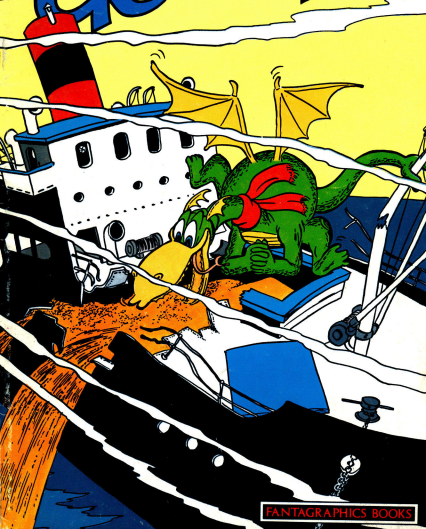


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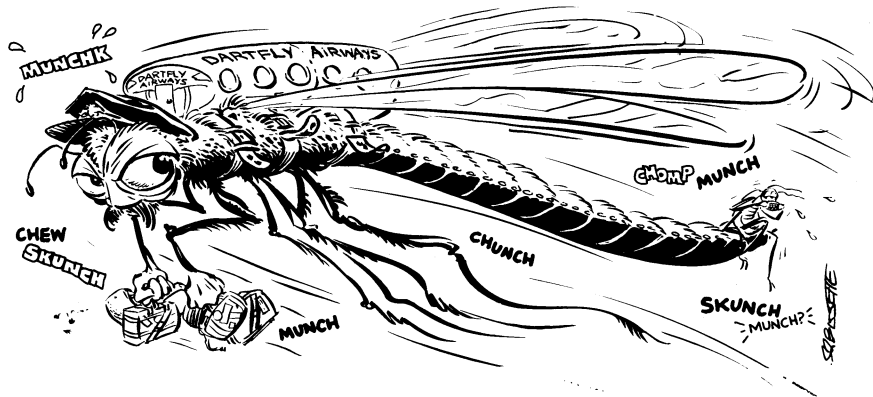
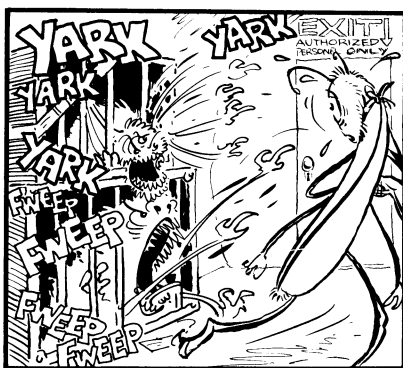
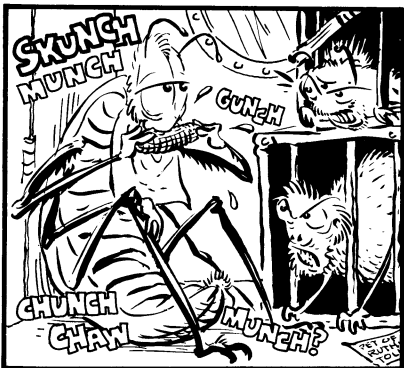
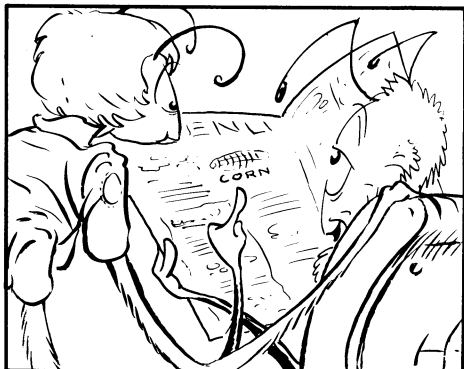
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Critters

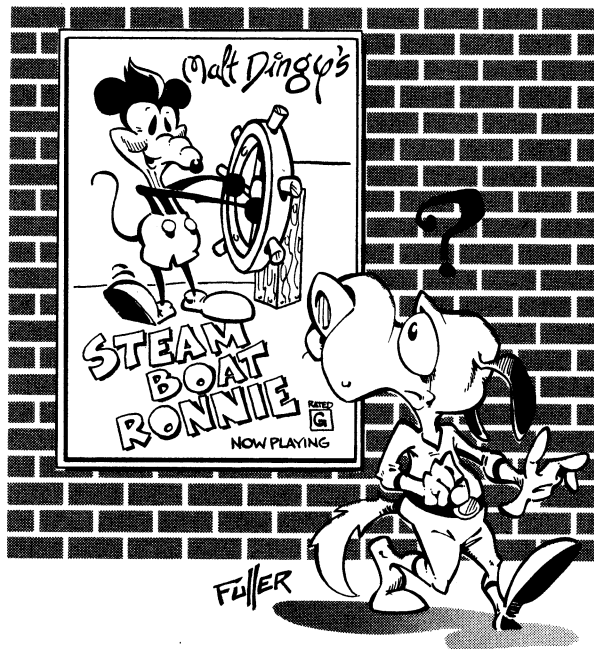


FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS

by **SR Bissette**



Critters



© 1988 Tim Fuller

EDITORIAL

A few personal notes. Thanks to the immensely talented Steve Bissette for his loan of his one-page "Corky" strip, printed on the facing page. A plug for Ty Templeton's excellent strip in the current issue of Wasteland, which contains no funny-animals but is an interesting change of pace for him. Congratulations to Freddy Milton and his wife Bodil, who are expecting twins, no less, by the end of the summer. And that's it. Read the issue!

—KIM THOMPSON

LETTERS

Zac Van Note
Albuquerque, NM

Dear Kim,

Last time you printed my letter, you introduced it saying I was long-winded; therefore I'll keep this note short (in hopes it too will be printed. Hope. Hope.) What's wrong with Fantagraphics' covers the past couple of months? The top center of each title I've seen looks like someone made hundreds of finger indentations on each one. Really turned me off. (I ended up with the city's best copies, which weren't too good, but I did get 'em.) Tell your printer to shape up.

Who's the cover colorist on the past 10 issues or so? Why don't you print acknowledgements in the back like you used to?

Number 23 was great! Flexidisc great! Templeton, incredibly good! William Van Horn: wonderful! Lionheart: funny. Mark Martin: want more. Birthright: when? Cover stock: blech!

● We've notified our printer of the problem. As for cover colorists, I've stopped listing them because the cover is almost invariably colored by the artist himself. The exception here is Stan Sakai, whose covers are colored by Tom Luth (credited in the indicia when I remember it)—oh, and Tom also colored the covers to #23 and this issue, from very precise guides by Templeton and Freddy Milton.

—KT

John Holland
Westwego, LA

Dear Kim,

I really should be doing one of many other things than writing this letter, but I just couldn't ignore it. What, you may be asking, am I talking about? The anti-Omaha letters in the letter section of Critters #25. Oh woe is me! How can someone be so blind to the beauty, the wit, the grace, the wisdom, the million-and-a-half other superlatives I could use to describe Omaha? This is one of my favorite books! And worse, one of the letter writers that cries foul over Omaha likes "Lizards." So I know this gentleman has good taste, excellent taste in fact. I guess I'll just have to concede him this one point, a

NUMBER 31 DECEMBER 1988

CONTENTS

Corky by Steve Bissette
Steve Bissette tells us he borrowed this gag from an old magazine cartoon—but the drawing is, unmistakably, all his.....0

Gnuff by Freddy Milton
"Dangerous Encounter"
Off on their first international expedition, Gnuff, Gnicky, and Albert run into an unexpected relative.....3

The Blue Beagle by Tim Fuller
"Star Wartz"
Blue Beagle ends up in outer space, battling the machinations of the evil Collie North—and what's Quax doing there?.....14

Lizards by J. Holland and Ron Wilber
"Fear of Flying, Part One"
Dweezil makes an enemy of someone with wings—not the wisest move in his world.....24

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blind spot when it comes to *Omaha*. I could never stoop to saying anything bad about someone who is a fan of my work. But on the other hand the first letter writer makes no mention of my work so he's fair game. Heh, heh...

● *Actually, the first letter writer was a woman, Andrea Feldman. She's a regular writer, so be good or she may snub "Lizards"!* —KT

Benjamin Urrutia
(no address handy)

Dear Kim,

Please keep publishing more and more "Fission Chicken"! Can't get enough of our favorite fowl. Not only the writing is good, so's the art. It only *seems* to be primitive; Morgan knows what he's doing. I confess that at first I was a bit turned off by FC's irascibility, but by now I've realized that under all his rage there's a heart of gold. Now I love him not just in spite of his anger, but *because* of it. The villains he fights, by the way, are the funniest bad-guys in Comic-dom.

Robert Crumb is reported to have said, "It's just lines on paper, folks!" To this somebody replied that saying such a thing is analogous to saying, "It's just detonators on dynamite, folks!"

● *"Fission Chicken" is one of those cases where I took a leap of faith in assessing the audience's tolerance for way-out stuff and have been amply rewarded. J.P. does indeed know what he's doing—I was talking to Tom Stazer a few days ago, and he commented that he'd been looking carefully at J.P.'s work and had noticed how skillful he is at delineating perfectly recognizable objects in just a few strokes. There's also a wonderful cluttered simplicity to his work, the closest analog of which I can think of is Sergio Aragones—and anyone who knows what I think of Sergio's work knows that is high praise indeed.*

Also, J.P. is probably the only Critters cartoonist I can take any kind of credit for "discovering," since Armstrong, Gallacci, Fuller, Kieth, Milton, Sakai, Stazer, Templeton, Van Horn, Waller/Worley, and Wilber were all more or less established before I got them to commit themselves to Critterdom. We editors like to pretend we've changed the course of human destiny, you know.

—KT

Philip M. Cohen
Boulder, CO

Dear Editor,

"Lionheart" started slowly in #25—maybe I'm accustomed to the exaggerated action of supercomics, but the chase scenes seemed static in places. But it really took off next month; funny, nasty humor from start to finish, absolutely top-notch. And their political heart's in the right place. Who is this

Anthony F. Smith? Issue #27 was even better; dream scenes are always an easy laugh, but pages 17-18, in Colonel Mustard's, are probably the richest two pages ever to appear in *Critters*; I was still seeing nice touches, like the grenade salt and pepper shakers, after several readings. Guadalcanal Diary shake, hoo!

Everything else pales by comparison, but other pieces I particularly liked were Mark Martin's "Everwonderland" poster and the last "Fission Chicken."

● *Anthony Smith is probably best known for co-writing Alien Fire; the 121st issue of Amazing Heroes (a.k.a. the source of all human knowledge as we know it) contains an excellent interview with him and co-writer/artist Eric Vincent. Look it up!*

—KT

Andrea Feldman
Boulder, CO

Dear Kim,

Finally got #25 in the mail. "Angst," which I usually don't like that much, was really good this time around. I love Van Horn's artwork, and the cover was especially good. Most of the time, I find his stories lack drive; they just sit there, staring up at me, as though they want me to read them, but they don't know what to say. This "Angst" episode was much better. Ratface and Louie are becoming more interesting with time. Certainly, they're more appealing, too. This "no script" story was better than any of Van Horn's other strips that had a script! Keep it up.

"Gnuff": ah, "Gnuff." Used to be one of my favorites, y'know. Now, I'm not so sure. One of my friends, who had never read *Critters* before, recently read #25. She loved it.



ANDREA FELDMAN

She thought "Gnuff" was "cute." It is cute, but after reading "Gnuff" almost every issue for 25 issues, cuteness alone stops sustaining the story, in fact, it becomes flat; no, make that downright bo-o-oring. I never thought I would enjoy "Gnuff" again. But *wait!* There's still hope! "The Price of Fame" was good, really good, just like the old "Gnuff" I used to know. It wasn't boring, contrived, or—well, it *was* cute, but I can overlook that for the time being. I'm actually looking forward to the next *Gnuff* serial.

"Lionheart," was, as you said, just as I ordered! One problem though: Stazer uses tons of Zip-A-Tone®! Even "Lionheart's" nose isn't spared! That's not so bad in itself, but I find Zip-A-Tone® detracts from Stazer's artwork, which is improving.

● *Hmm, let's see—"Gnuff" is too cute except for this episode which wasn't too cute, and Tom Stazer uses too much Zip-a-Tone on Lionheart's nose. We'll see what we can do about all this. Thanks for the art, though, which is reproduced on this page.*

—KT

Arthur Yee
San Francisco, CA

Dear Editor,

Thank you for replying to my letter in *Critters* #26. Sorry for the many questions I asked in that letter, but with postage rates the way they are, I wanted to get my money's worth and also to check on *Critters'* future directions and the direction of other "Fantagraphics Fauna" titles. I am not a constant writer of letters of comment but if a comic book really appeals to me deeply, I will write to let those responsible know how much I enjoy it. So, here I am again.

I have been a *Critters* (as well as *Captain Jack* and *Usagi Yojimbo*) reader since issue one and I have enjoyed every issue very much. I have seen consistently high quality in each issue of all three titles in terms of artwork and story; variety in terms of comedy, drama, satire, action, and social comment; and very intelligent fan comments that pull no punches—all of which for a genre that, I feel, doesn't get as much respect as it deserves from most comic book buyers and readers.

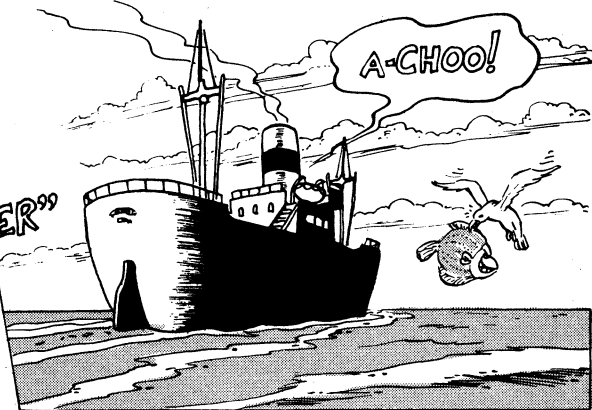
I find funny-animal/anthropomorphic comics a very refreshing change of pace. I believe "animalistic" comics require a special touch to render not usually found in most super-hero comics—be it a gentle sense of whimsy and imagination, a sense of the off-beat and unorthodox made acceptable and appealing to anybody, or a way to forcibly imprint the artist/writer's views into the reader's mind in the most visually appealing (or to put it bluntly, "cutest") and/or most memorable way possible. Anthropomorphics are versatile enough to be convincing in

Freddy Milton's Gnuff

PP DANGEROUS ENCOUNTER"

ART &
STORY:
FREDDY
MILTON

GNUFF IS TAKING AN OCEAN
VOYAGE FOR HIS HAY FEVER...AND
PERHAPS TO FIND ALBERT'S LOST
UNCLE, THE EXPLORER
DRYERHALL...



@Milton

I THOUGHT THIS SEA TRIP WAS SUPPOSED
TO HELP YOUR ALLERGIES, GNUFF...

...SO YOU WOULDN'T
HAVE TO TAKE PILLS!

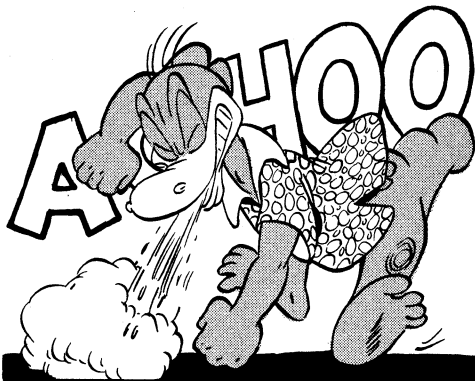
THAT'S WHAT THE DOCTOR SAID...

HE WOULD HAVE BEEN RIGHT IF WE'D
TAKEN A DIFFERENT SHIP!

WE COULDN'T AFFORD
A LUXURY CRUISE
SHIP!

I'M NOT COMPLAINING
ABOUT THE COMFORT...
IT'S THE CARGO!

THAT'S ALFALFA!

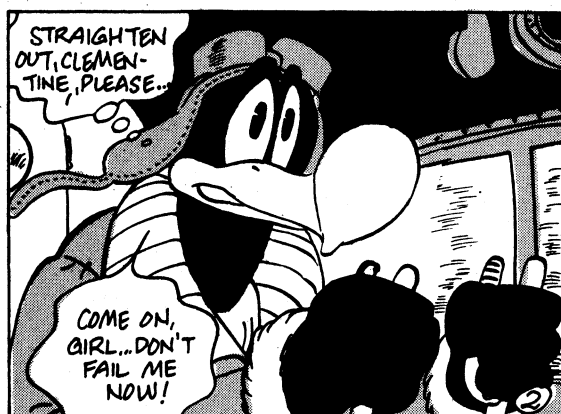
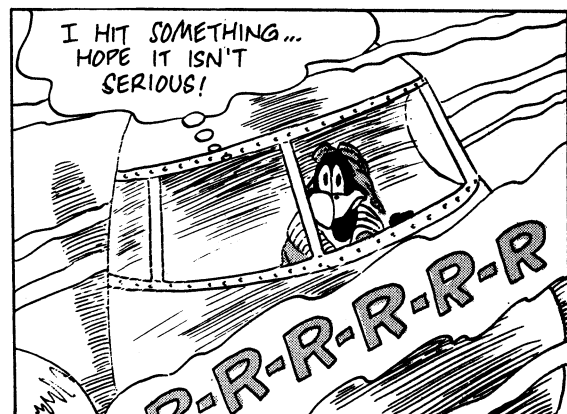
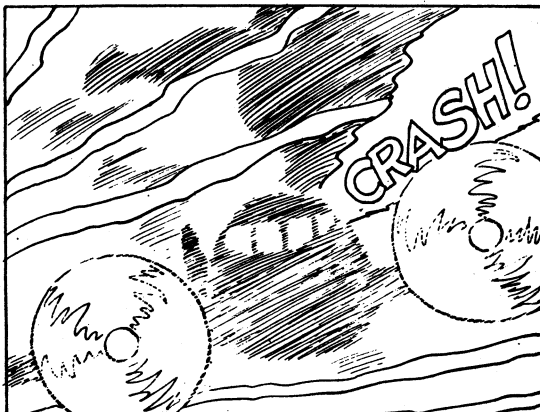
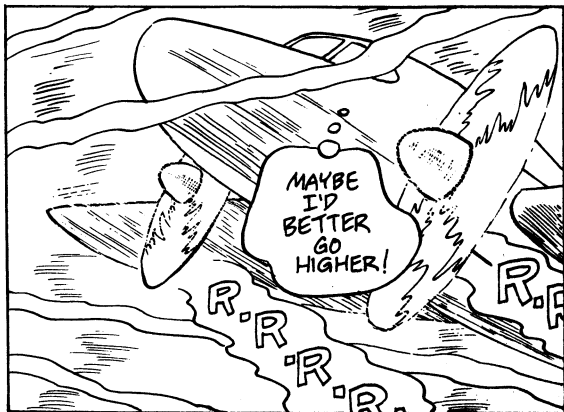
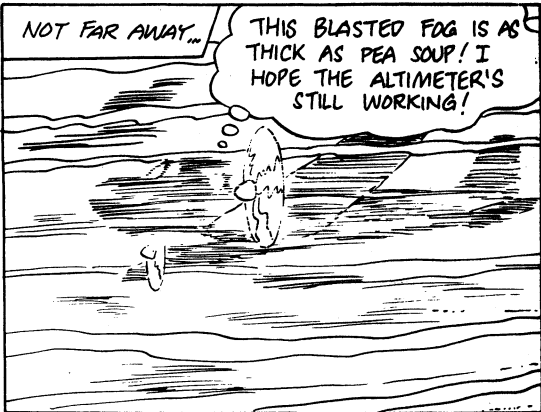


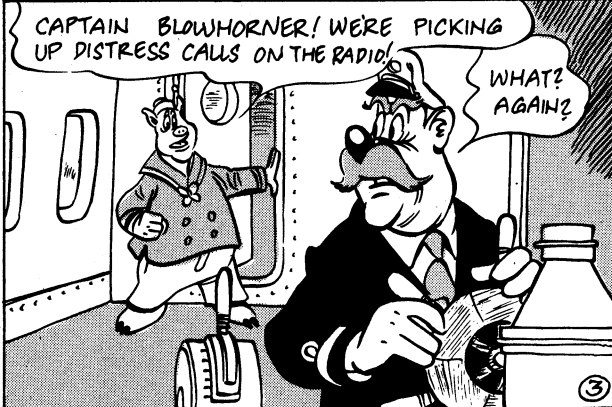
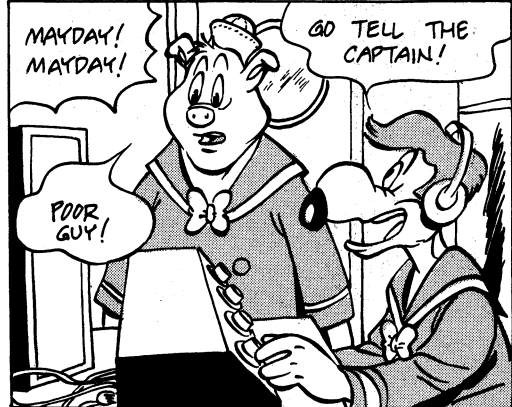
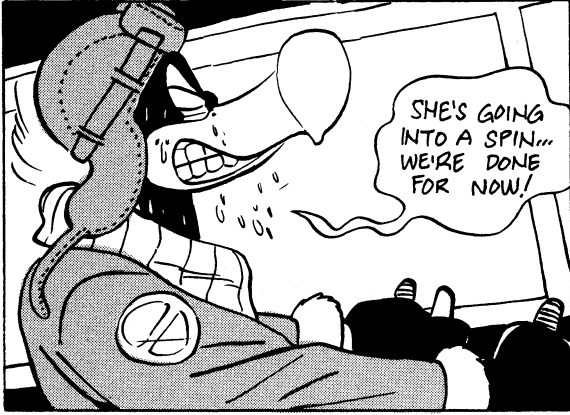
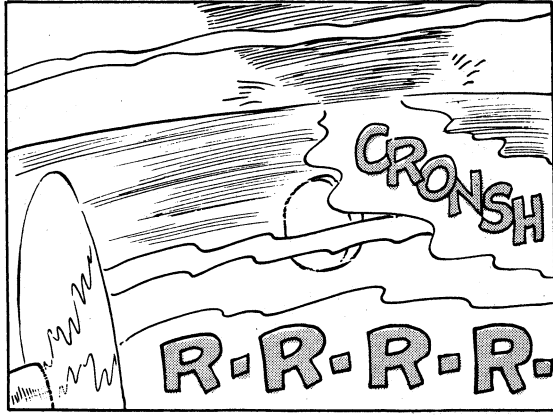
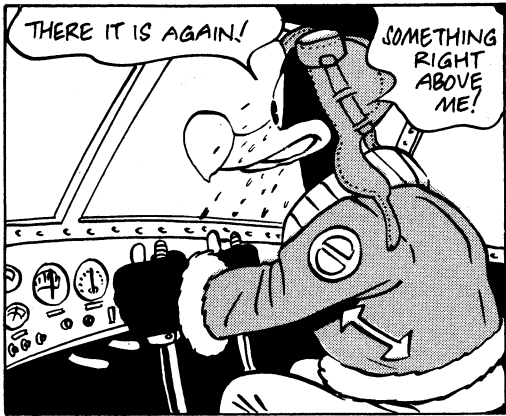
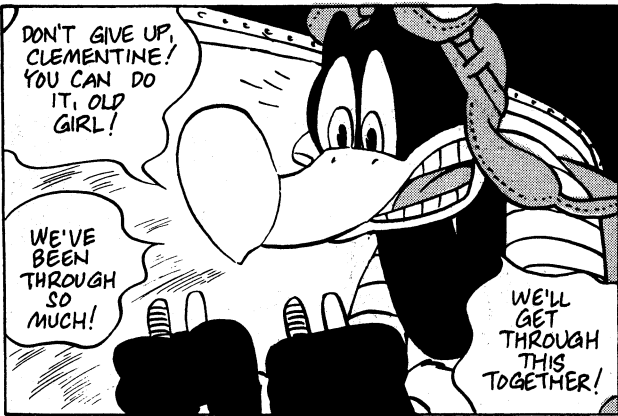
... AND I'VE FOUND OUT I'M ALLERGIC
TO ALFALFA!

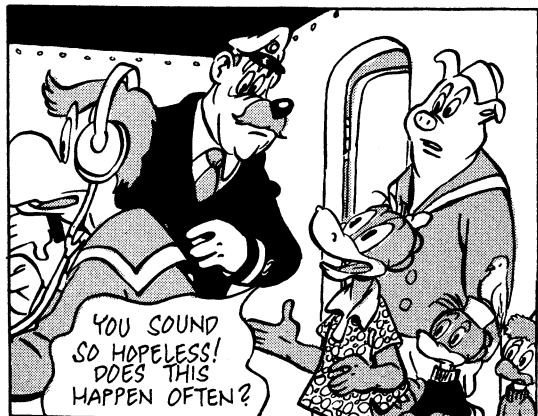
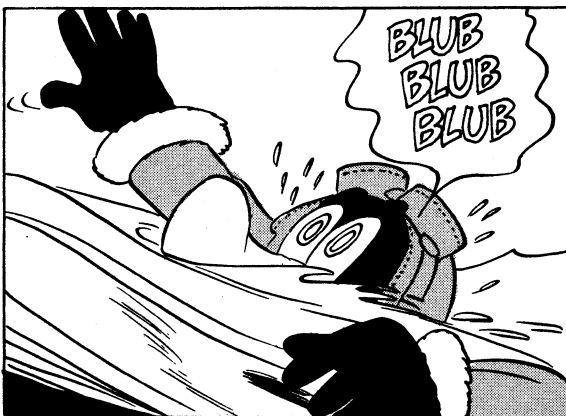
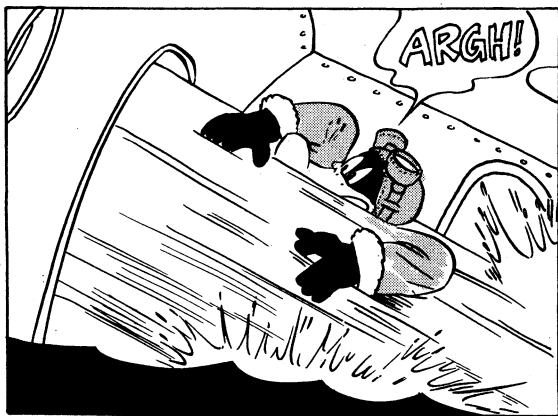
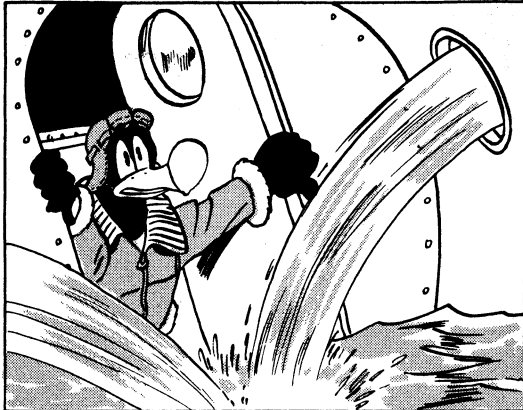
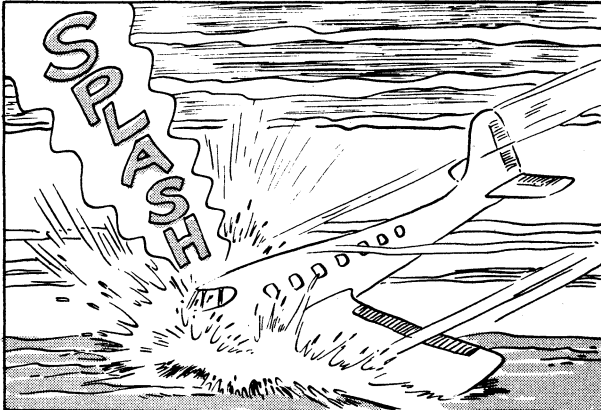
TAKE SOME MORE
PILLS, GNUFF!

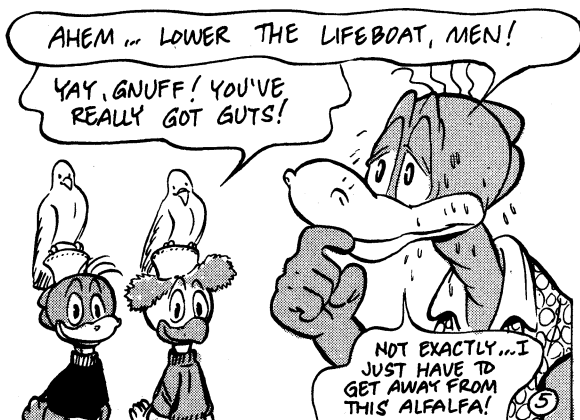
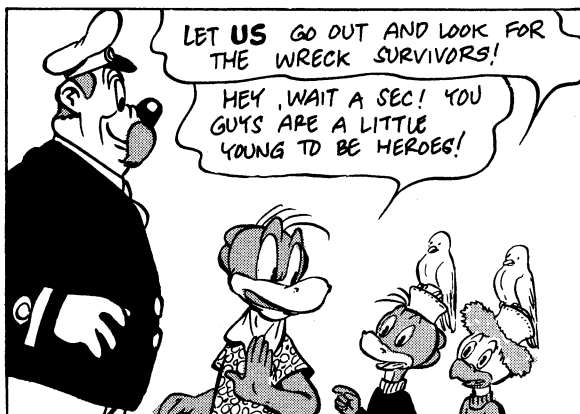
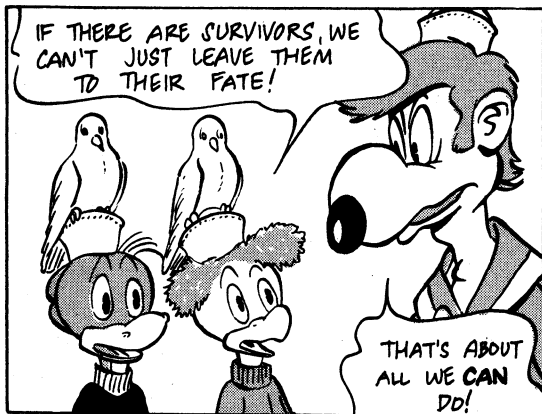
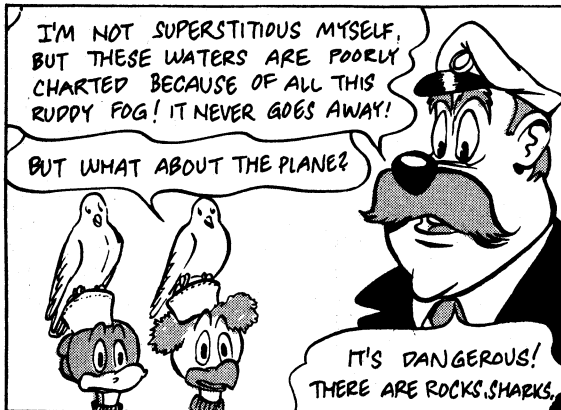
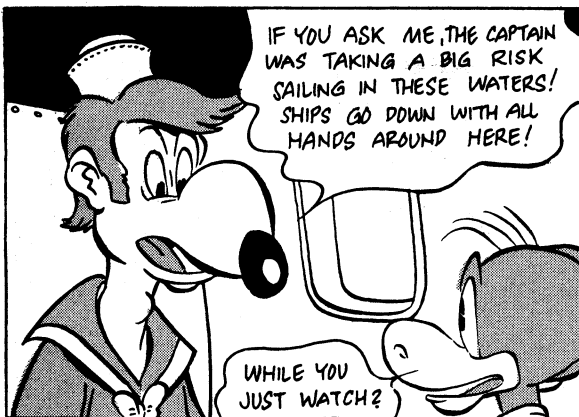
IT'S A GOOD THING
WE BROUGHT LOTS
OF PILLS
ALONG ON
THE TRIP!

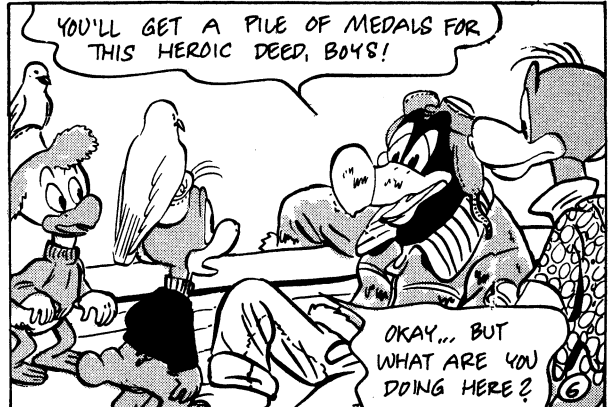
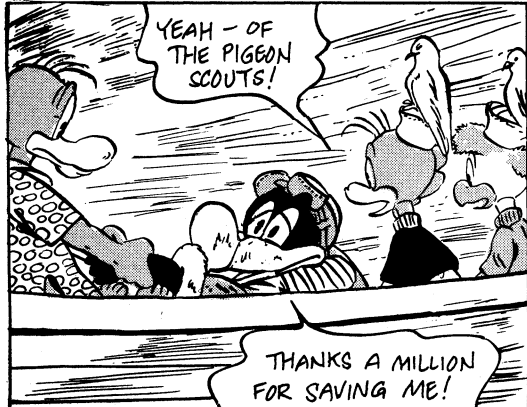
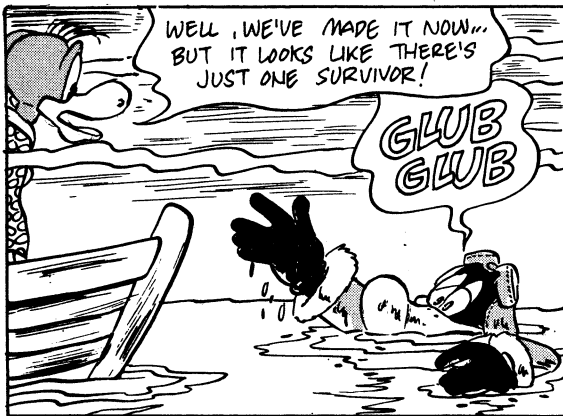
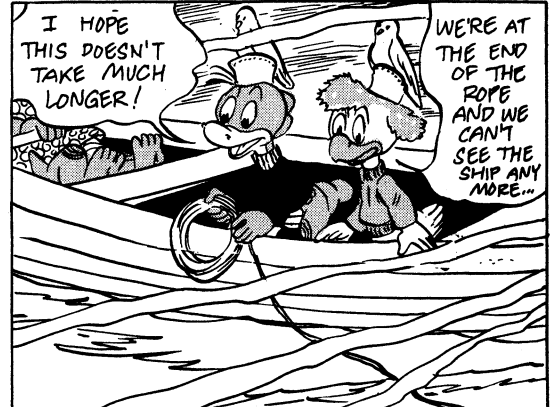
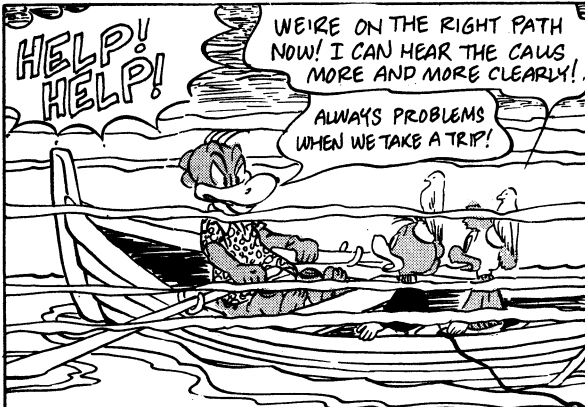
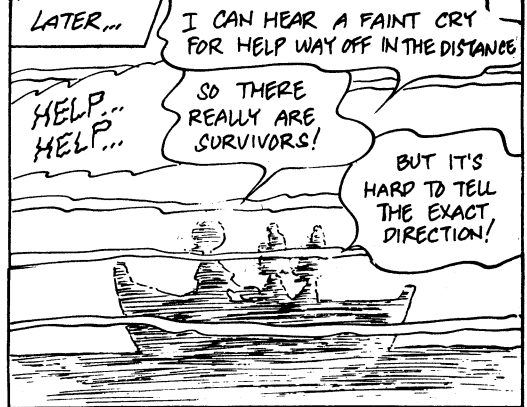
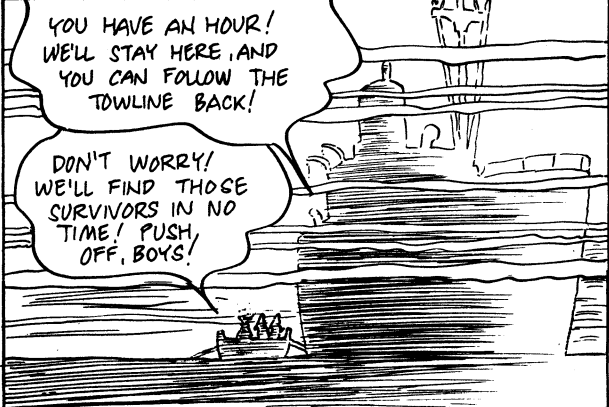
YES, AND IT LOOKS
LIKE WE'LL HAVE
TO USE EVERY ONE
OF THEM!

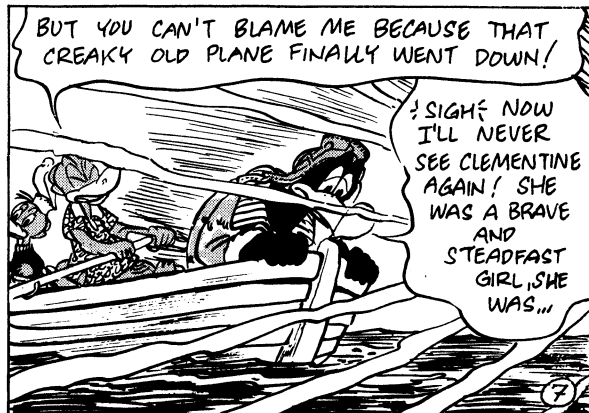
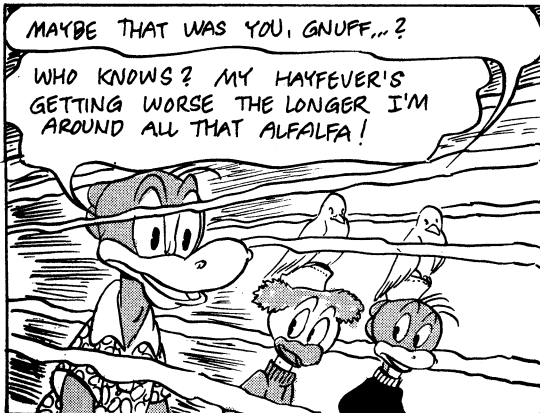
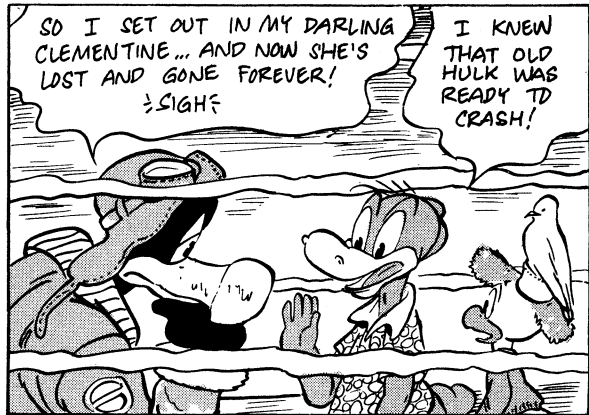
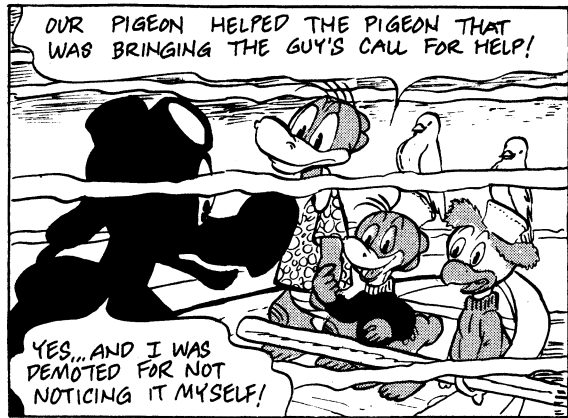


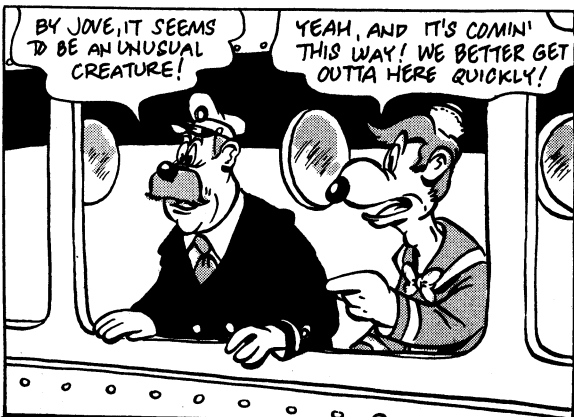
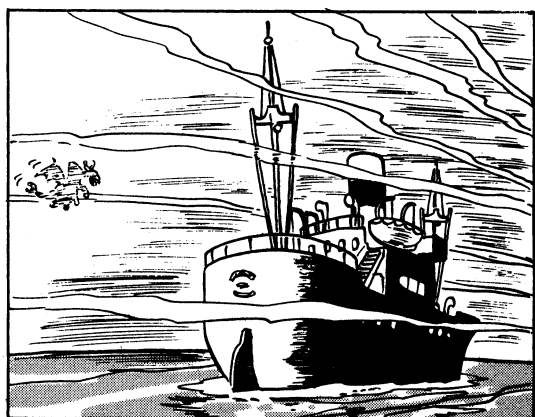
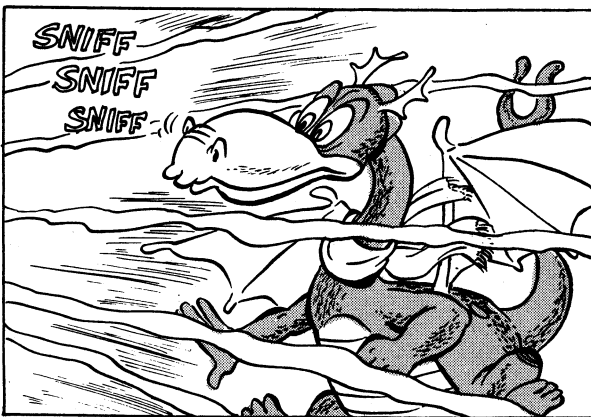
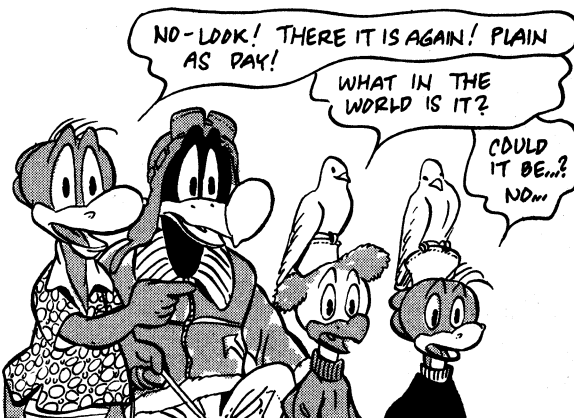
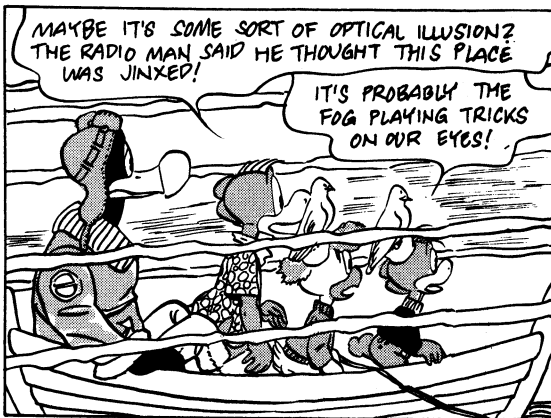
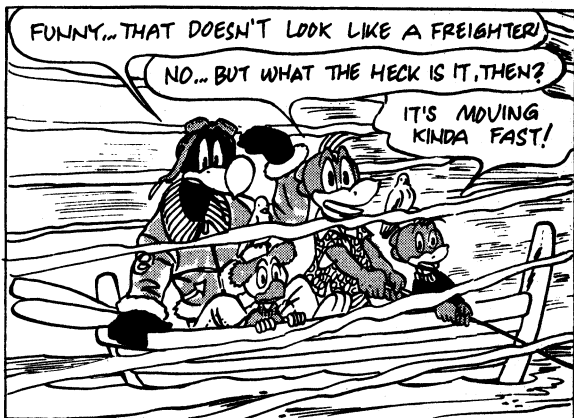


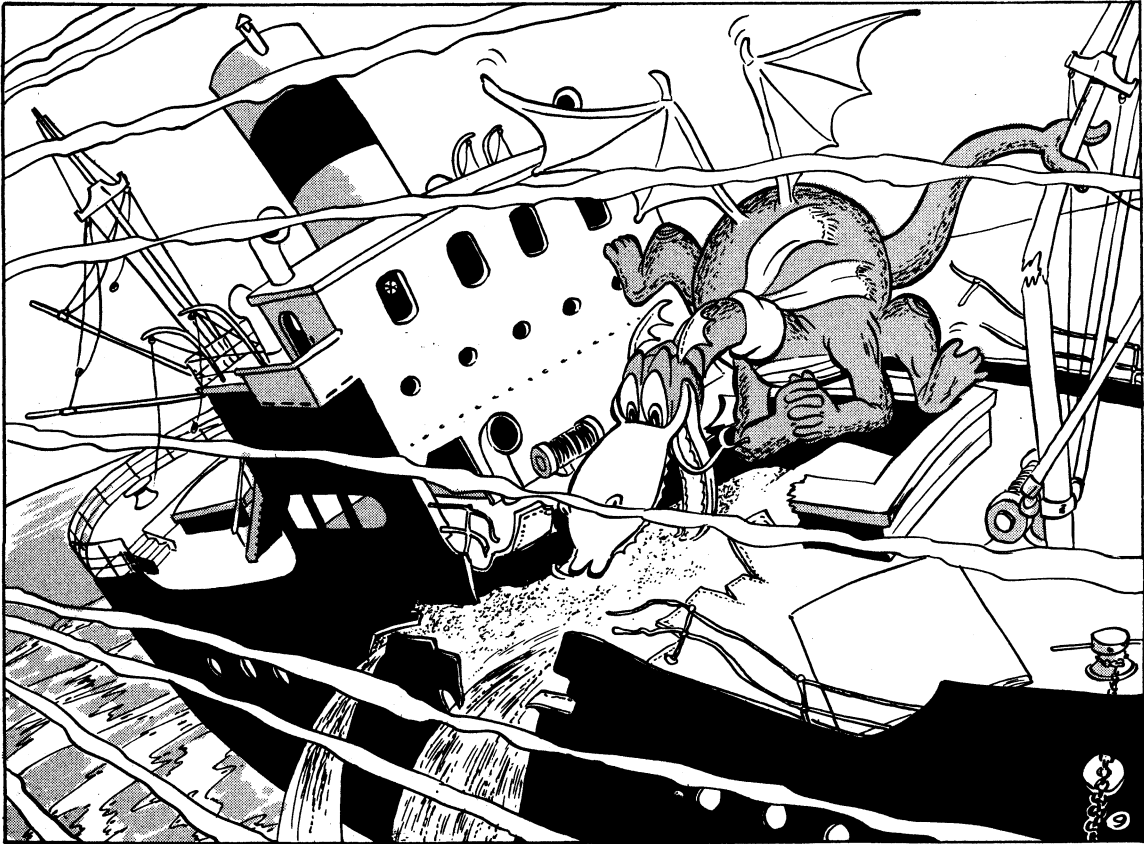
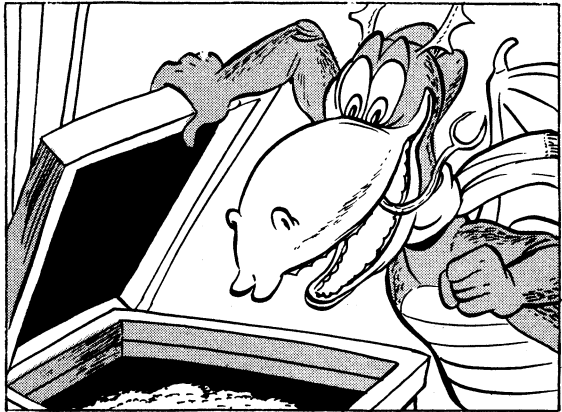
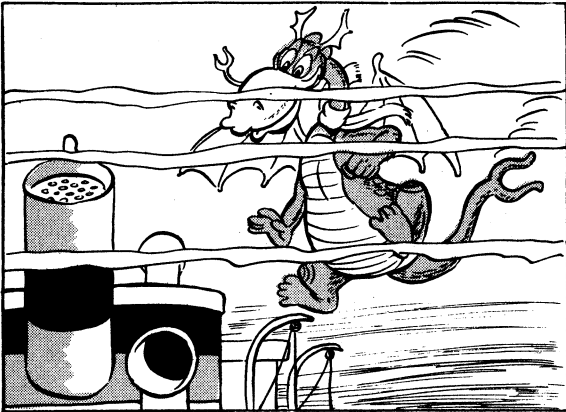
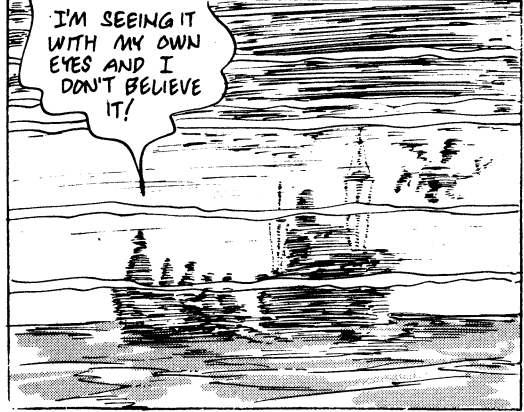
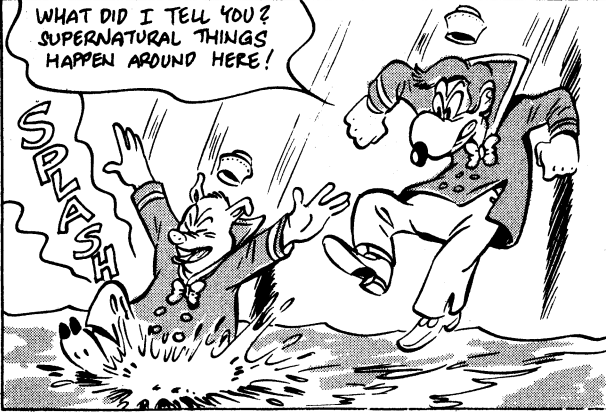


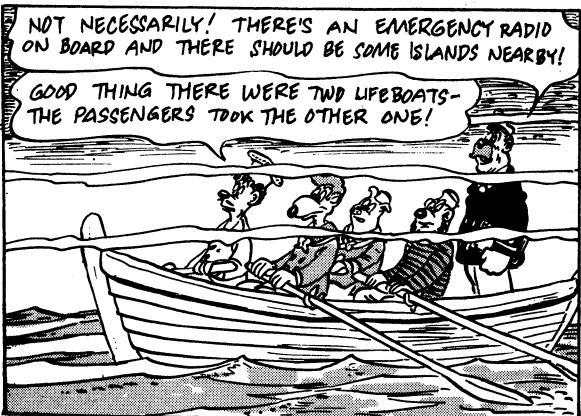
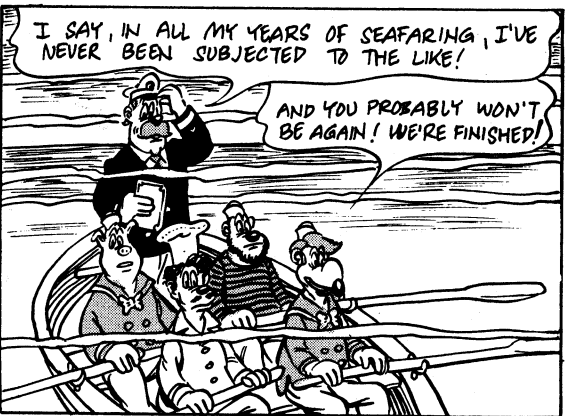
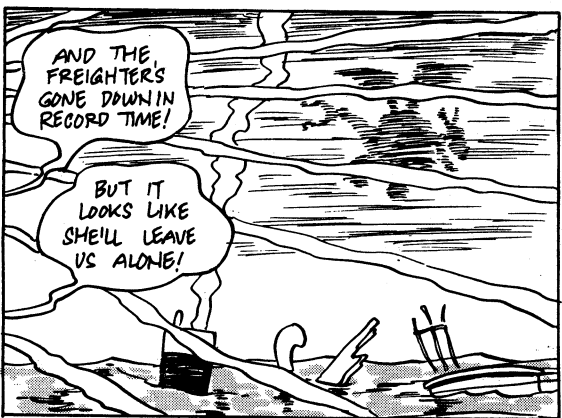
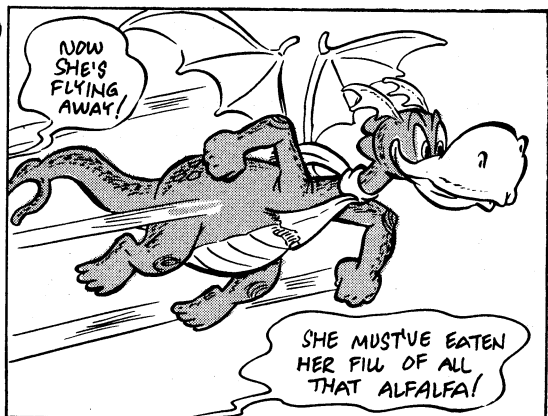
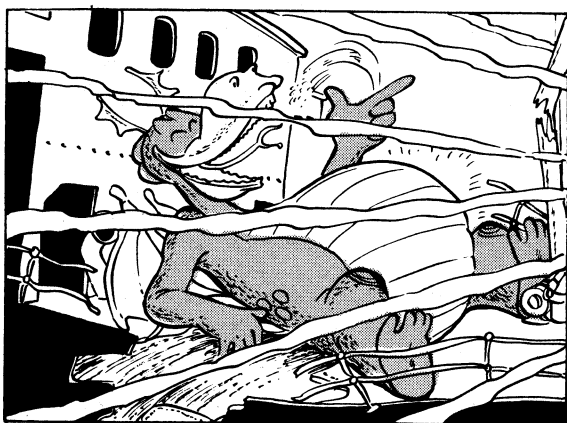
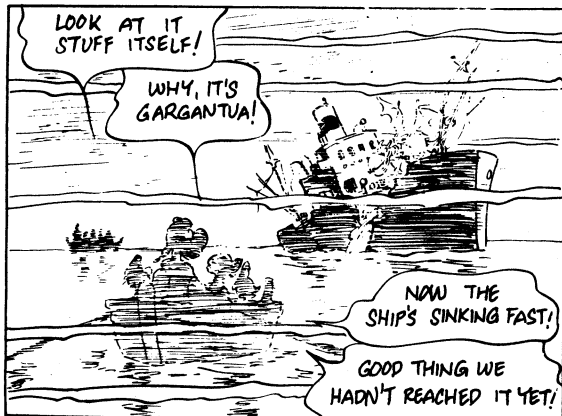












wild, wacky comedy ("Fission Chicken," *Space Ark*), grim serious drama ("Birthright," *Omaha*), high adventure (Barks's ducks, "Speakingstone"), or be adept at all three (*Usagi Yojimbo*, *Captain Jack*, "Gnuff"). Anthropomorphics can appeal to a wider audience (male/female, children/adults) from Gladstone's titles to *Critters* to *Omaha* than male-oriented heroes: anthropomorphics offer harsh satire and biting social commentary as a reflection on the real world (*Pogo*, "Birthright," Barks's work, *Omaha*) instead of offering mindless violence from super-heroes. Finally (my main point), anthropomorphics offer something different in style and content. They are drawn differently by individual artists and offer wide ranges of character designs and story content. Super-hero comics have different artists drawing basically the same characters, the same situations, the same muscle bulges, etc. over and over. Maybe, there are more super-hero titles because of the cookie-cutter art and plot repetition while "animalistic" titles are fewer because of the individuality and originality as well as the sense of care (and love?) that goes into its rendering. It's a shame many comics readers ignore funny animal/anthropomorphics titles and encourage a super-hero-dominated comics market instead of giving deserving, better quality "animalistic" titles a chance. They don't know what they are missing.

What prompted this letter of comment are the comments from Steve Gallacci in *Albedo* #12 that orders for *Albedo* #12 fell through because of distributor apathy, while Marvel and DC are introducing (yet!) more super-hero titles. I feel angry when a good "animalistic" title is cancelled or is suffering from mediocre or low sales. But when *Albedo*, the one that made anthropomorphics a national sensation (well, almost), is suffering from falling orders—that really hurts. I hope Fantagraphics' menagerie are safe now and remain safe for the future and the loyal followers of all three titles continue their loyal ties and encourage more readers to buy more animal titles (*Albedo*, too!). I know I will.

Questions:

- (1) Any appearance by "Gargantua" in future "Gnuff" stories? What's the deal about the dragons' wings? After issue #2, that subject hasn't been touched; any explanation soon in future installments?
- (2) Any chance of reprinting features from animal APAs *Rourbrazzle* and *Vootie* (co-founded by *Omaha*'s Reed Waller but now defunct) in *Critters* or as a *Critters* special? (You didn't answer last time.)
- (3) Future appearances by: Jerry Collins, Milton Knight, Scott Shaw! (what happened to "Digger Duckbill"?), Ken Mitchroney (*Space Ark* never comes out enough!), Steve

Leialoha's "Ranger Rabbit," Michael T. Gilbert's "The Wraith," Deal Whitley and Monika Livingston? (Perhaps continue "High Orbit" or "Rufus the Red" on a semi-regular basis since *Adventure Tails* fell through?

(4) I thought you were going to print a "funny-animal artist/character hall of fame" on a semi-regular basis in the first few issues of *Critters*; what happened to that? Any chance of it showing up in future *Critters* issues?

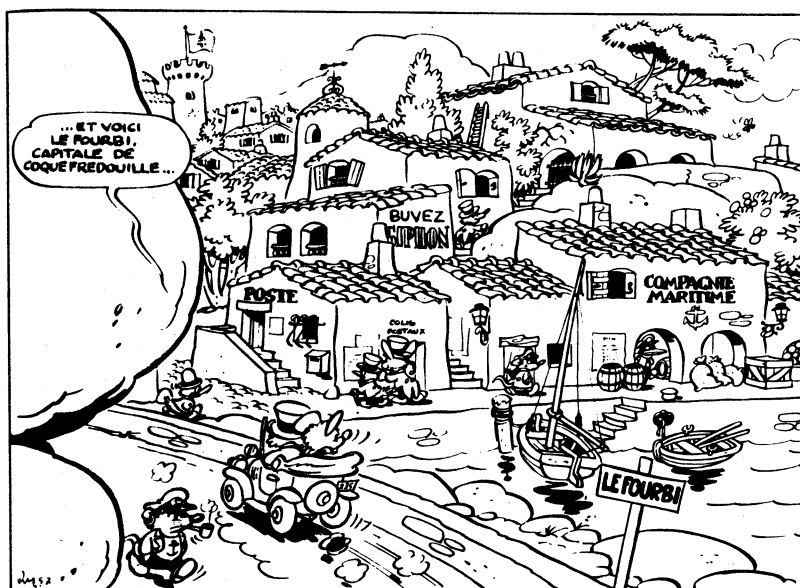
(5) Funny-animals from Great Britain, Japan (Kimba, Holmes-Famous Detective, The Amazing Three, for example), and Belgium (there was a strip called "Chlorophylle" about a mouse and his friends—any information on this strip?) Reprints or articles?

Thank you, again!

up in *Usagi Yojimbo* #13, and I hope to see another short *Shaw!* piece before the decade is over; the reason *Space Ark* is so infrequent is that Mythconceptions is taking up a lot of Ken Mitchroney's time, so it would be really counter-productive for us to make his workload even heavier, wouldn't it? As for Steve Leialoha and Michael T. Gilbert, I actually contacted them with the idea of reprinting that work about a year ago, but neither seemed especially interested either in that or in doing new stories. And I think Whitley and Livingston are both involved in a number of *Thoughts & Image* and/or *LX* projects.

(4) Laziness is a terrible disease, isn't it? Especially since I would have devoted one of my first "Hall of Fame" columns to:

(5) Raymond Macherot, the fellow behind *Chlorophylle* whose name you were groping for. Despite the obvious folk-tale traditions, cartoon funny-animals haven't found a particularly fer-



© 1988 Editions du Lombard

● You are most emphatically welcome, Arthur. If I ever decide I don't have the time to answer questions sent in by loyal *Critters* fans, I hope someone hits me in the head with a rubber chicken until I regain my senses. So, to answer your questions:

(1) *Gargantua*, as you may have noticed, shows up this issue... with a vengeance. I have not seen any further details about the dragons' wings in any of *Freddy*'s stories and am therefore as mystified as you.

(2) Well, maybe. We're pretty full up right now as far as *Critters* contents go, although I've been talking to one or two of the *Rourbrazzles*.

(3) I don't know who Jerry Collins is; I'd love to print some Milton Knight work, but I think he's been a little demoralized by the successive failures of *Hugo* and *Midnite*; "Digger Duckbill" has actually been completed and will show

tile ground in Europe. The Belgian Macherot is one of the major exceptions. First published in 1953 in the weekly *Tintin*, he created the funny-animal world of *Chlorophylle*. During the '60s, he also wrote and drew a one-off album that remains something of a classic in the field, *Chaminou et le Khrompire*, and went over to *Spirou* to create his second major series, *Sibylline*. The illustration on this page, right above—a late '50s splash from *Chlorophylle*—is a good indication of his charming style. It would be nice to publish his work some day, but for now it seems more important to give space to current artists. (And there are still lots of European cartoonists really crying out to be reprinted before we get around to Macherot.)

Thanks for writing, and I'll see you all next time, when the *Lizards* finally get their own cover!

—KT

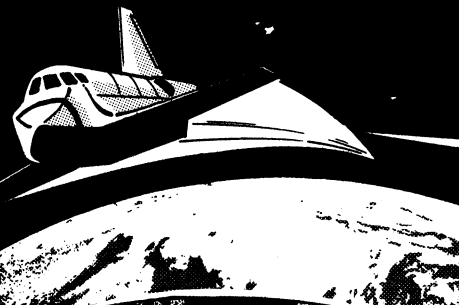
SPACE.

IT'S JUST TOO DAMN BIG!

BUT THAT HASN'T STOPPED THE PEA-BRAINED POLITICIANS FROM FENCING OFF CHUNKS OF IT AND GLARING AT THEIR NEIGHBORS ACROSS THE INVISIBLE BOUNDARIES...

ONCE THE BOUNDARIES ARE DRAWN, TEMPER FLARE. SPACE IS GREENER ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE NEUTRAL ZONE.

THE BALANCE IS SO DELICATE THAT ALL IT TAKES IS ONE WRONG MOVE TO TIP THE SCALES AND PLUNGE US INTO A WAR IN SPACE; THE SCALES ARE ABOUT TO BE TIPPED!



... WHILE BACK ON EARTH, THOSE LEFT BEHIND CAN ONLY SIT AND LISTEN.

MISSION CONTROL?! THIS IS CAPTAIN LILLYPAD. I'M GETTING SOME STRANGE READOUTS ON THE ON-BOARD SYSTEMS...



...IT'S LIKE SOMEONE-ELSE IS IN THE SYSTEM!

CAPTAIN, YOUR SHIP IS MALFUNCTIONING. THE COMPUTER HAS LOCKED ME OUT! WHAT'S GOING ON?

CAPTAIN LILLYPAD HAS BEEN PLUT OFF THE SHIP! FROM NOW ON YOU'LL HAVE TO D-D-DEAL WITH ME-- QUAX BEDROOM!!

WE'VE GOT A BLOCK UP IN THE NUMBER TWO JOHN! I'M SWITCHING TO POO-POO OVERRIDE, BUT THE COMPUTER ISN'T RESPONDING...

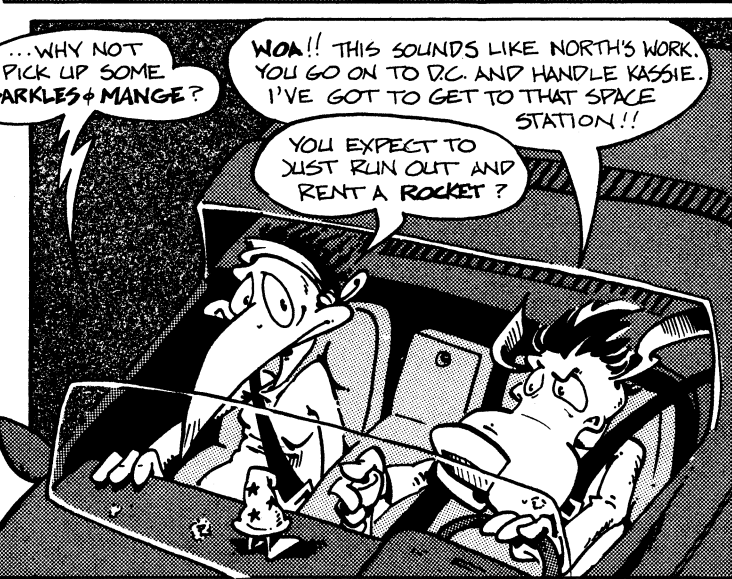
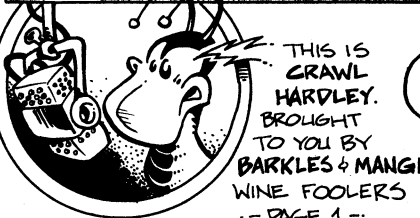
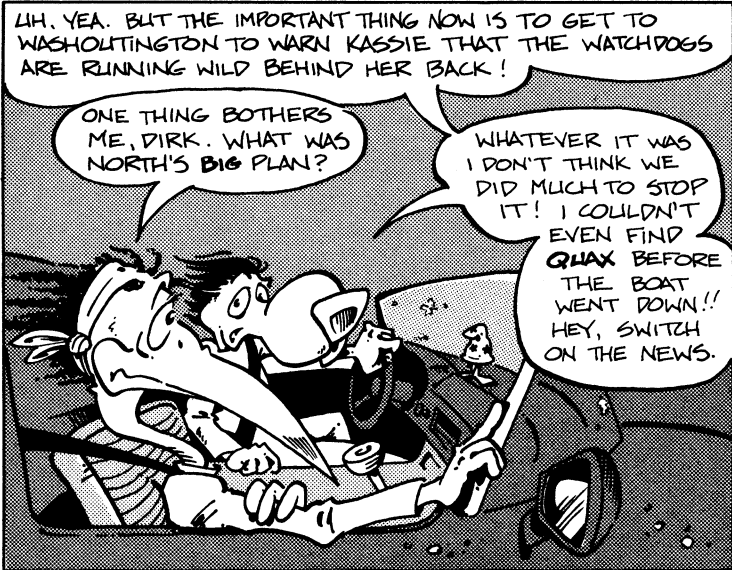
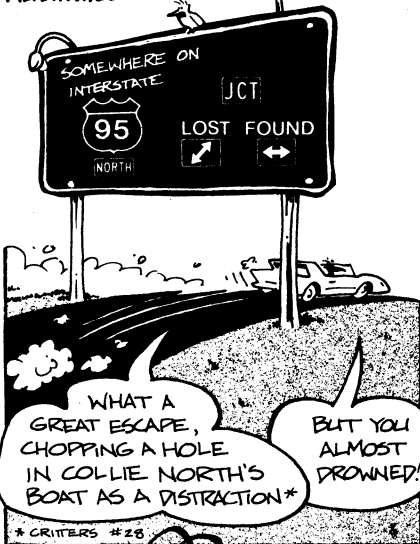
THIS IS OUT OF YOUR HANDS. MY FROGS AND I INTEND TO DOCK THIS SHUTTLE WITH THE ORBITING DEFENSE PLATFORM AN' COMMANDEER IT.

IT WOULD BE FUTILE TO ATTACK US FROM THE GROUND. MY FROGS AND I ARE NOT AFRAID TO USE WEAPONS! THAT SHOULD GIVE YOU A TASTE OF...

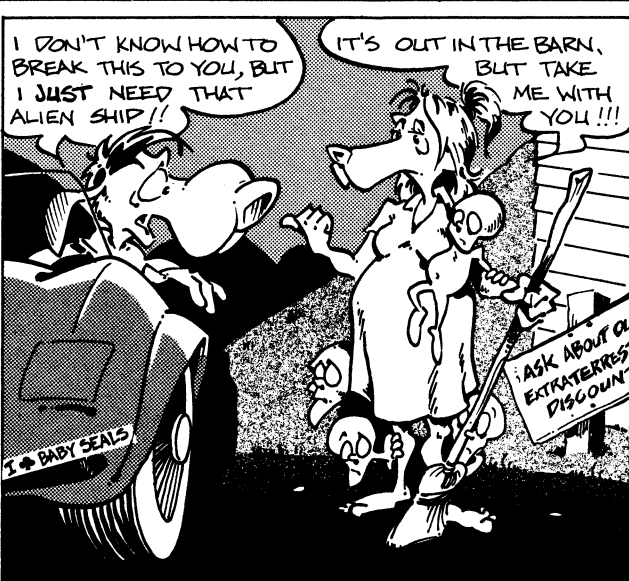
STAR WARTZ

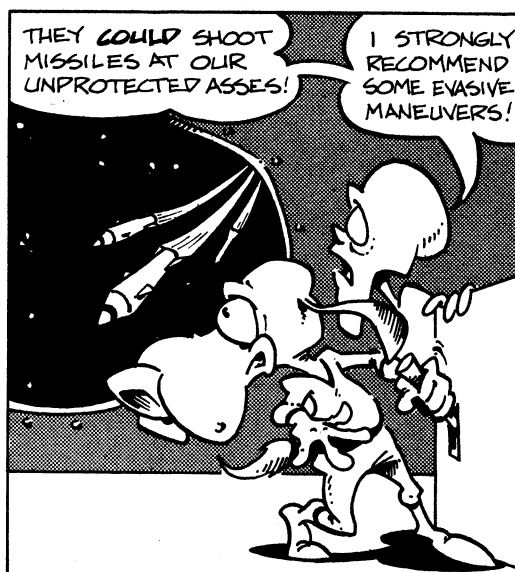
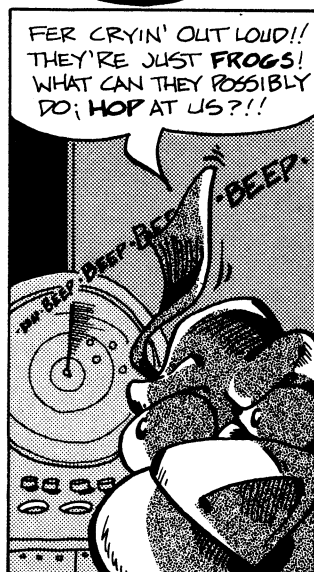
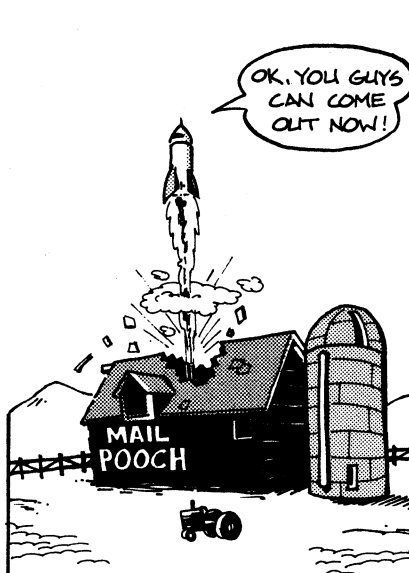
The further adventures of
THE BLUE BEAGLE by TIM FULLER

MEANWHILE:

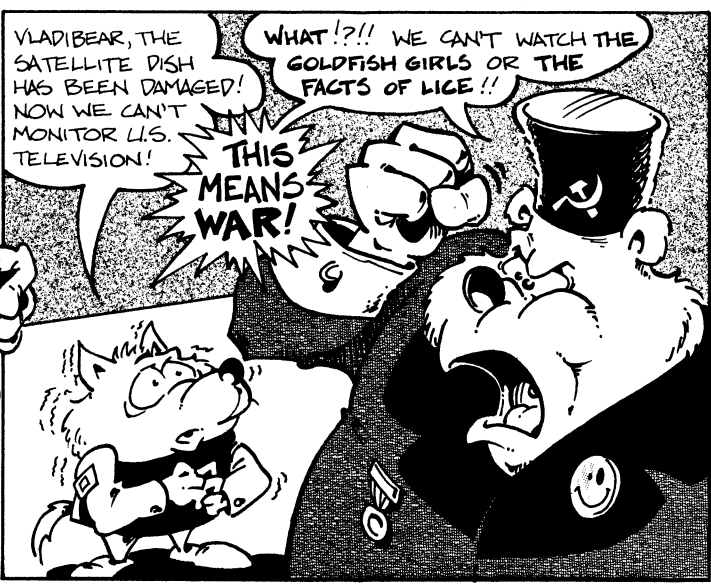
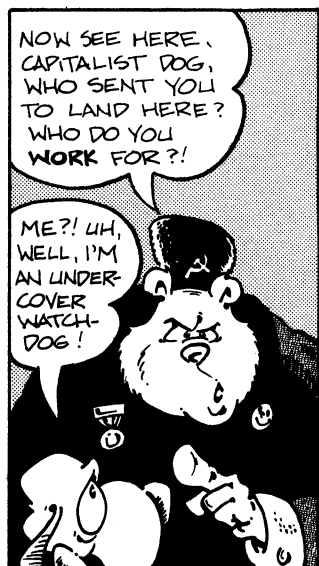
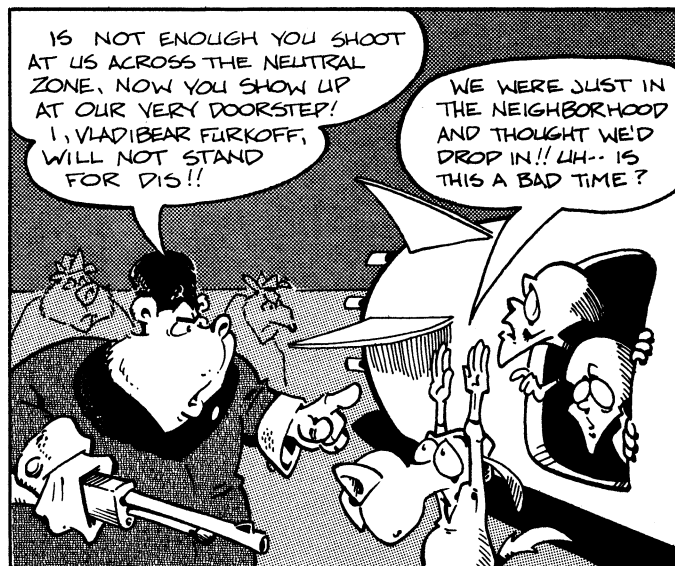
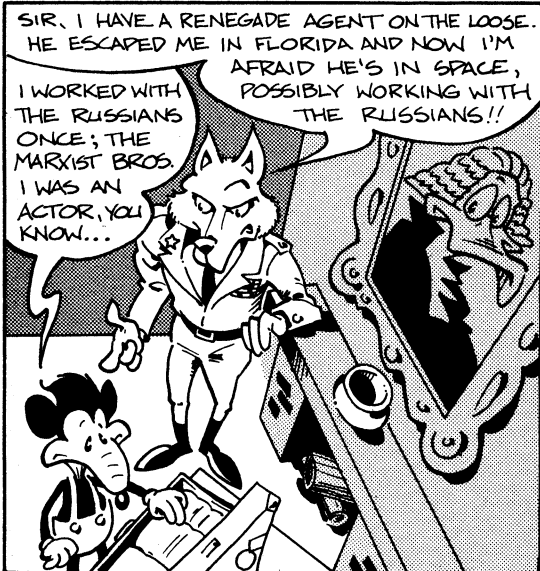


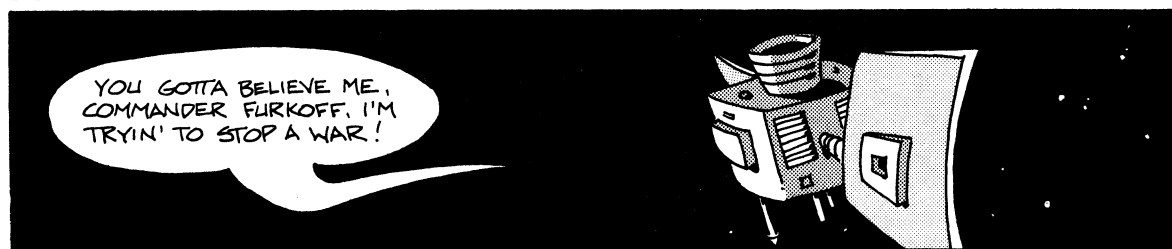
WELL, THIS MORNING'S SPACE SHUTTLE LAUNCH HAS MET WITH A SLIGHT PROBLEM. IT WAS HIJACKED IN MID-FLIGHT BY A GANG OF TERRORIST INFILTRATORS LED BY A COMPUTER-GENERATED 'DUCK'! THEY ARE NOW IN CONTROL OF THE PRESIDENT'S SPACE DEFENSE STATION. AND WITH THE ADVANCED WEAPONS AT THEIR COMMAND, THE TIME TO PANIC IS NOW! BUT WHILE YOU WAIT FOR THE END OF THE WORLD...

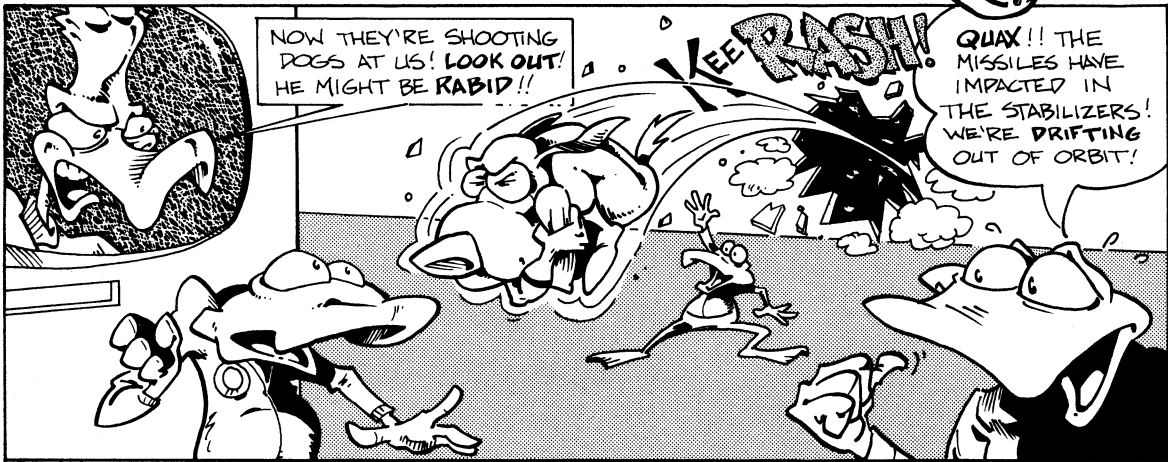












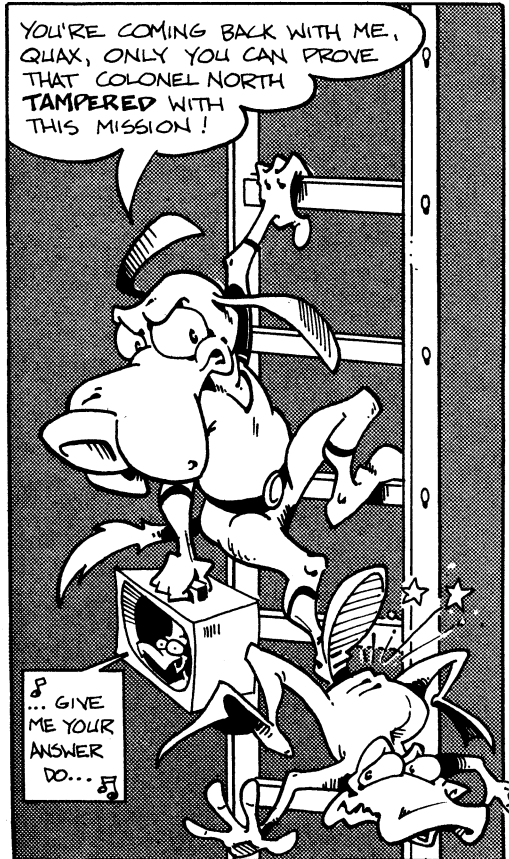


HE'S GOING TO STOP A WAR!! THIS IS ALL JUST A **SHOW**, HE'LL STEP IN AT THE LAST MINUTE AND SAVE THE DAY! HE'LL BE A NATIONAL HERO...

I KNOW I'VE MADE SOME POOR DECISIONS LATELY. I FEEL MUCH BETTER NOW. I CAN SEE YOU'RE REALLY UPSET ABOUT THIS--
-- STOP, DIRK-- MY MIND IS GOING-- I CAN FEEL IT-- STOP-- I'M AFRAID, DIRK--
♪ DAISY, DAISY... ♪

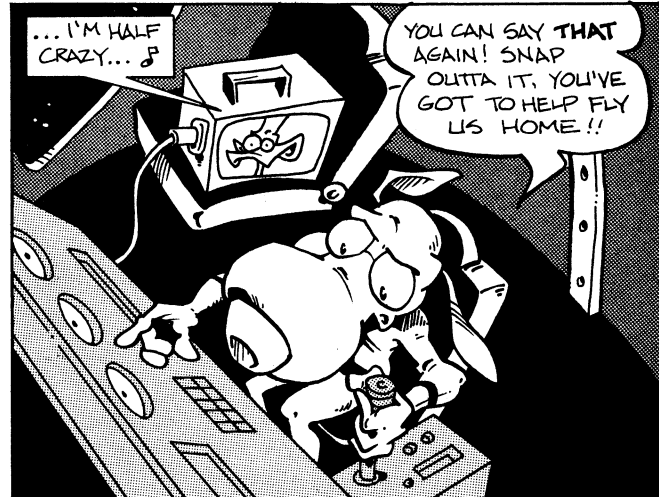
...AND THEN, WHO KNOWS?! AFTER ALL, IT IS AN ELECTION YEAR!

HE'S **BRAINWASHED** YOU! I'M GOING TO TAKE YOU BACK WITH ME AND WASH YOUR MIND OUT WITH SOAP!!



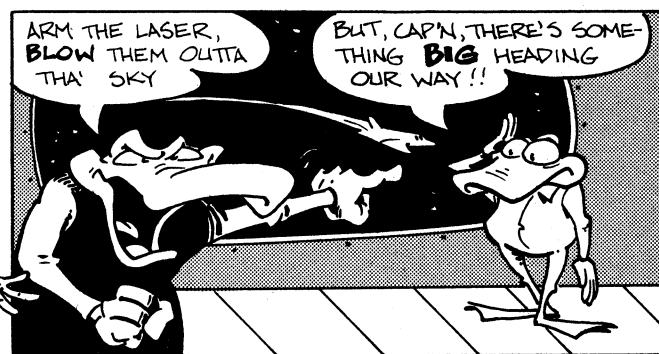
YOU'RE COMING BACK WITH ME, QUAX, ONLY YOU CAN PROVE THAT COLONEL NORTH **TAMPERED** WITH THIS MISSION!

♪ ... GIVE ME YOUR ANSWER DO... ♪



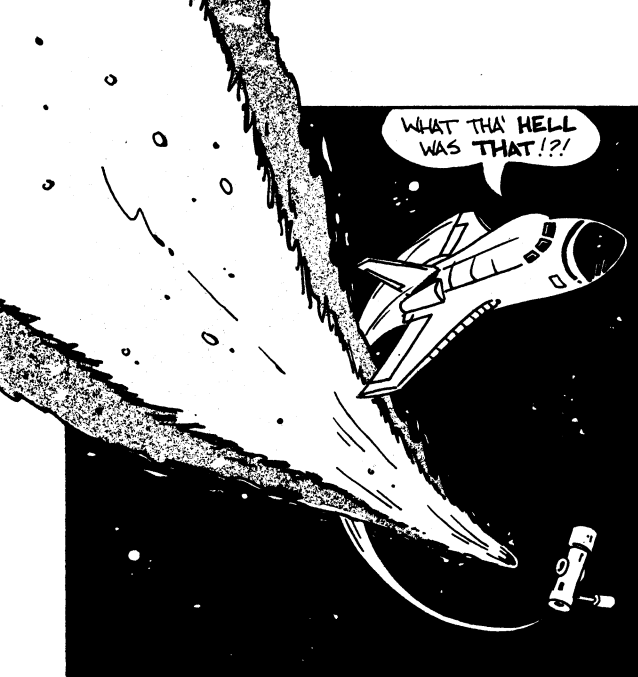
... I'M HALF CRAZY... ♪

YOU CAN SAY **THAT** AGAIN! SNAP OUTTA IT, YOU'VE GOT TO HELP FLY US HOME!!



ARM THE LASER, **BLOW** THEM OUTTA THA' SKY

BUT, CAP'N, THERE'S SOMETHING **BIG** HEADING OUR WAY!!



WHAT THA' HELL
WAS THAT!?!



OH, MY COW!!
IT'S WHALIE'S
COMET, THE
GREAT WHITE
NOVA! IT ONLY
COMES 'ROUND
EVERY 75 YEARS!

BET I'LL
GET BLAMED
FOR THIS!



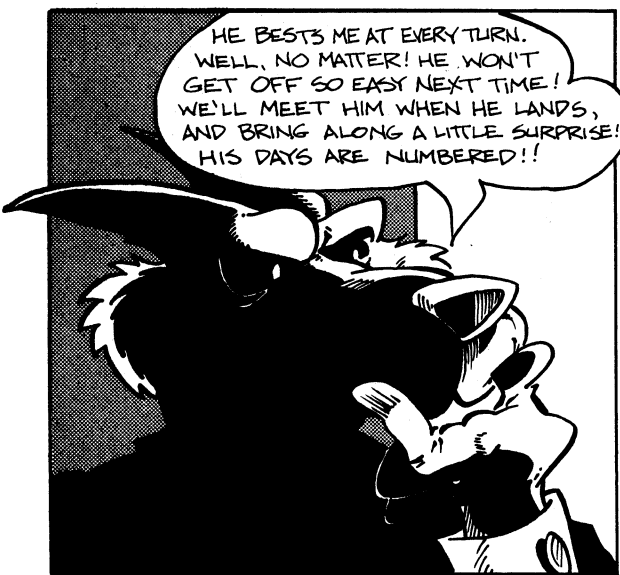
WELL, THE TERRORISTS ARE GONE, NOW.
SO IT'S ONLY MY WORD THAT I'M
INNOCENT! MY FATE RESTS ON WHAT
YOU'LL SAY! -- SIGH -- THEY
MIGHT AS WELL HANG
ME NOW!!

♪ DAISY, ♪ DAISY,
GIVE ME YOUR
ANSWER DO ... ♪



COLONEL NORTH, THE
BLUE BEAGLE IS
FLYING THE SHUTTLE
BACK, BUT THE
SPACE STATION
WAS DESTROYED!

DAMN!



HE BESTS ME AT EVERY TURN.
WELL, NO MATTER! HE WON'T
GET OFF SO EASY NEXT TIME!
WE'LL MEET HIM WHEN HE LANDS,
AND BRING ALONG A LITTLE SURPRISE!
HIS DAYS ARE NUMBERED!!



NEXT:
WANTED -

ROBOHOP
The Bionic Bunny

FEAR OF



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FLYING

PART 1

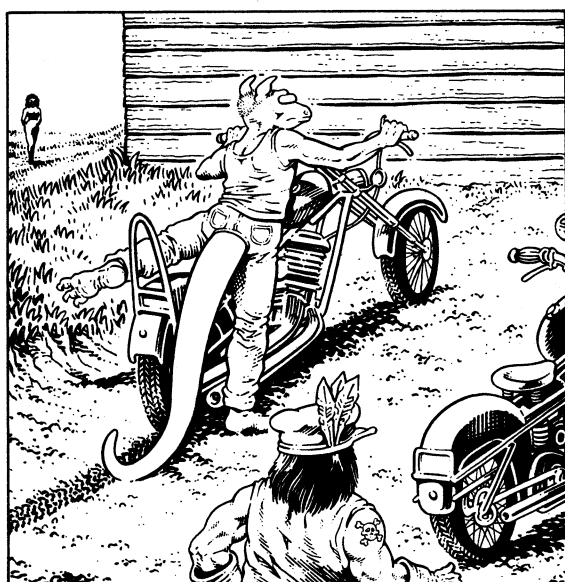


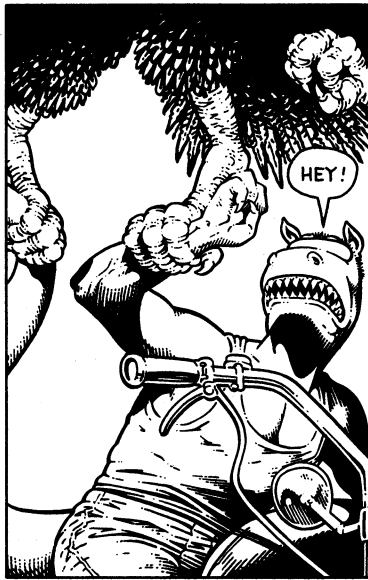
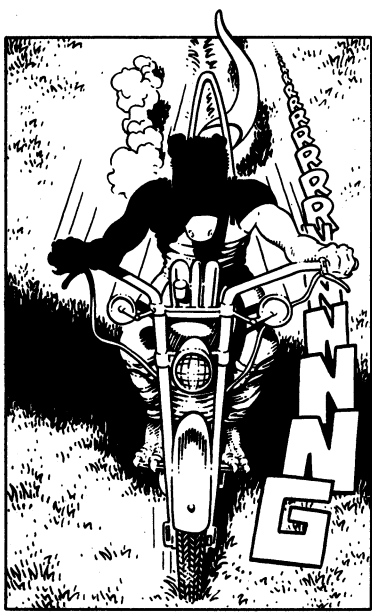












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Panel 1: Bart Simpson is sitting at a table in a restaurant, looking up at a waiter.

Panel 2: A close-up of Bart Simpson's face.

Panel 3: A close-up of the waiter's face.

Panel 4: Bart Simpson is sitting at a table, looking up at the waiter.

Panel 5: A close-up of Bart Simpson's face.

Panel 6: A close-up of the waiter's face.

Panel 7: Bart Simpson is sitting at a table, looking up at the waiter.

Panel 8: A close-up of Bart Simpson's face.

Panel 9: A close-up of the waiter's face.

Panel 10: Bart Simpson is sitting at a table, looking up at the waiter.

Panel 11: A close-up of Bart Simpson's face.

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