

No. 36
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Critters



FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS

Critters

EDITORIAL

Hey, welcome to 1989! *Critters* enters its fourth year of publication, and boy, do we have some plans for you!

Remember how I said I wasn't going to be doing a special double-sized Christmas issue? Well, I fully intended not to, and, in fact, succeeded in not doing one, but the temptation proved to be too much—so, a mere two issues from now, issue #38 will boast an additional 16 pages.

And what great stuff we've got there, too! Try this on for size: A brand spanking new eight-page "Usagi Yojimbo" tale! A ten-page Donna Barr "Stinz Lowhard" story, which will segue into the upcoming *Stinz* mini-series from Fantagraphics Books! The next chapter of the ongoing "Blue Beagle" epic! Plus episodes of "Fission Chicken," "Angst," and still more!

This issue will also mark a big change in *Critters*. Namely, we'll be changing over to a rotating single-feature format. Whazzat mean?, I hear you cry. Well, instead of featuring a variety of strips, every issue will focus entirely on one feature. Issue #39, for instance, will be a "Fission Chicken" issue, while #40 will bring back the Gnuffs; issue #41 is tentatively scheduled to feature the epic wrap-up of the Blue Beagle "Watchdogs" saga. And so on.

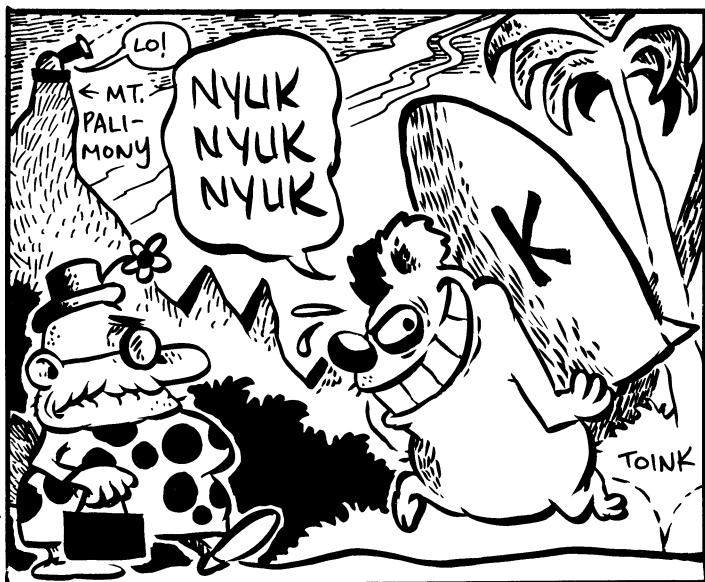
Why the change? Well, I'm becoming more and more convinced that the anthology format just doesn't cut it any more. My suspicion is that if a reader likes one or two of the features in any given issue, he might give the book a miss simply because he hates the third. Our new format will thus guarantee that if you're a big Fission Chicken fan and pick up an issue of *Critters* with Fission Chicken in it, you won't be disappointed, for the simple reason that there won't be anything *but* Fission Chicken in it. (Unless you're disappointed by that particular Fission Chicken story, of course, but there's not much we can do about *that*.)

Also, quite frankly, this is my way of trimming the page count a little in order to stop losing money. The new *Critters* will be 22 to 23 pages of story, rather than the 26 to 30 to which you've become accustomed. Sorry about the cutback, but it was that or kill the book.

In other news, we've discovered that our supplies of *Adventures of Captain Jack* aren't stretched quite as thin as we thought, and we have, as a result, put issues #3-8 back on the "available" list (See the "Menagerie" ad in the back). Since Mike Kazaleh has the lead story next issue, I predict a mini-rush on those last few back issues—snap 'em up now, while you can!

That's all for now. See you next issue!

—KIM THOMPSON



NUMBER 36

MAY 1989

C O N T E N T S

Lionheart

by Tom Stazer

"Target: Freddy!"

In the second chapter of "Rich and Stupid," Lionheart starts taking Freddy's paranoia a bit more seriously 1

Duck "Bill" Platypus by Kyle Rothweiler

"The Unkindest Cult of All"

In the third installment of Rothweiler's geometrically expanding insanity, we...no, it's impossible to summarize 11

Fission Chicken

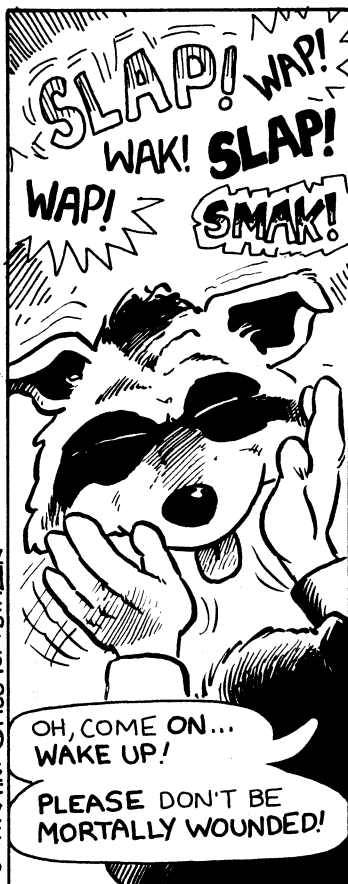
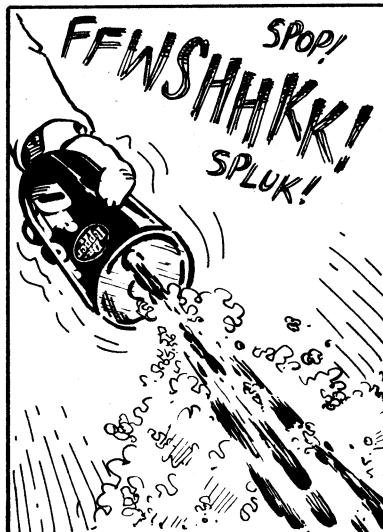
by J.P. Morgan

"They Came From Beneath Someone's Garage Part II"

In battling with the creatures, Fission Chicken discovers that they have severe philosophical differences 21

Critters #36, May, 1989. *Critters* is published monthly by Fantagraphics Books, Inc., and is copyright © 1989 Fantagraphics Books, Inc. All stories © respective creators: J.P. Morgan, Kyle Rothweiler, and Tom Stazer. Production by Mark Thompson. No part of this magazine may be reproduced without written permission from Fantagraphics Books and the authors. No similarity between any of the names, characters, and institutions in *Critters* and those of any living or dead persons is intended, and any such similarity that may exist is purely coincidental. Letters to *Critters* become the property of the magazine and are assumed intended for publication in whole or in part, and may therefore be used for those purposes. First printing: January, 1989. Available from the publisher for \$2.50: Fantagraphics Books, 1800 Bridgegate St. Suite #101, Westlake Village, CA 91361.

LIONHEART



TARGET: *FREDDY!*

WHOA!

WHAT IN
HELL
HAPPENED
TO MY
TAIL!

SORRY... I HAD
TO PUT OUT THE
FLAMES... THE
ONLY AVAILABLE
LIQUID WAS
DR. PEPPER.

I ONLY HOPE YOU CAN FORGIVE ME... OF
COURSE I'LL RESIGN IMMEDIATELY,
I'VE NO EXCUSE FOR MY FAILURE TO
DEFEND YOU...

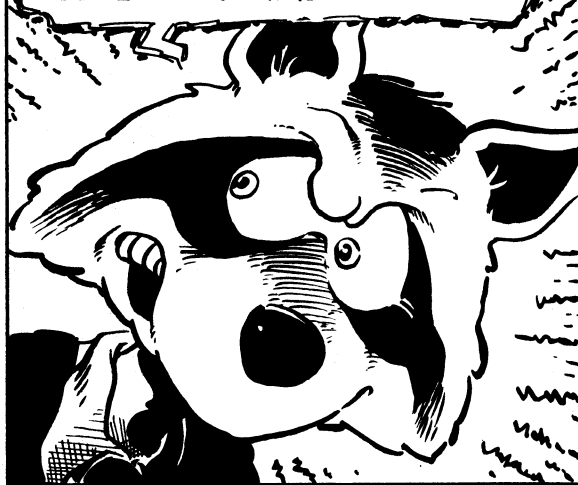
THAT'S NOT THE WAY
I SEE IT...

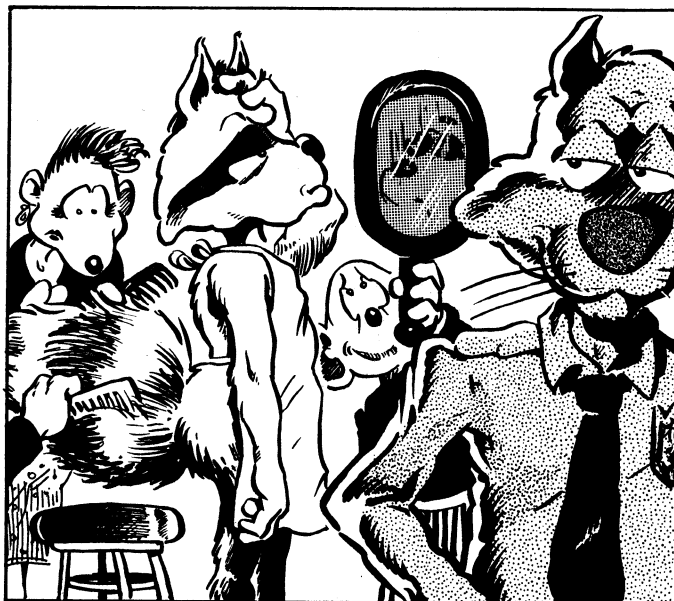
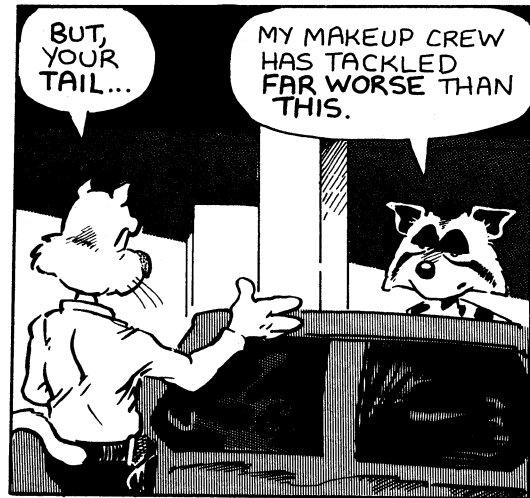
YOU GOT MY
BUTT OUTTA
THE FIRE --
LITERALLY!
AND THE
FACT THAT
YOU HAVEN'T
TRIED TO
KILL ME
PROVES THAT
YOU'RE
TRUSTWORTHY.

DON'T QUIT--
STAY AND
PROTECT ME.

LET THE
POLICE
PROTECT
YOU...
THERE'S
MORE
OF THEM.

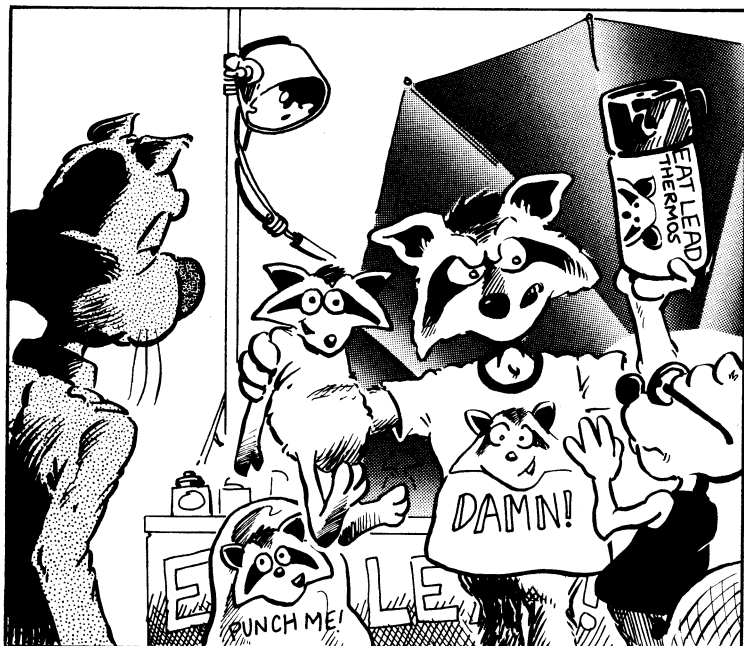
NO! NO POLICE! THAT WOULD
MEAN PUBLICITY... BESIDES, THE
COPS WOULD JUST LOVE TO
HARASS A FAMOUS YOUNG
REBEL MILLIONAIRE LIKE MYSELF.



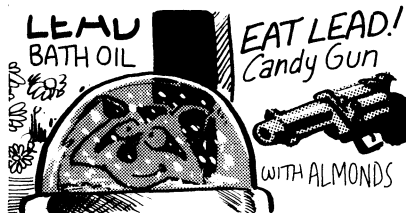


I TOLD MYSELF THAT IT WASN'T BECAUSE I DIDN'T WANT TO LOSE A FIVE THOUSAND DOLLAR STORY... BUT IT DID CROSS MY MIND THAT AN EXCLUSIVE ON LUCRE'S MURDER WOULD BE WORTH EVEN MORE.

IT FELT AS IF I WAS LIVING AN EPISODE OF "MURDER, SHE TYPED": HAM ACTORS, PLENTY OF SUSPECTS ... AND THIS CERTAINLY LOOKED LIKE A COMMERCIAL.



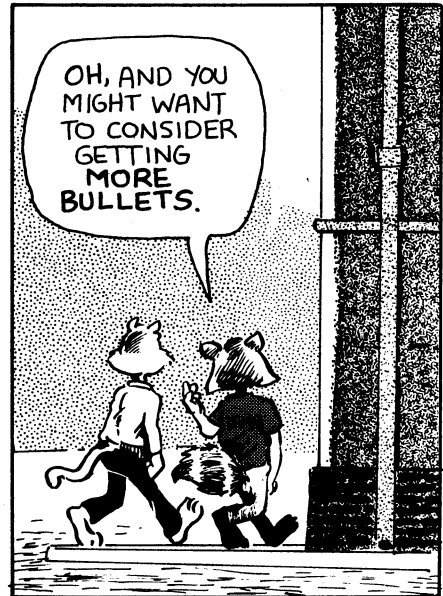
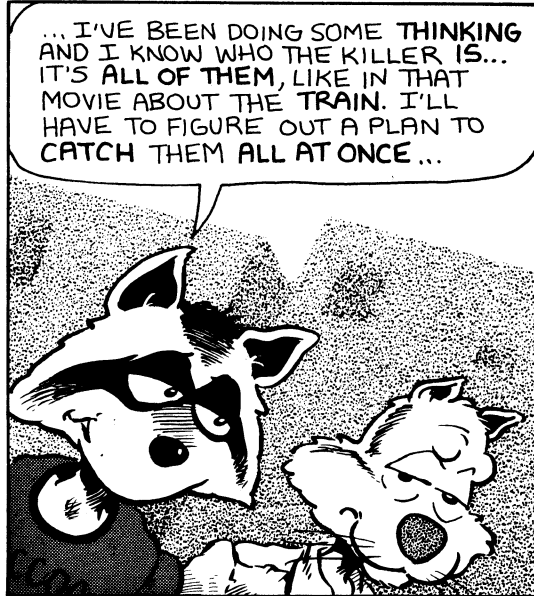
FREDDY'S SMIRKING PUSS WOULD SOON ADORN EVERYTHING FROM TOOTHBRUSHES TO POT HOLDERS ... THERE WERE FUZZY FREDDIES, WAX FREDDIES, INFLATABLE FREDDIES AND FREDDIES THAT GLOW IN THE DARK.

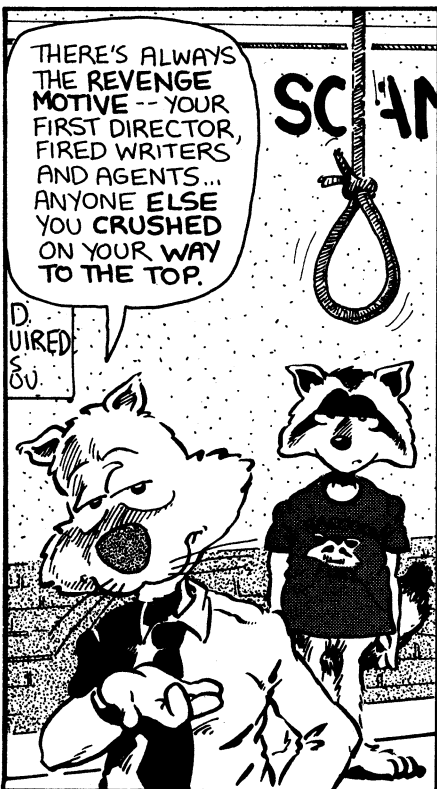
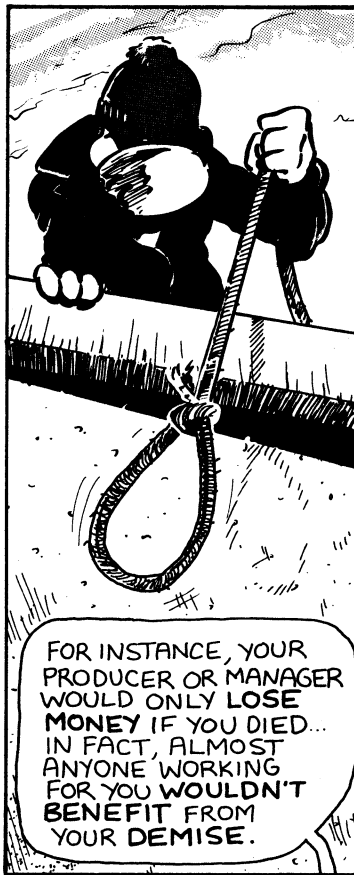
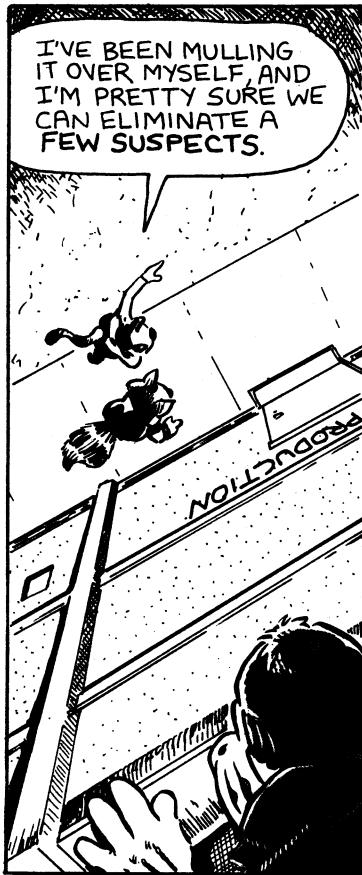


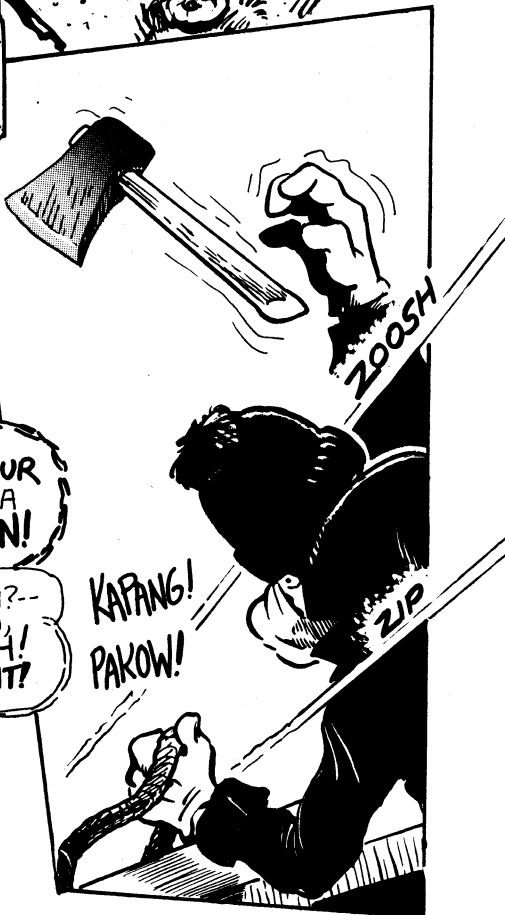
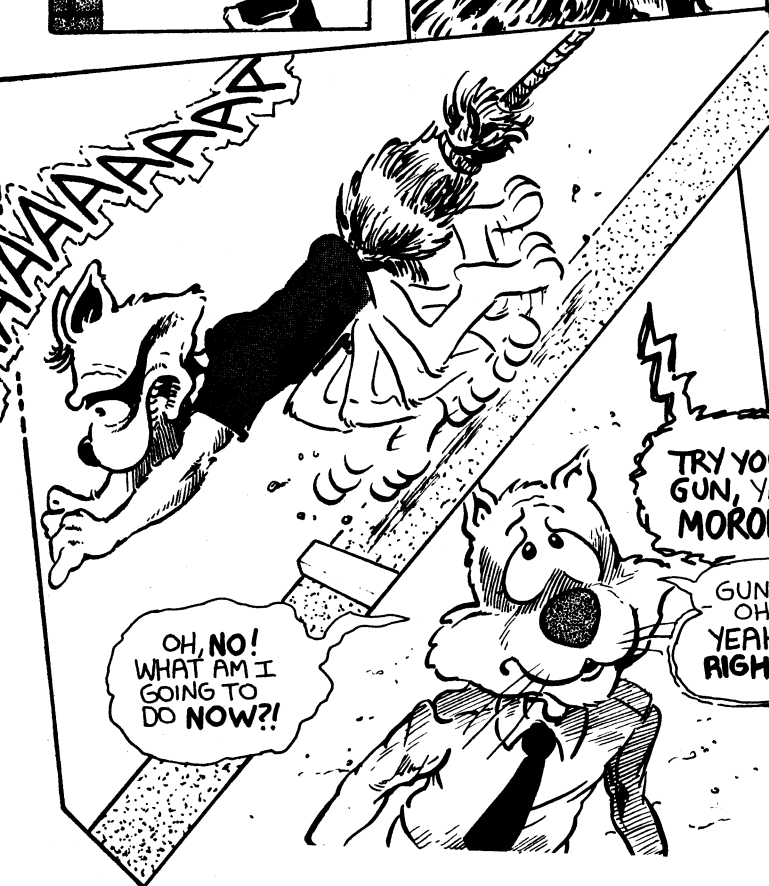
YESSIR, LUCRE WAS GUARANTEED A PLACE IN HISTORY... AS A CHEAP NOVELTY.

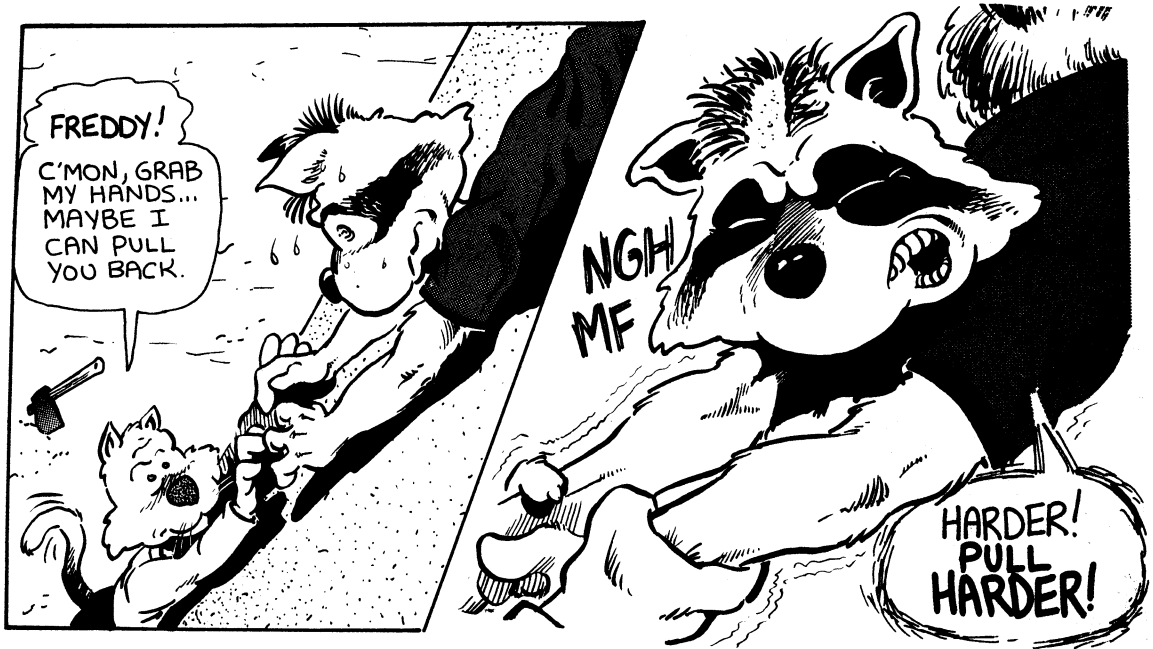


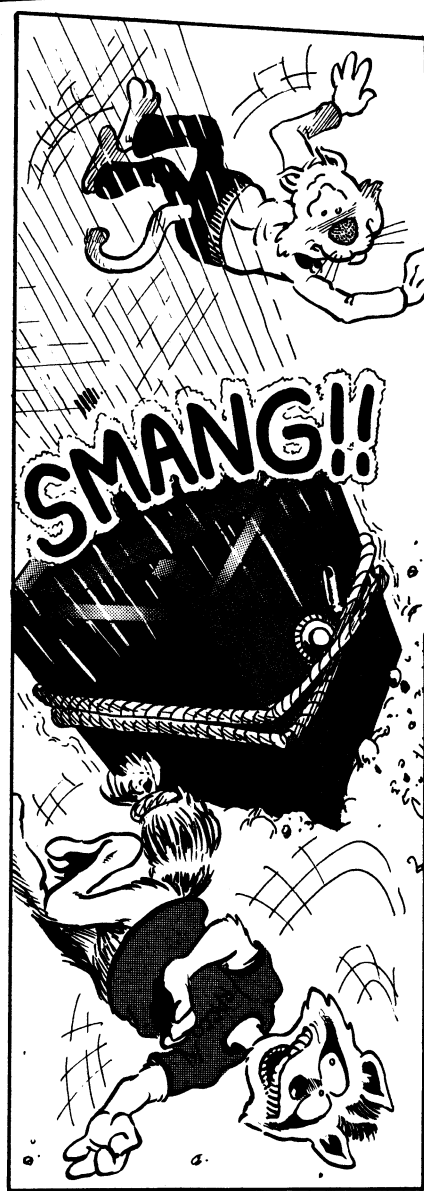
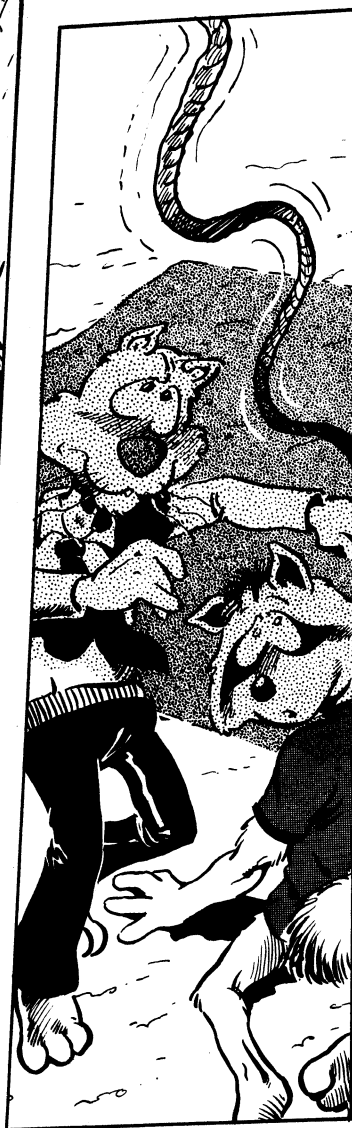
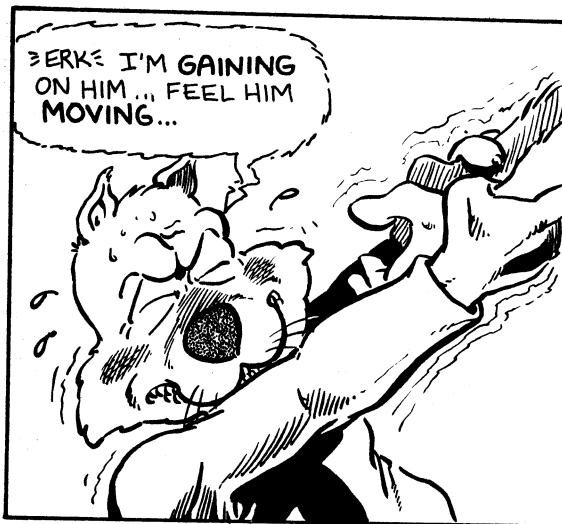
SHORTLY

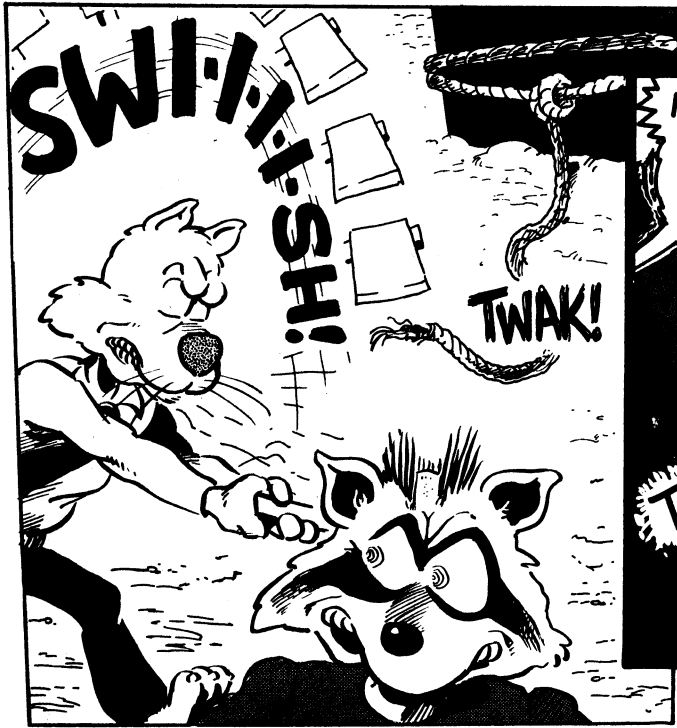
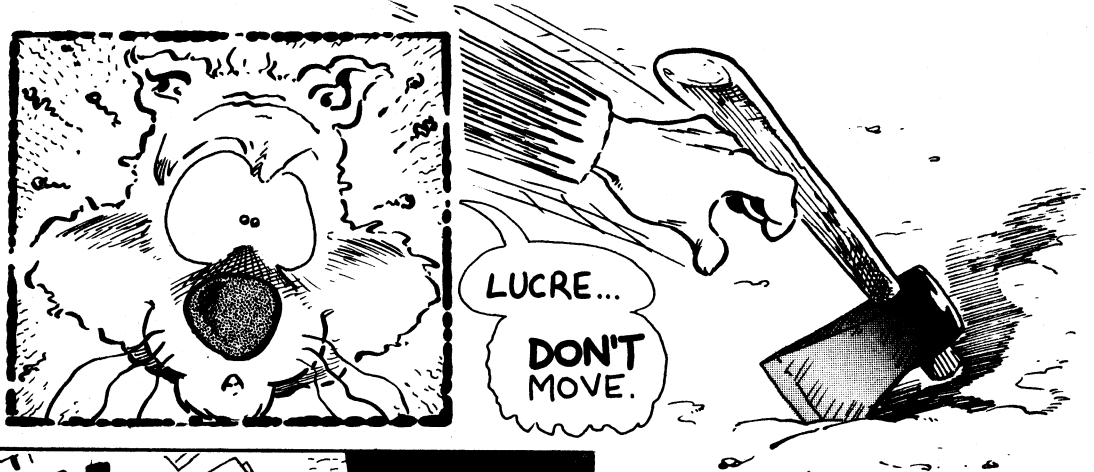
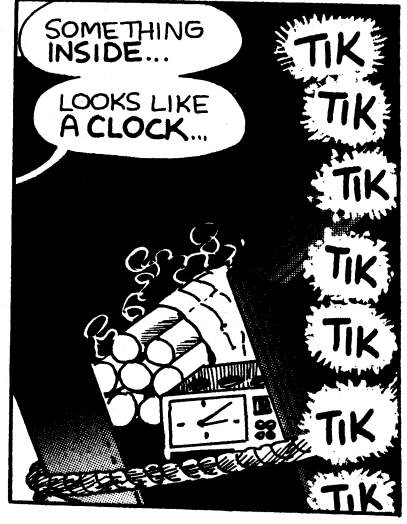
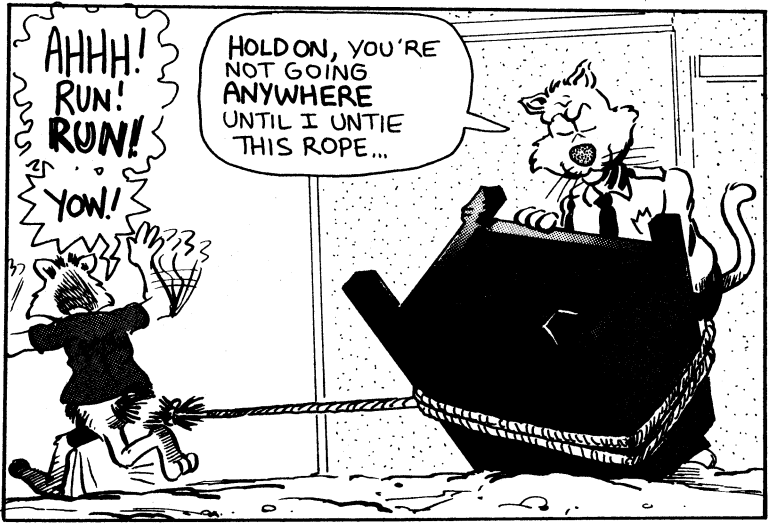




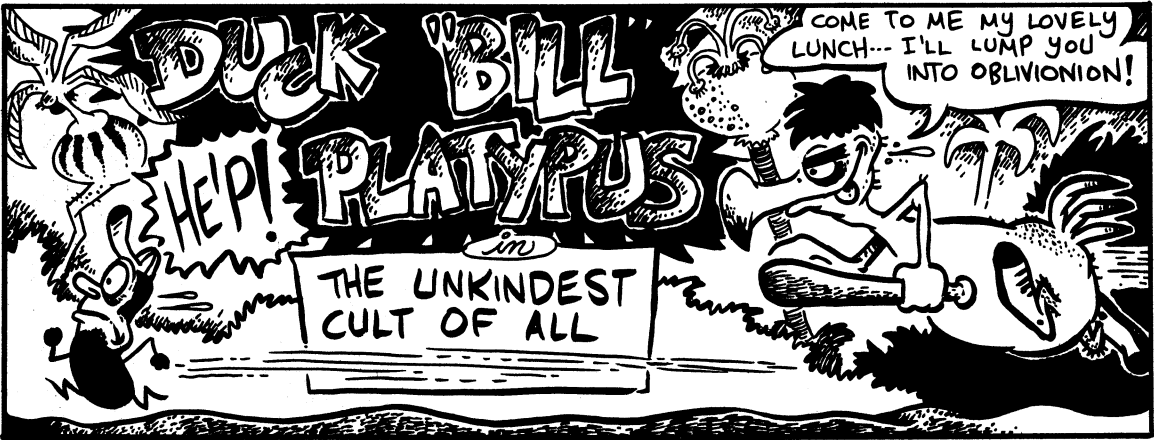


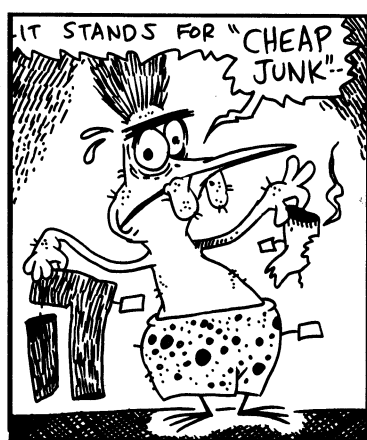
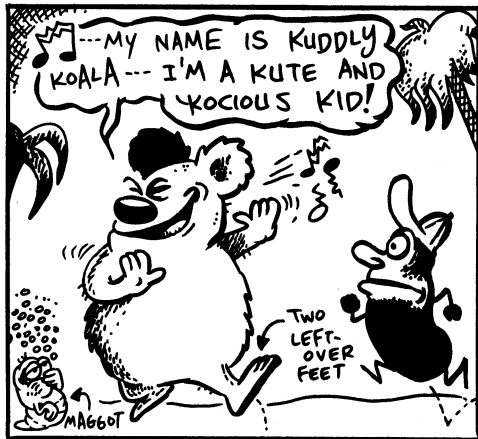


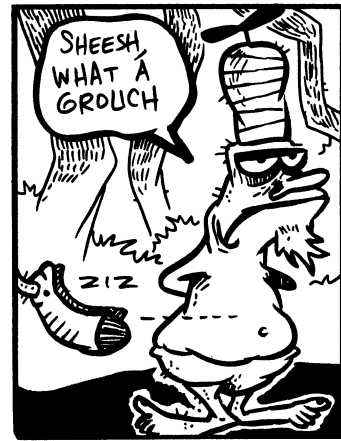
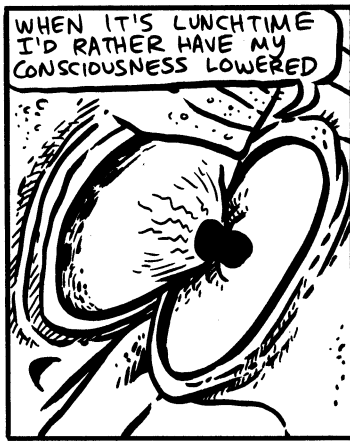
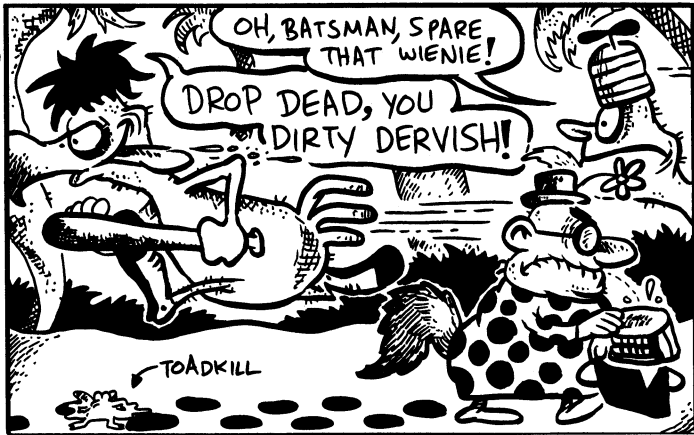




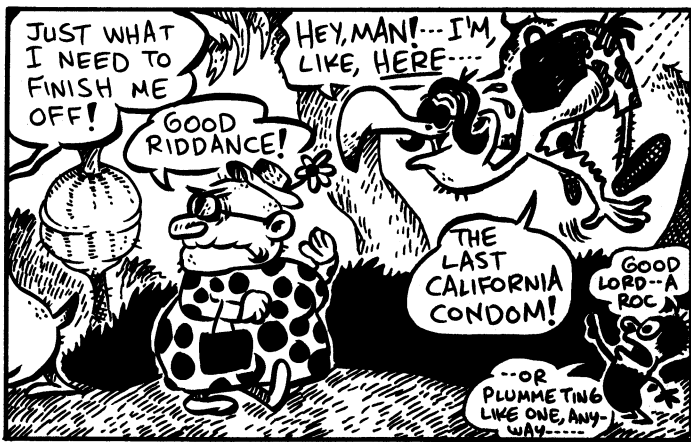
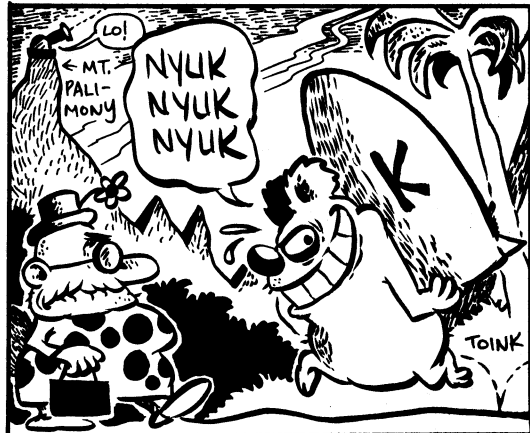
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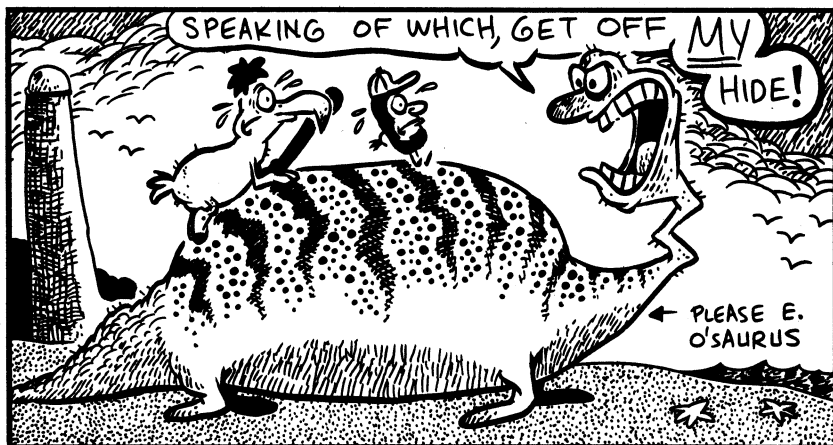


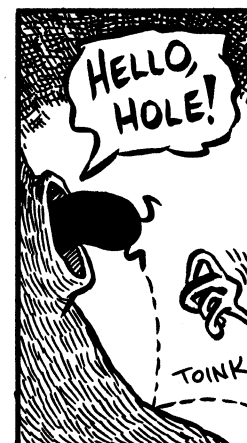
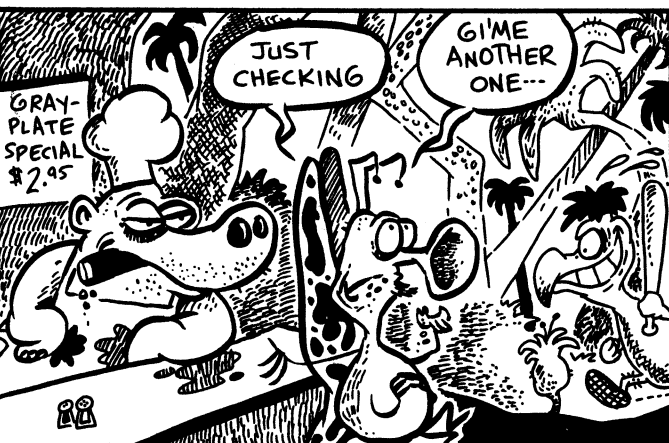
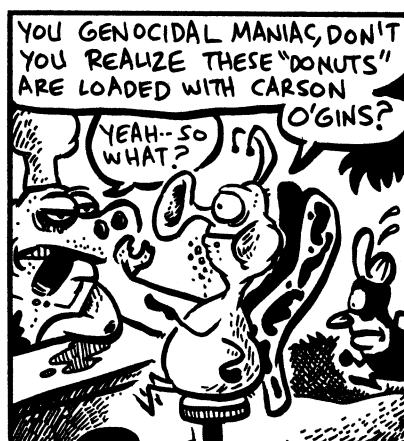
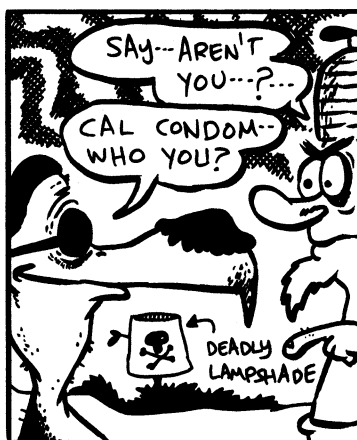


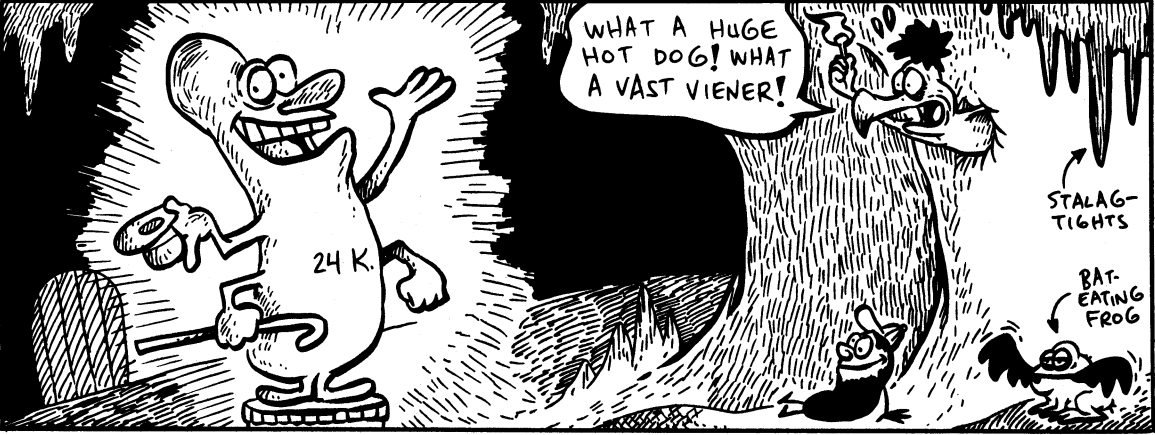


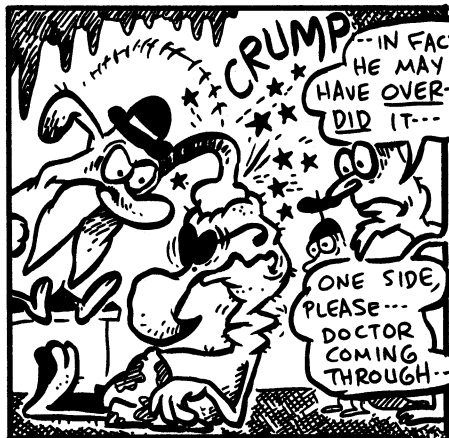
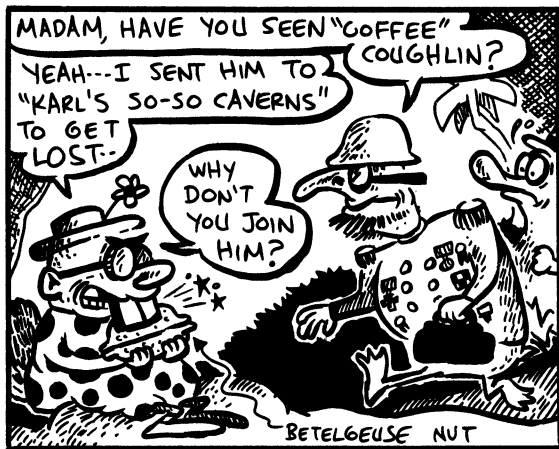


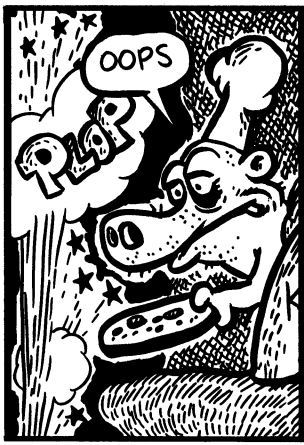
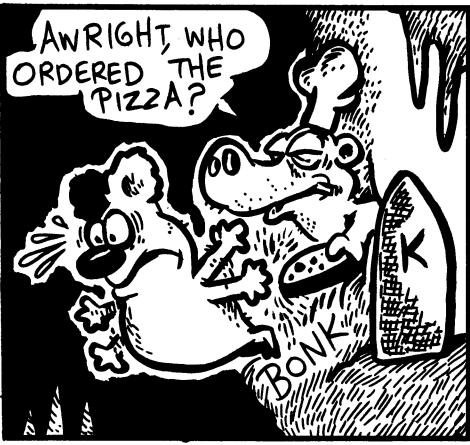
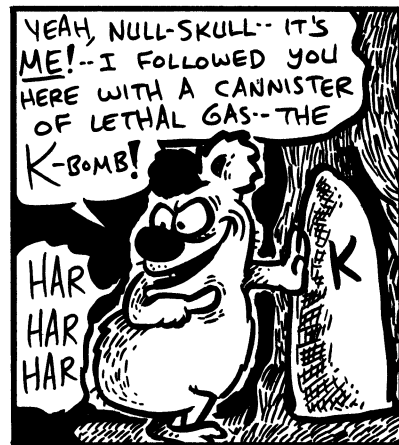












AND NOW

FISSION CHICKEN

IN...

"THEY CAME FROM BENEATH SOMEBODY'S GARAGE"

PART 2

ERRRAARRRRMARRRRRARRRRRR

GNASH GNASH GNASH

HEY NOW!

CRKK

SSHRRKRRKKKK

J.P. MOR GAN ©1988

CHUNK

BITE CHEW

GRIND GRIND

RZZZZZ

I'M GETTING SICK OF THIS! GET OFF, OR FACE MY WRATH!! YOU HEAR ME? YO!

...IS EVERYTHING HERE STUPID?! GET OFF, ALREADY! NG!

POOMF

FWIP...

WHIPPP SNAP

ACK! BLURG!

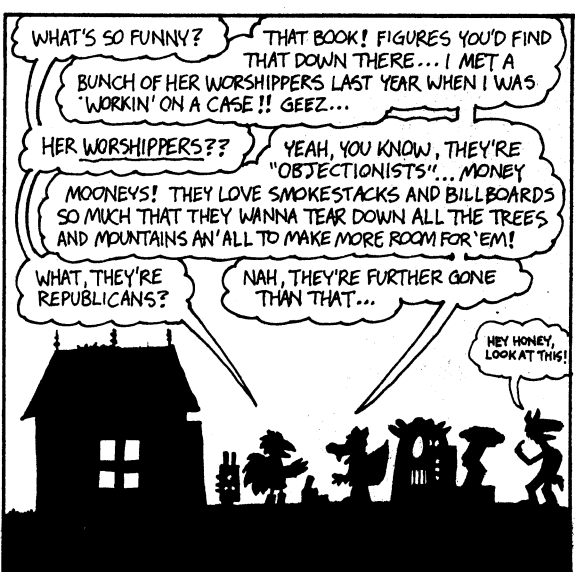
GLUMF SNARB

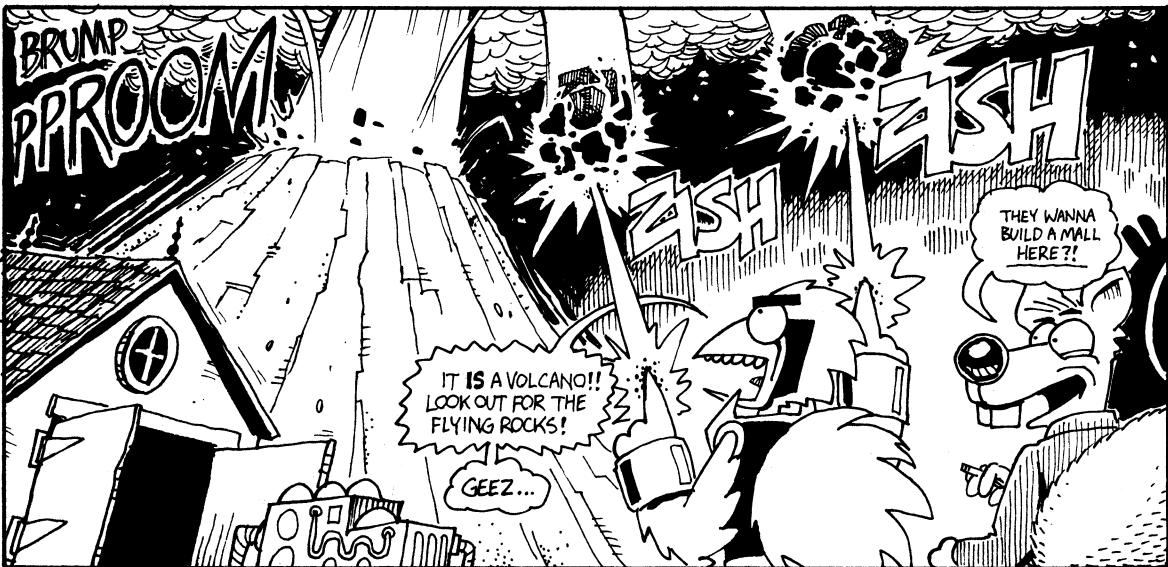
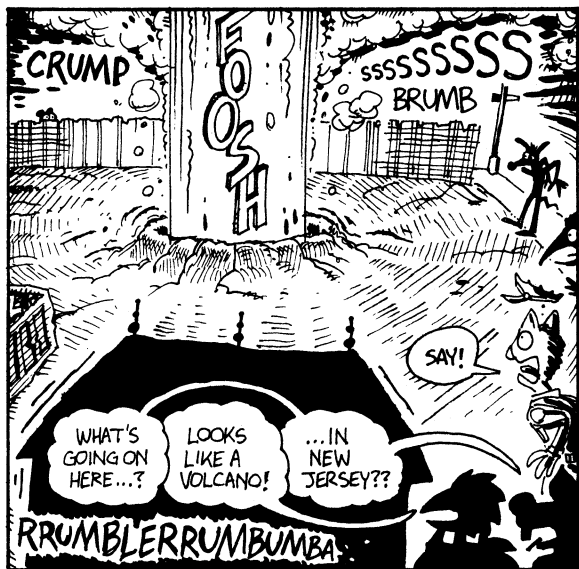
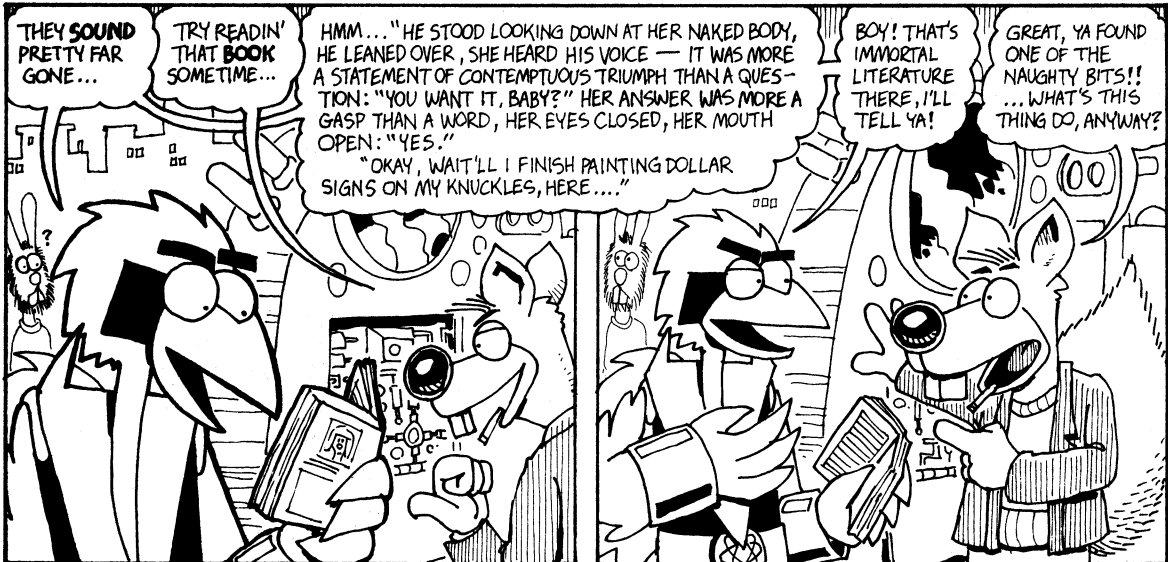
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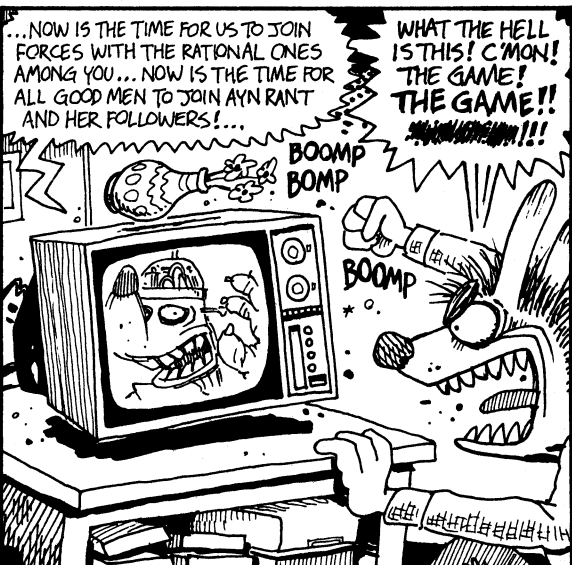
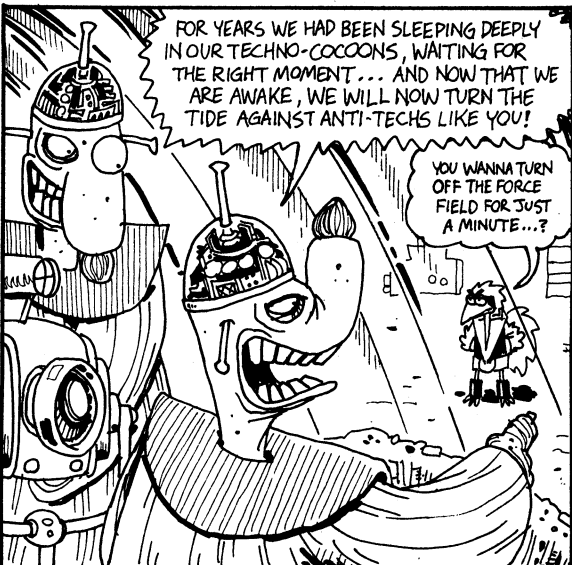
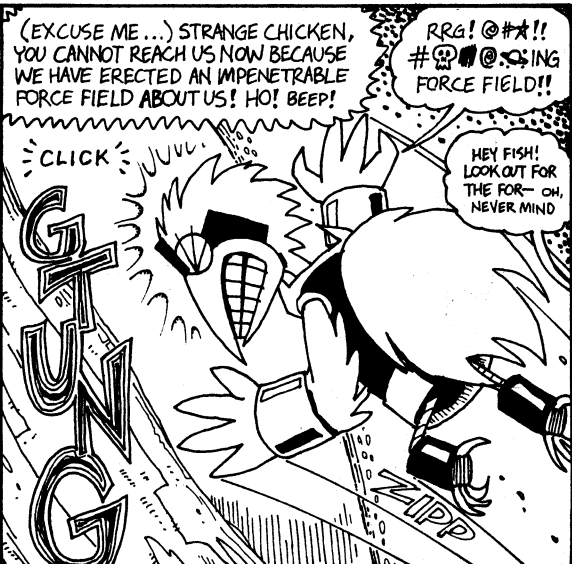
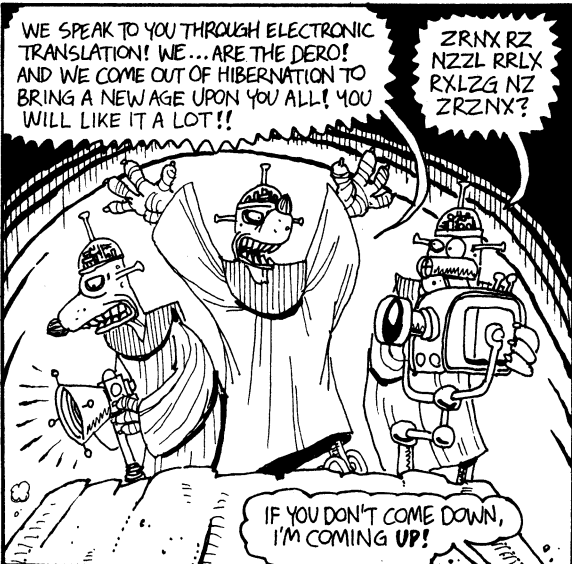
THAT'S IT! YOU DIE!!

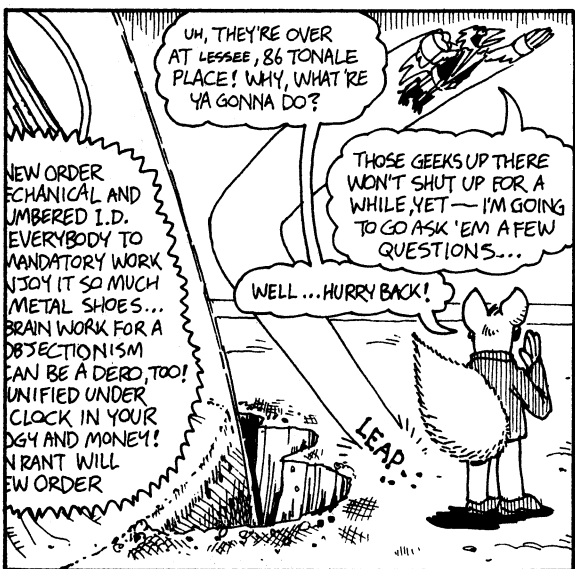
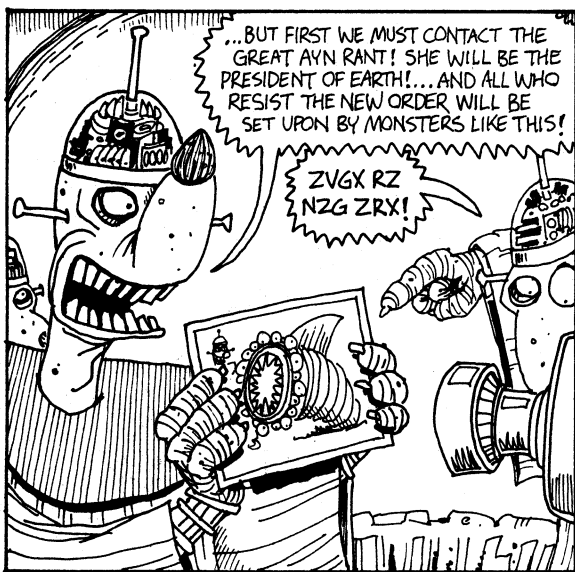
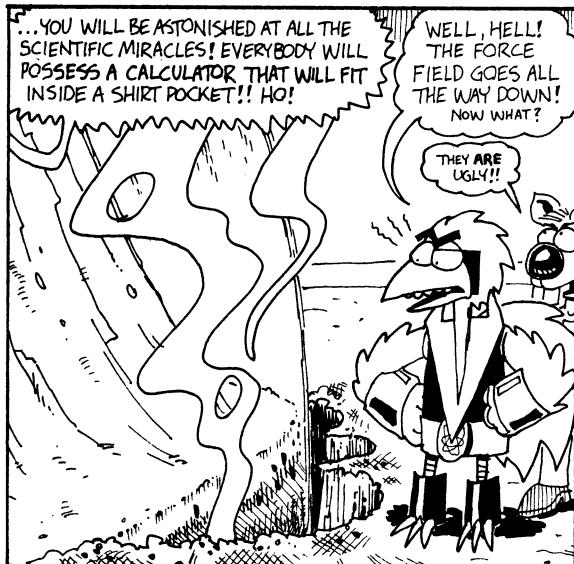
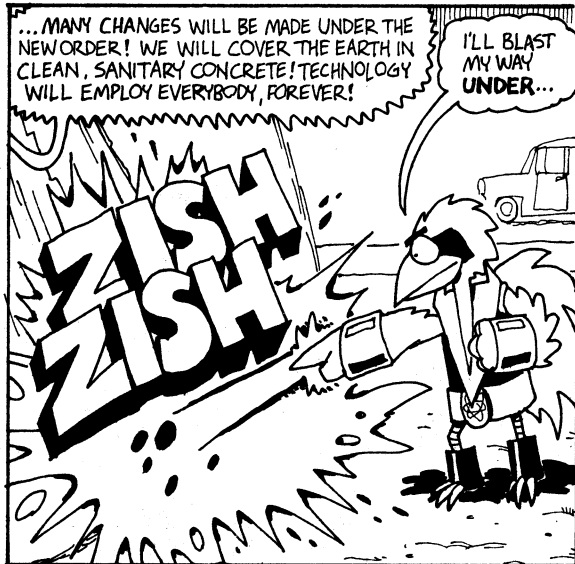
RRRRUM

BELUMBLE











...HELLO? I HAVE TO TALK TO SOMEBODY IN CHARGE, QUICK!

WHO IS JOHN GULP?

WHY, CERTAINLY! I'M THE MANAGER: MANDO BAXTER, AT YOUR SERVICE! SO, YOU'RE HERE, FISSION CHICKEN!

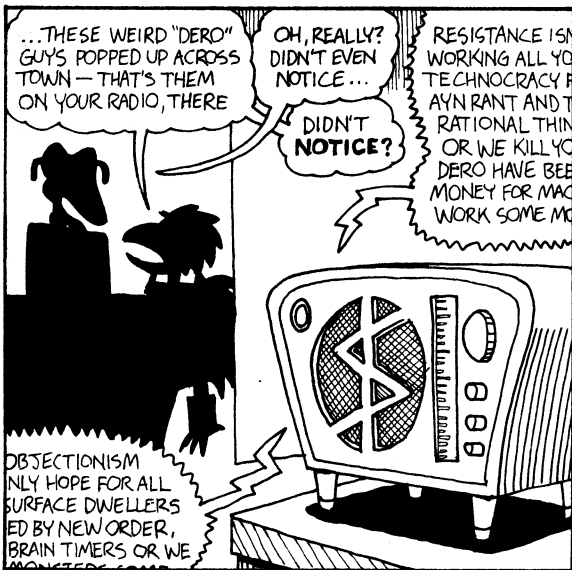


YOU SOUND LIKE YOU WERE EXPECTING ME ...?

OH, NO! NO NO NO... IT'S JUST THAT I'VE ALWAYS HOPED YOU'D APPLY FOR MEMBERSHIP! WOULD YOU LIKE A CONTRACT?

THAT'S NOT WHY I'M HERE!

OH?



...THESE WEIRD "DERO" GUYS POPPED UP ACROSS TOWN - THAT'S THEM ON YOUR RADIO, THERE

OH, REALLY? DIDN'T EVEN NOTICE ...

DIDN'T NOTICE?

RESISTANCE ISN'T WORKING ALL YET TECHNOCRACY AYN RANT AND T RATIONAL THINK OR WE KILL YOU DERO HAVE BEE MONEY FOR MAC WORK SOME MO

OBJECTIONISM ONLY HOPE FOR ALL SURFACE DWELLERS ED BY NEW ORDER, BRAIN TIMERS OR WE MONSTERS



THEY'VE BEEN GOING ON ABOUT AYN RANT AND OBJECTIONISM EVER SINCE THEY-

ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT!! I CAN'T STAND IT, YOU'VE FORCED IT OUT OF ME ... I'LL TELL!

HUH? GOOD! ...TELL WHAT?

A THING IS WHATEVER IT IS



FOR... FOR YEARS I'VE BEEN AFRAID THIS WOULD HAPPEN! THE DERO HAVE RETURNED ... IT ALL GOES SO FAR BACK...

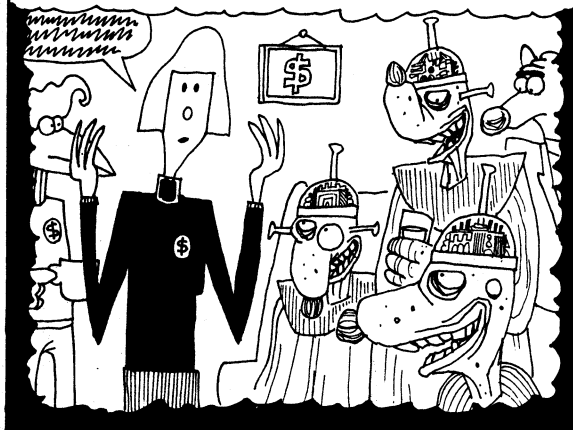
SO THEY'RE MEMBERS OF THE CLUB?

YES... SECRET MEMBERS...



ONE DAY, LONG AGO, AYN RANT WAS DIGGING A BOMB SHELTER (TO BE NAMED "GULP'S VALLEY")... WHEN SHE UNEARTHED PART OF A DERO TUNNEL! THE DERO: HALF-FLESH, HALF-MACHINE BEINGS... THEY SAID THEY WERE THE HEIRS OF ATLANTIS!! AND AYN RANT AND THE DEROS TALKED AT LENGTH...

AND THE DERO ENDED UP ATTENDING HER 'SALON' MEETINGS! THEY AGREED HEARTILY WITH WHAT SHE HAD TO SAY... THAT SMOKESTACKS SHOULD BE WORSHIPPED, AND THAT TREES WERE ONLY GOOD FOR MAKING PAPER... AND EVENTUALLY, A PLAN WAS FORMED BETWEEN THEM... IT WOULD'VE BEEN KEEN...



THE DERO WOULD HIBERNATE IN THEIR LIFE-SUPPORT COCOONS, AND THUS BE SHIPPED TO CERTAIN NERVE CENTERS OF LIBERAL, ENVIRONMENTALIST ACTIVITY — AND THEN RISE AND ATTACK ON A PRE-ARRANGED SIGNAL....

UH HUH! SO WHAT WERE THEY STILL DOING UNDER THAT GARAGE ALL THESE YEARS?

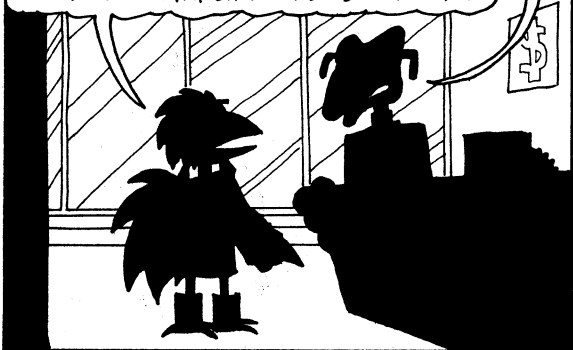


OH, THAT WAS HER GARAGE! SHE NEVER GOT AROUND TO SENDING THEM... I THINK POSTAL RATES HAD GONE UP AGAIN...

RIGHT... WELL, NOW I HAVE TO STOP THESE CLOWNS, AND THEIR FORCE FIELD IS GETTING IN THE WAY!!

OH YES, IT'S IMPENETRABLE, YOU KNOW! AH-HEH

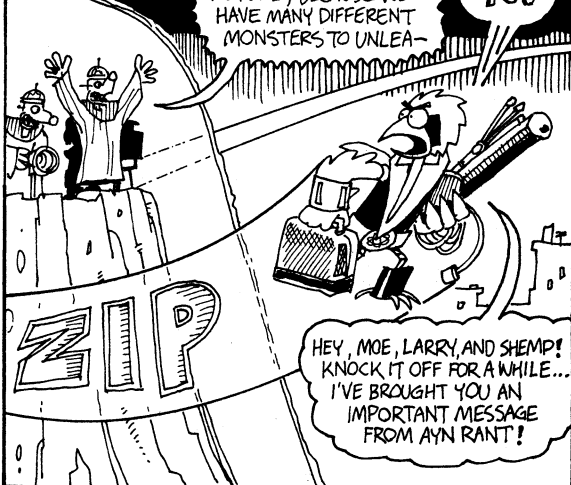
NO KIDDING! HEY! DO YOU HAVE ANY FILMS OF RANT, HERE? I WANNA TRY SHOWING 'EM SOMETHING...



LATER:

SO NOW JOIN US IN THE WORLD OF THE RATIONAL FUTURE, BECAUSE WE HAVE MANY DIFFERENT MONSTERS TO UNLEASH!

YO!



HEY, MOE, LARRY, AND SHEMP! KNOCK IT OFF FOR A WHILE! I'VE BROUGHT YOU AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM AYN RANT!



... A MESSAGE?! BUT THIS IS A FILM! WE WANT TO TALK TO THE GREAT ONE HERSELF!

WELL, SEE... I TRIED TO GET HER, BUT SHE COULDN'T COME RIGHT NOW!

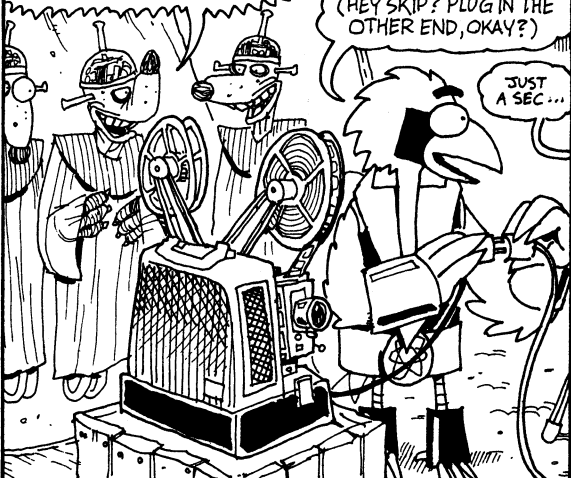
WHATTA Y'DOIN'?

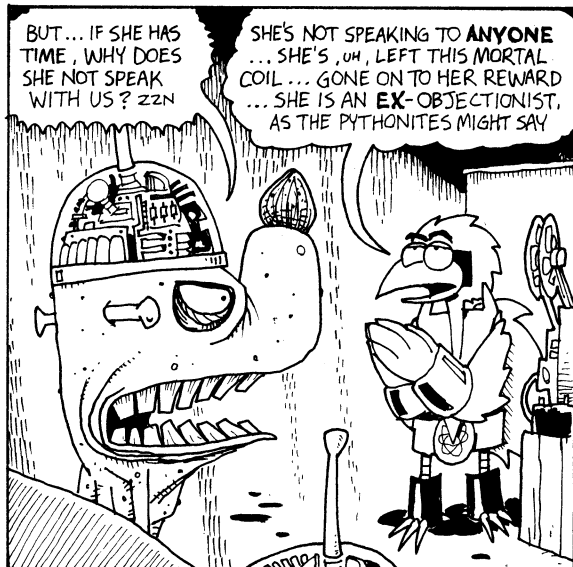
BEEP! HO! SHE MUST NOW BE AN IMPORTANT RULER, WITH HER TIME AT A PREMIUM!

UH, NOPE... SHE HAS PLENTY OF TIME....

(HEY SKIP? PLUG IN THE OTHER END, OKAY?)

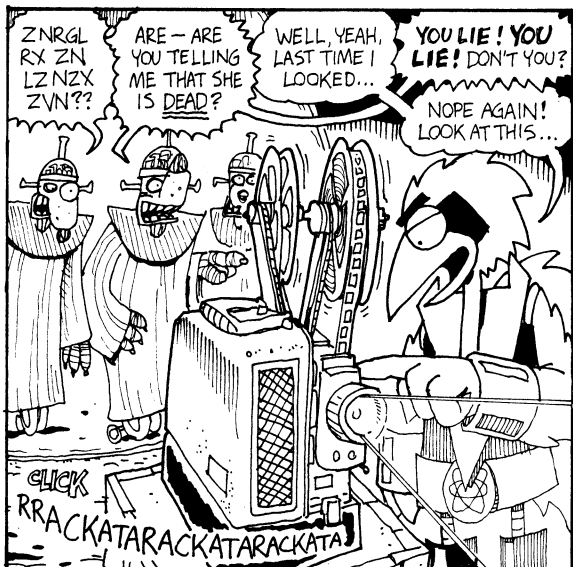
JUST A SEC...





BUT... IF SHE HAS TIME, WHY DOES SHE NOT SPEAK WITH US? ZZN

SHE'S NOT SPEAKING TO **ANYONE**... SHE'S, uh, LEFT THIS MORTAL COIL... GONE ON TO HER REWARD... SHE IS AN **EX-OBJECTIONIST**, AS THE PYTHONITES MIGHT SAY



ZNRGL
RX ZN
LZNZX
ZVN??

ARE - ARE YOU TELLING ME THAT SHE IS **DEAD**?

WELL, YEAH, LAST TIME I LOOKED...

YOU LIE! YOU LIE! DON'T YOU?

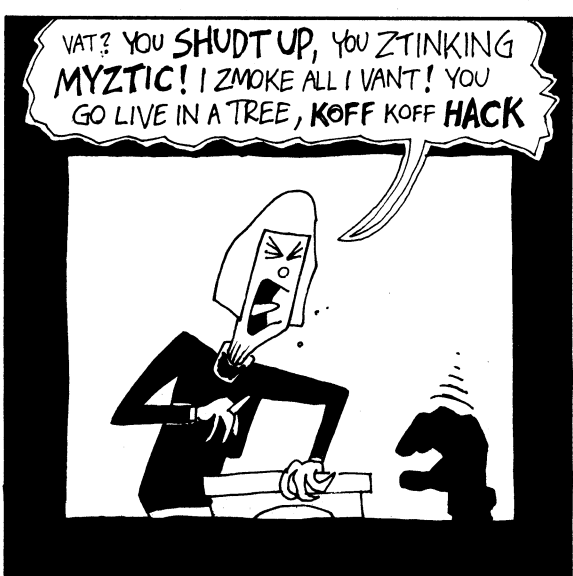
NOPE AGAIN! LOOK AT THIS...

CLICK
RRACKATARRACKATARRACKATA



...UND ZO YOU ZEE, ALL VE GODDA DO ISS RIP UP ALL DA NAZHUNAL PARKS UND ZEN VE GOT LOTS OF OIL UND ZTUFF

HEY, MISS RANT? ... IF YOU'RE SO LOGICAL, HOW COME YOU SMOKE?



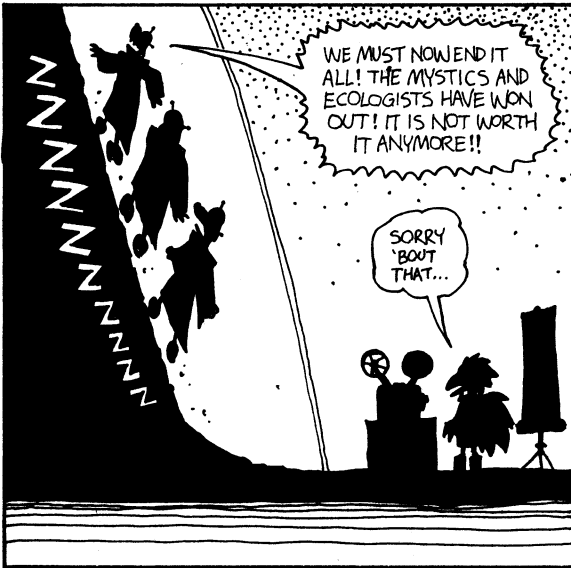
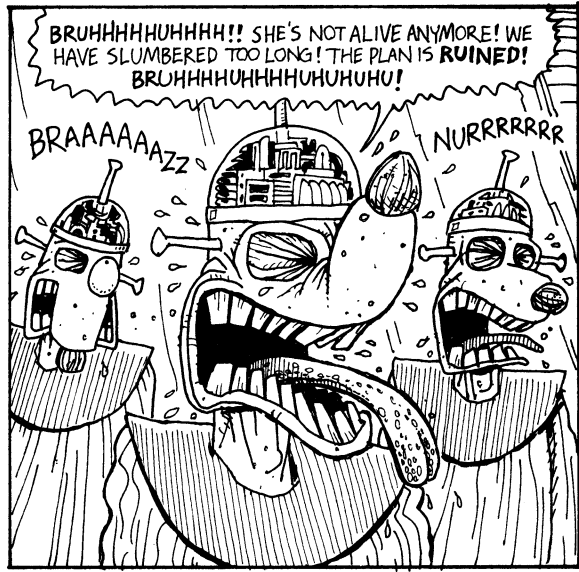
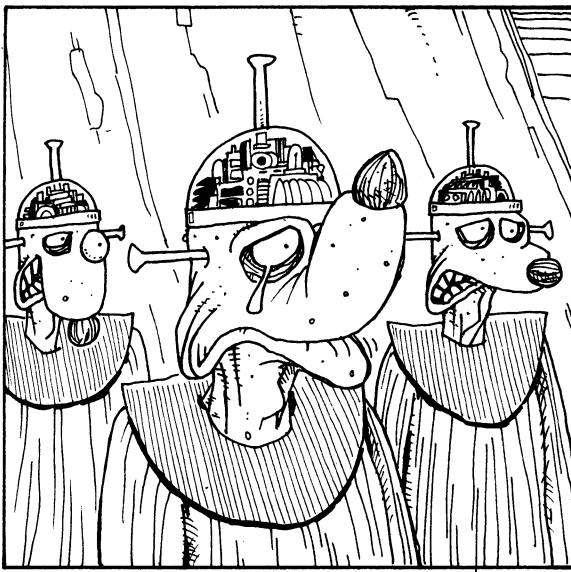
VAT? YOU **SHUDT UP**, YOU ZTINKING **MYZTIC!** I ZMOKE ALL I VANT! YOU GO LIVE IN A TREE, **KOFF KOFF HACK**

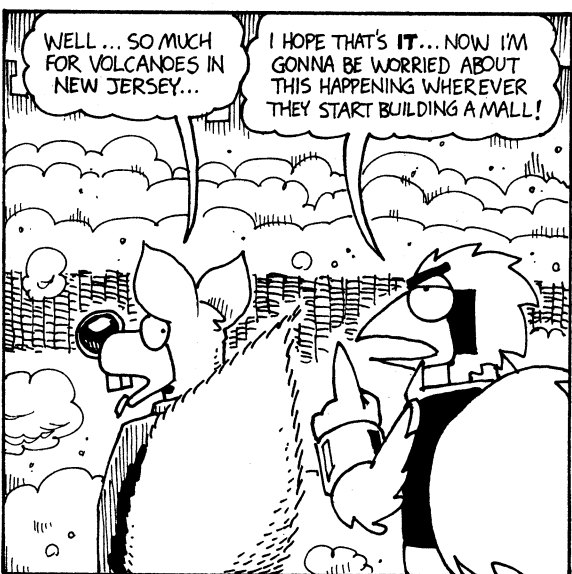
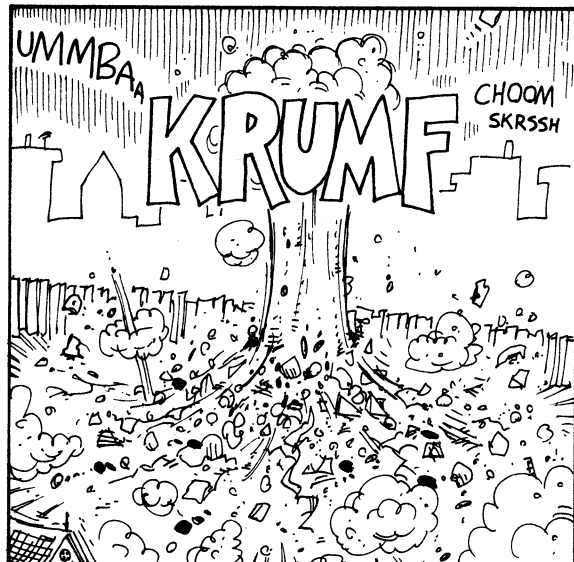
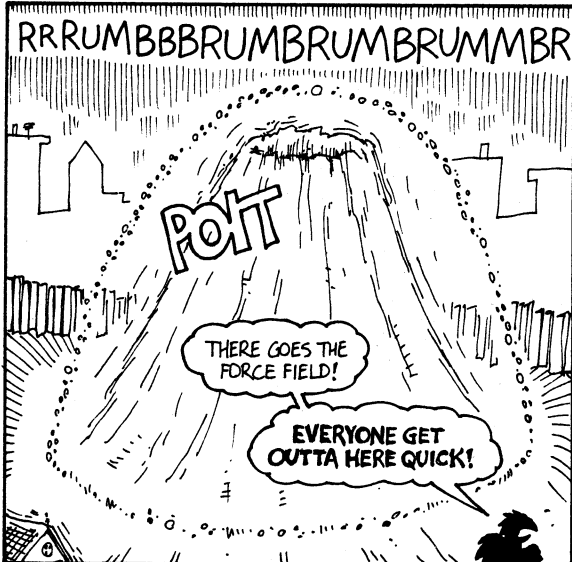


KOFF KOFF HARRACK, KAFFFF...
WHEEZ HURF KOFF KOFF CACK
KAF HHRACKA KOFF HUK!



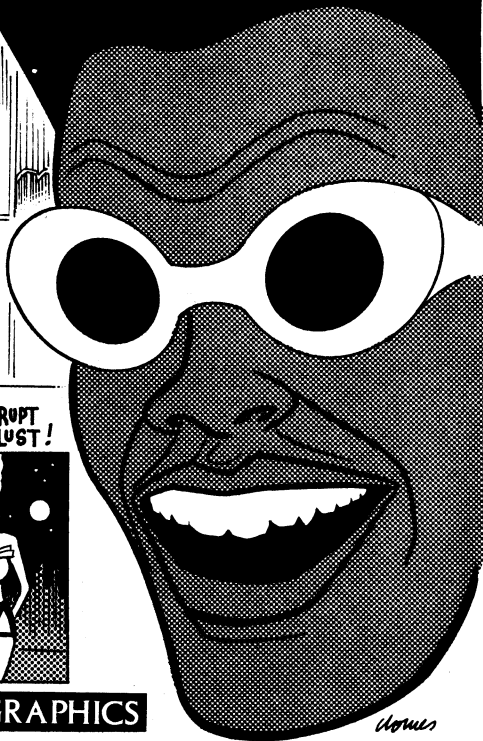
KOFF URK
HRACK THUD



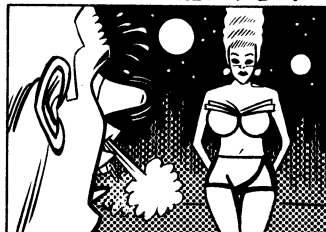


The city is a woman; a sultry, fickle goddess of stone and mortar; a crumbling Venus coarsely veiled in a cloak of steel, forever casting an icy shadow over all who cling too tightly to her bosom... not your ordinary whistle-bait. This is my city: *Endsville, The Naked Jungle, The Land of the Lost, A Town Called Trouble*. You can't miss it. All roads lead here. Just follow the one paved with good intentions. They call me by many names: *The King of the Losers, The Chairman of the Bored, The Mayor of Lonely Street*. My friends call me Lloyd. You may call me Mister Llewellyn.

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Adventures of Captain Jack #11: Jack meets up with the mob.

Adventures of Captain Jack #12: The grand finale of the series, as things will never be the same.

CRITTERS

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

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

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

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

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

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

Critters #11: Big 64-page Christmas issue, with Sakai, Milton, Armstrong, Stazer, Templeton, Kieth, and a cover by Macklin.

Critters #12: *Birthright* returns, plus Waller/Worley's *SpeakingStone*, and Sam Kieth!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Critters #20: *SpeakingStone* by Waller/Worley, *Gnuff* and *Fission Chicken*.

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

Critters #22: *Watchmen* cover parody for *Blue Beagle* story, plus *Gnuff*, *Fission Chicken*, and *Ambrose*. (Also available: non-cover-parody version.)

Critters #23: Christmas issue with *Gnuff*, *Lizards*, *Fission Chicken*, *Lionheart*, as well as strips by Schirmeister, Kieth, Fuller, Kazaleh, Templeton—plus a flexidisc with songs performed by Templeton & Alan Moore!

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

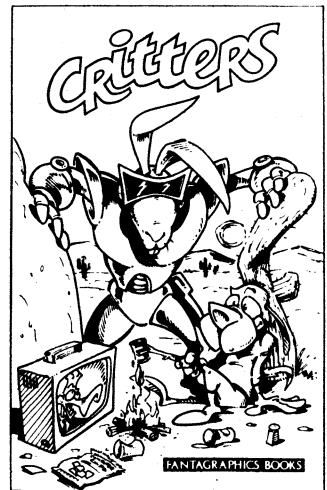
Critters #25: The return of *Lionheart*, plus *Gnuff* and *Angst*.

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

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

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

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



Critters #30: Mark Martin cover and story, plus *Angst*, *Fission Chicken*, and *Gnuff* returns.

Critters #31: *Gnuff* cover featured, plus *Lizards*, *Blue Beagle*, and a Steve Bissette one-pager.

Critters #32: *Lizards* continues with a cover, *Gnuff*, and a new *Fission Chicken* story—plus DeStefano!

Critters #33: *Fission Chicken* cover, *Gnuff* concludes, and *Angst*.

Critters #34: *Blue Beagle* returns, the premiere of *Duck "Bill" Platypus*, and a Halloween horror tale.

Critters #35: Lela Dowling cover, *Fission Chicken*, the beginning of a new *Lionheart*, and *Duck "Bill" Platypus*.

Critters #36: Featuring the continuation of *Lionheart*, *Fission Chicken*, and *Duck "Bill."*

Critters #37: Mike Kazaleh cover and story, conclusion to *Lionheart*.

Critters #38: Giant issue with *Usagi Yojimbo*, *Blue Beagle*, *Fission Chicken*, *Angst*, and Donna Barr's *Stinz*.

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

DOG BOY

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

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

Dog Boy #4: Dog Boy goes to Hell, and Dog Girl squashes Reagan!

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

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

Dog Boy #8: Alfred Knoot starts a newspaper, Dog Girl does graffiti.

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

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

GROOTLORE

Grootlore #1: Peter Gullerud's fantasy strips, with a new cover and intro.

Grootlore #2: More tales of Loadtoad and the rest of the gang.

HUGO

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

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

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

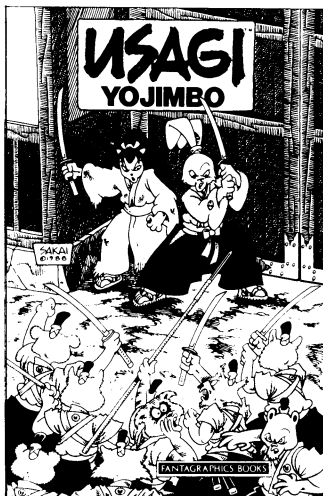
Myron Moose Funnies #3: "Comic Book Fans," and more silly snot.

USAGI YOJIMBO

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

Usagi Yojimbo #8: "A Mother's Love," plus Luth's "Rockhoppers."

Usagi Yojimbo #10: "Blade of the Gods," plus a Usagi/Leonardo the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle tale by Peter Laird!



Usagi Yojimbo #11: Saga of a tea cup, plus a "Catnippon" back-up by Sergio Aragones.

Usagi Yojimbo #12: "The Shogun's Gift," plus Tom Stazer's "Lionheart" in an eight-page hostage story.

Usagi Yojimbo #13: First chapter of "Dragon Bellow Conspiracy," plus Shaw! & Evanier's "Digger Duckbill."

Usagi Yojimbo #14: "Dragon Bellow Conspiracy" continues, full-length!

Usagi Yojimbo #15: Treachery and death as "Dragon Bellow" continues.

BOOKS, MAGAZINES, AND OTHER STUFF

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

Usagi Yojimbo Book Two: The complete "Samurai" origin saga, plus more stories and an intro by Evanier.

Amazing Heroes #9: Behind the scenes of DC's *Captain Carrot* comic with Scott Shaw! and Roy Thomas.

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

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

Amazing Heroes #129: Interviews with Steven A. Gallacci and Freddy Milton, the new *Mighty Mouse* show!

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

Christmas With Superswine #1: Gary Fields's Pig of Power in a seasonal one-shot. Not for those fond of Yuletide cheer!

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

The Comics Journal #99: Big interview with Arn (*Neil the Horse*) Saba, among other things.

Doomsday Squad #5: Features a spectacular full-color Captain Jack story by Mike Kazaleh!

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

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

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



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