2) TOM YEO (gopher)

### (3) JON (BEAN) HASTINGS (plant)

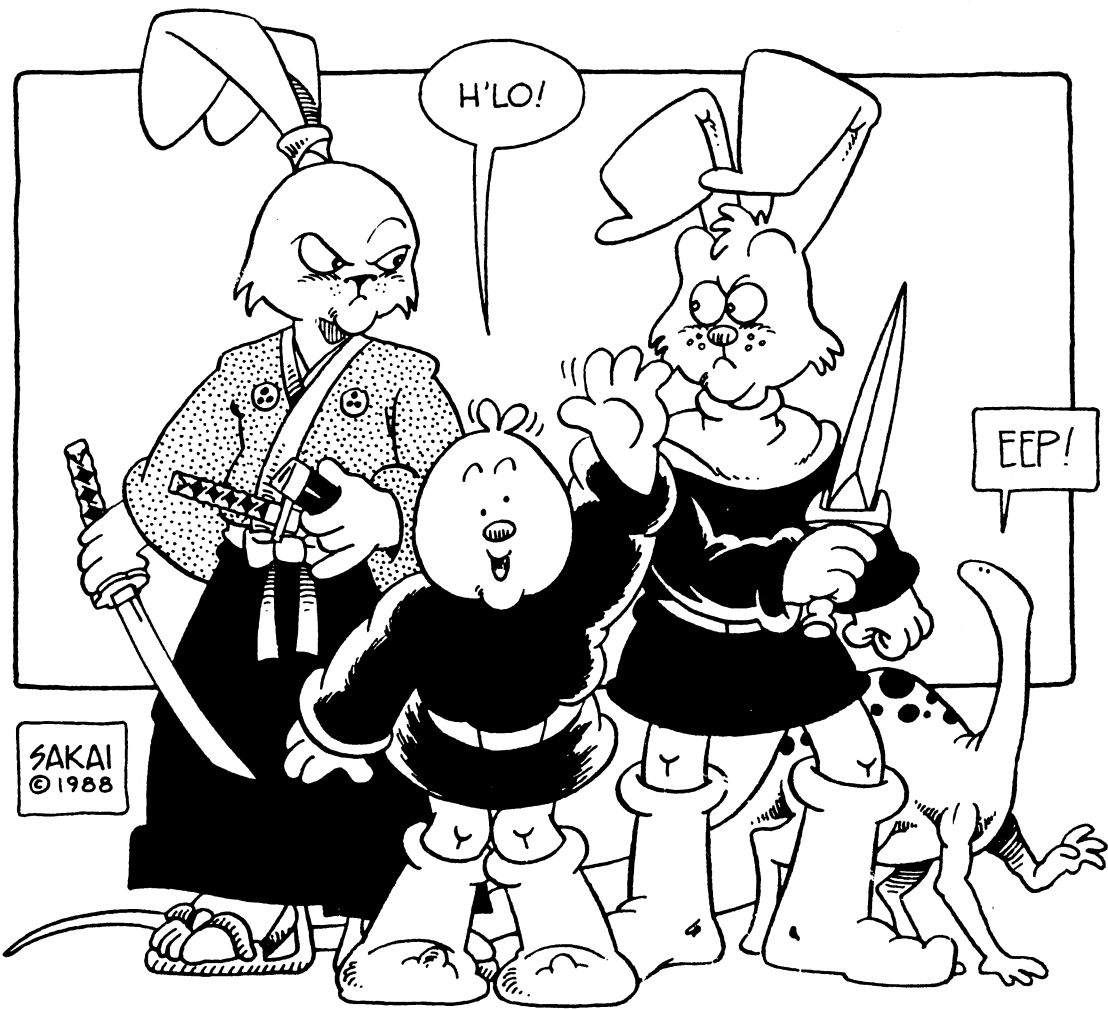
*Tom and Jon will receive a 12-issue subscription to Usagi Yojimbo or Critters, of which Stan will sign the first issue. However, Jon (Bean) Hastings needs to send us his address as it is nowhere to be found on his letter!*

## EVERYONE ELSE:

*Just about everyone else sent in entertaining, thoughtful, or amusing entries. As a result, we're sending them all a first-class copy of this issue as it goes to press, and Stan will be sending them a signed, limited-edition print of the winner's illustration.*

*There are no losers this time around, folks!*

—KIM THOMPSON





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