

AMBROSE

CRITTERS

No. 45

\$2.00

(\$2.50 in
Canada)



FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS

VAN HORN

Critters

FEATURING

AMBROSE

William Van Horn's credits could fill a whole page, so we'll have to squeeze them together as best we can: "Nervous Rex" and "Tracker" for Blackthorne; "Angst" for Critters; some of the best new duck stories for *DuckTales*, *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories*, and *Uncle Scrooge Adventures* (and yes, it looks like Bill will be continuing to do these even after Gladstone's contract runs out and reverts back to Disney); plus a raft of fine children's books, and much more. Whew—tires us out just thinking about it.

The "Ambrose" strips printed herein have appeared in various places over the years—but it's very unlikely you'll have seen them. Trust us. The cover is new, done just for this edition.

CRITTERS #45, November, 1989. Critters is published monthly by Fantagraphics Books, Inc., and is copyright © 1989 Fantagraphics Books, Inc. All characters, stories, and art in this issue is © 1989 William Van Horn. Separations by Rayson Films. No part of this magazine may be reproduced without written permission from Fantagraphics Books and Tim Fuller. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and institutions in Critters and those of any living or dead persons is intended, aside from satirical references to persons or corporations in the public arena, 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: October, 1989. Available from the publisher for \$2.00 + 50¢ postage and handling: Fantagraphics Books, 7563 Lake City Way N.E., Seattle, WA 98115. Printed at Port Publications, Port Washington, Wisconsin. Edited by Kim Thompson; production by Mark Thompson.

CRITTERS LETTERS

7563 Lake City Way, Seattle, WA 98115

Just a few weeks ago, most of the Fantagraphics staff went on a day-long inventory at our warehouse. And lo and behold, we turned up a handful of copies of a number of books and comics we thought we'd sold out of. Only a couple dozen copies in most cases—but I figured I'd give loyal Critters readers first dibs on snapping up some of these semi-rarities.

First of all, we still have copies of every issue of *Adventures of Captain Jack* from #3 to #12. (Some of these have been listed as "sold out" since last year, and a few have been on and off our lists a couple of times.) That includes the whole "Herman and Janet" sequence that started in #5, the Jackie Gleason tribute issue, and many more. *Primo stuff!*

On the Critters front, I was delighted to find a stash of #11s—the first Christmas issue. This was the first Critters special issue, and since it includes the conclusions to no fewer than three serials (*Usagi Yojimbo*, *Gnuff*, and *Lionheart*), its absence has probably been keenly felt by any number of collectors. It includes such goodies as the premiere of "Lizards," a Mark Armstrong strip, plus Stan Sakai and Mike Kazaleh, li'l one-pagers by Templeton, Kieth, and Lafler, all wrapped up in a Ken Macklin cover. And we're selling it for a mere \$3.50.

Further on down the line, we've been listing #18 as sold out for some time now. I don't know why—we've got piles and piles of the damn thing. It's got a knockout Jim Engel cover and story, plus *Blue Beagle* and *Lionheart*.

I also ran across a number of *Dog Boys*—every issue is still in stock, to a limited degree. So are all three issues of *Milton Knight, Jr.*'s *Hugo* (although #1 is real low, so only one per customer, okay?)

Remember *Doomsday Squad* #3—the one with the really lousy printing job on the full-color *Usagi Yojimbo* strip? Well, I can't recommend it for its aesthetic value, but apparently it's got some kind of collector's appeal—and we've still got about a hundred copies at cover price, \$2.00 each. But remember, I warned you: the printing is bad!

Speaking of *Usagi Yojimbo*, you can still buy every back issue but #1, 2, and #4—although we're running real short on some of them, especially #6 and #9.

Everything on this list is \$2.00 apiece, with the exception of Critters #11, which is \$3.50.

Boy, wouldn't some of these make

great Christmas gifts?

Just a thought. And lookee here—after all this greedmongering, I only have room for a single letter!

Dear Kim,

As a comics fan and animal lover, let me say that *Critters* is a terrific showcase of funny-animal comics. The first issue I ever got was #38. Since then I've been sold on *Critters*. It's got to be the best in its class since *Captain Carrot and His Amazing Zoo Crew*, the brainchild of Scott Shaw! (Why does he have that exclamation point tacked onto his name, anyway?) I hope they bring back *Captain Carrot*, I'd love to see some new CCAH-AZC adventures.

I think the *Critters* artists are marvelous! I like Tim Fuller's zany style, not to mention Stan Sakai's intriguing work and J.P. Morgan's wacky images. *Fission Chicken* is really great, but my favorites have to be *Blue Beagle* and *Stinz*. And I hope Har Lowhard comes back to *Critters*.

I read an idea submitted by a Mr. John Henry Sain (in #39) calling for a couple characters in the same story. He says he gave it up after reading #28. Well, John, if you're out there, I for one think it's still a great idea. Say, maybe in some *Critters* special in the future, there could be a brace of *Critters* characters in one story. I'm talking all-star jam session here. If it can be done, I'd really like to see it happen.

You're all doing a great job. Keep it up, folks!

Faithfully,

Jeff Plotkin

Hillsborough, CA

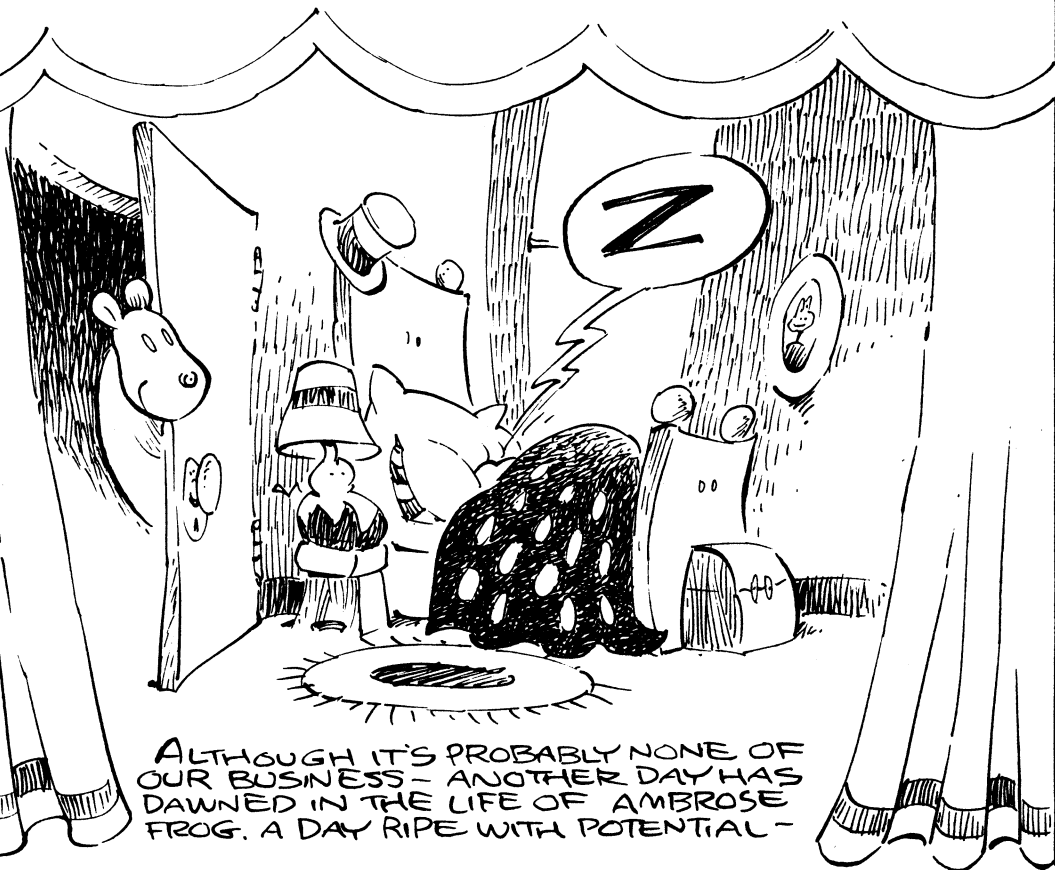
P.S.: I was enchanted by Freddy Milton's "A Midsummer Night's Enchantment" in #40.

● Thank you for your many kind words, Jeff. As you know if you read last issue, *Critters* will unfortunately come to an end with #50, and *Stinz* is only a four-issue mini-series at present, but *Usagi Yojimbo* and *Fission Chicken* continue apace—and I'm sure we haven't seen the last of most of the other creators and characters, either!

Next issue: *The return of Lionheart!* And then it'll be time for the long, long-awaited conclusion to "Birthright"!

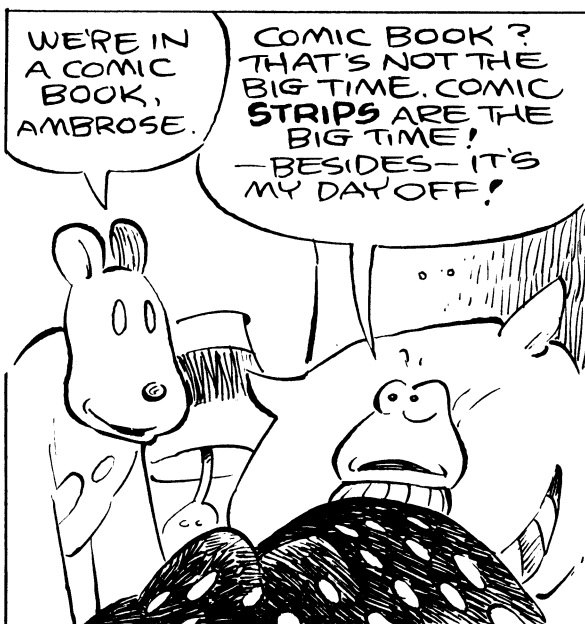
And Mike Kazaleh fans can start rejoicing, because the new year will bring the first issue of *Har Har Comics*, an all-Kazaleh funny-animal humor book! —KIM THOMPSON

A M B R O S E



ALTHOUGH IT'S PROBABLY NONE OF OUR BUSINESS - ANOTHER DAY HAS DAWNED IN THE LIFE OF AMBROSE FROG. A DAY RIPE WITH POTENTIAL -





I AM NOT A BARREL OF LAUGHS! I'M A SERIOUS AND ERUDITE FROG. A STUDENT OF WORLD LORE - A DELVER INTO THE OBSCURE - A CHAMPION OF SMART THINKING.



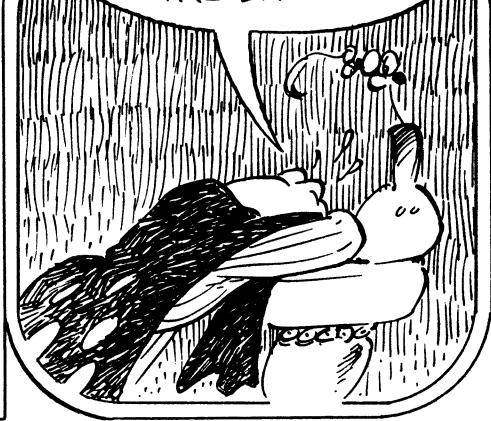
I HAVE A MIND LIKE A STEEL TRAP. IT IS ALL ENCOMPASSING - UBIQUITOUS - IT IS A VERITABLE FOUNTAIN - BUBBLY AND AFROTH!



AND YOU, COLBY - YOU REFER TO ME AS A MERE BARREL OF LAUGHS?



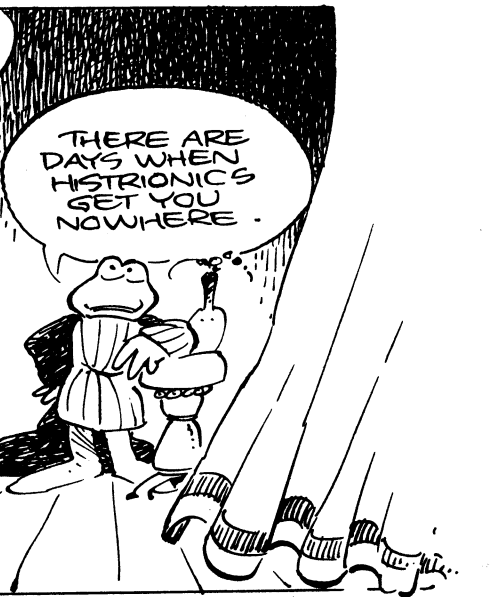
OH - THE SHAME - THE SHAME...



YEAH - WELL AT LEAST YOU'RE AWAKE. NOW WE CAN DO THE COMIC BOOK.



THERE ARE DAYS WHEN HISTRIONICS GET YOU NOWHERE.



VAN HORN

A M B R O S E

IN THE WORLD OF
AMBROSE FROG
A FROWN IS ALWAYS
FOLLOWED BY A
SMILE -

FIRST, THE FROWN - - -

SOME PEOPLE DETEST
SPIDERS AND YOGURT.
BUT I'M DIFFERENT -



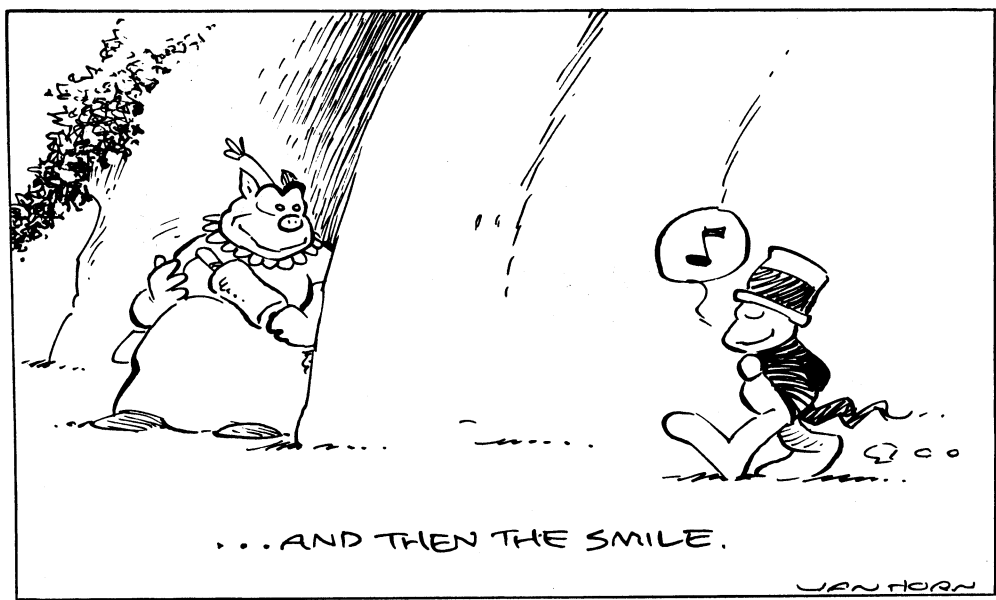
I DETEST
FROGS!



AND ONE FROG
IN PARTICULAR I
DETEST BEST!



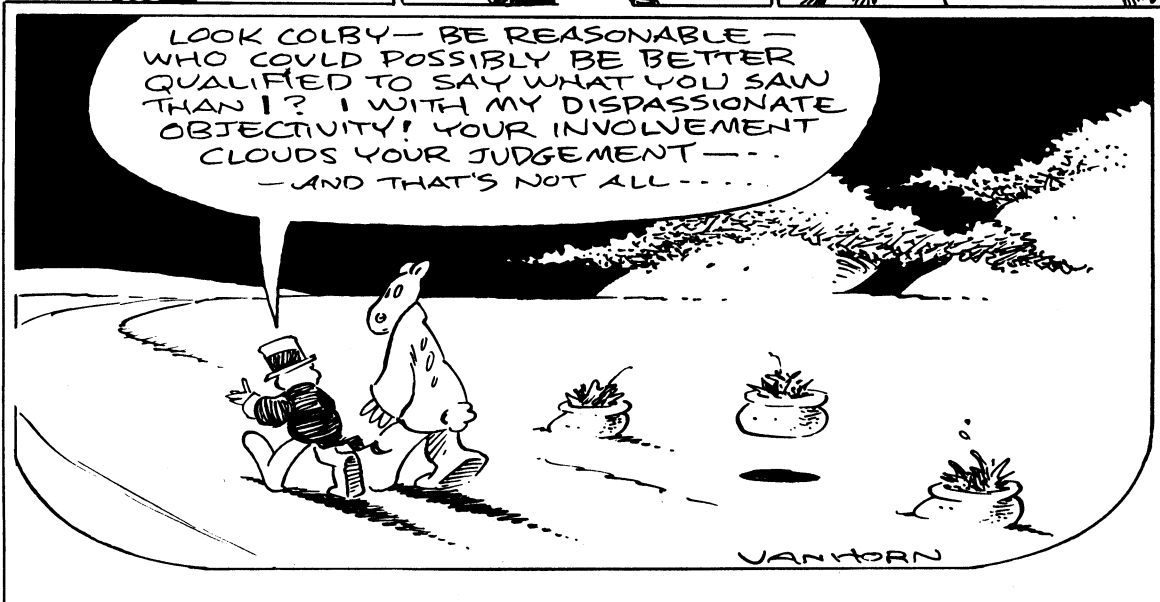
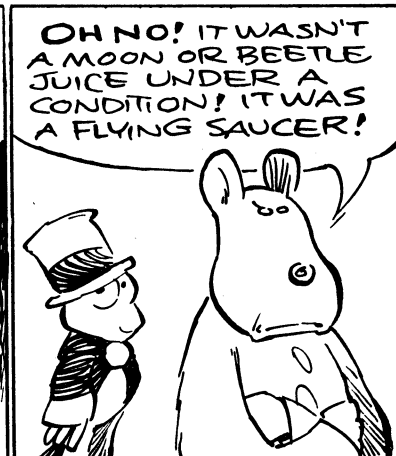
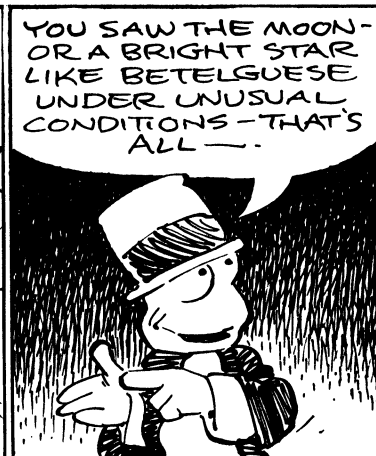
IN FACT, WERE THE
GODS TO SMILE UPON ME
NOW, AND THAT ONE
FROG WERE TO PASS
THIS WAY - I'D
MESSAGE HIS DOME
JUST FOR THE PURE
PLEASURE OF IT!



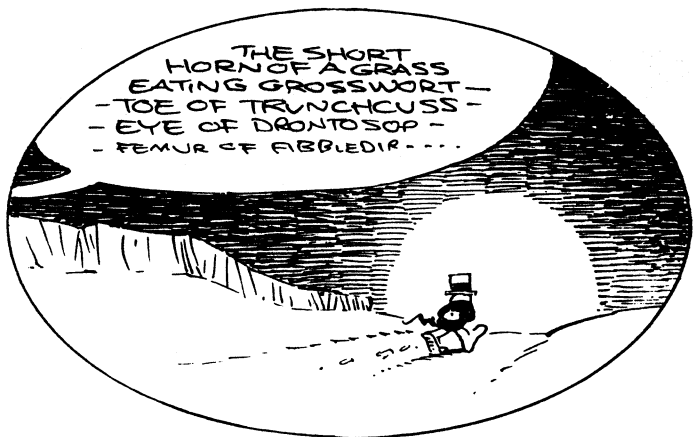
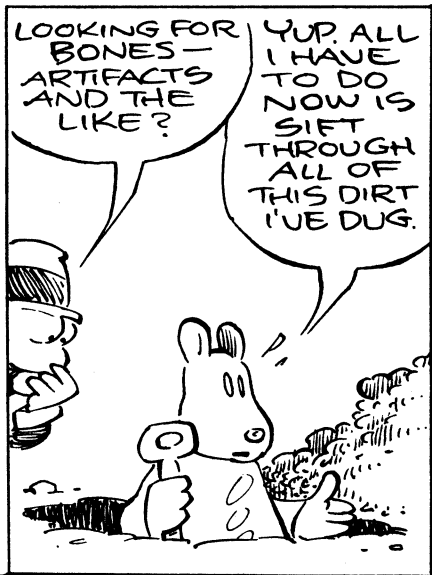
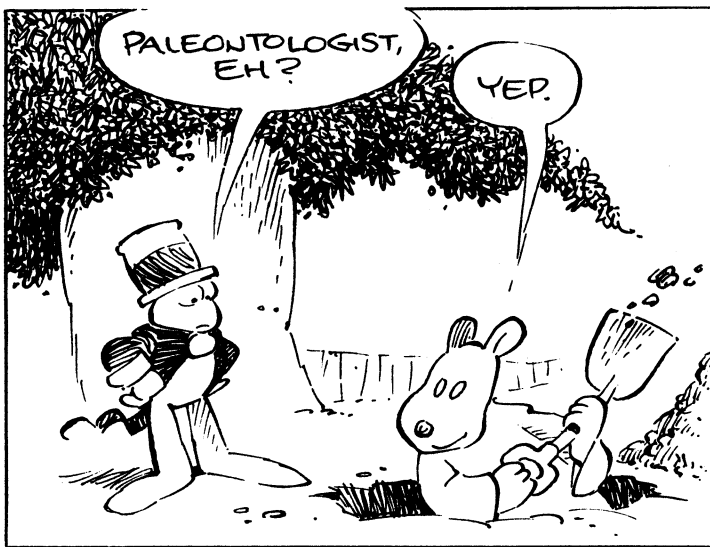
...AND THEN THE SMILE.

JEAN HORN

A M B R O S E

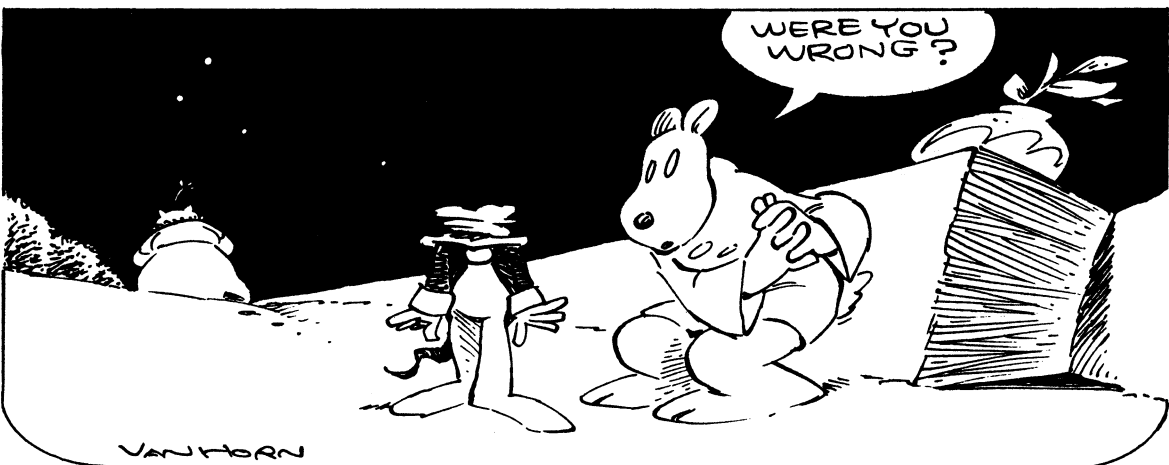
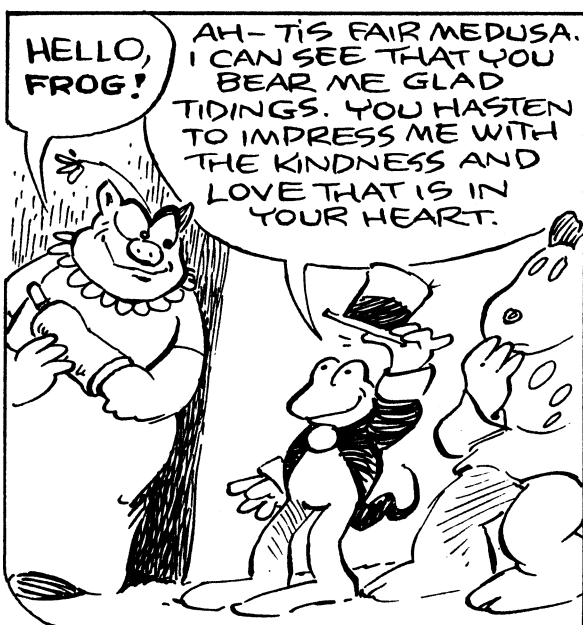


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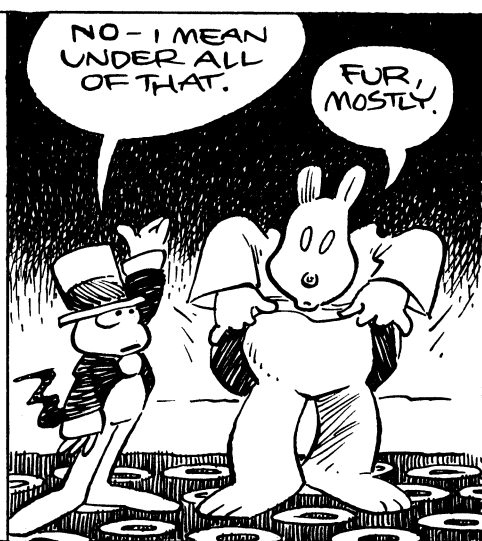
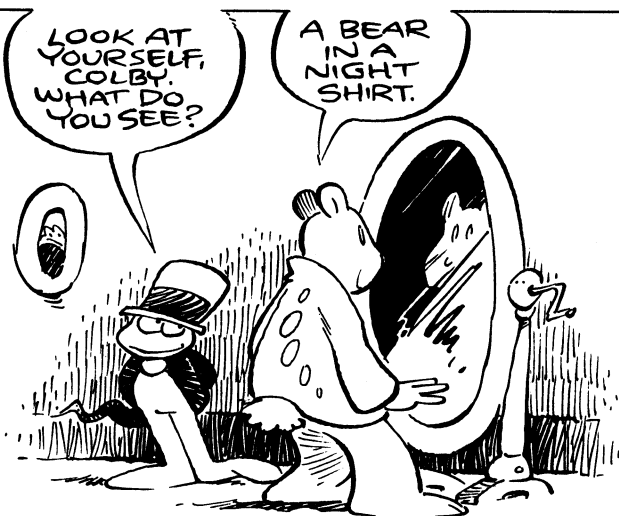


VAN HORN

A M B R O S E



AMBROSE



AMBROSIE

AND NOW, COLBY, I'M GOING TO GIVE YOU A DEMONSTRATION OF ONE OF MY LESSER KNOWN TALENTS. I'M GOING TO DEFY THE LAW OF GRAVITY.

RIGHT HERE — IN PLAIN SIGHT FOR ALL TO SEE?

YES — NOW OBSERVE. I LEVITATE — I FLOAT — FREE OF EARTH'S FORCES AND FETTERS!

FEATHERS — WHERE?

AN AMAZING DISPLAY. AND YOU WILL NOTE — NO STRINGS — NO WIRES —

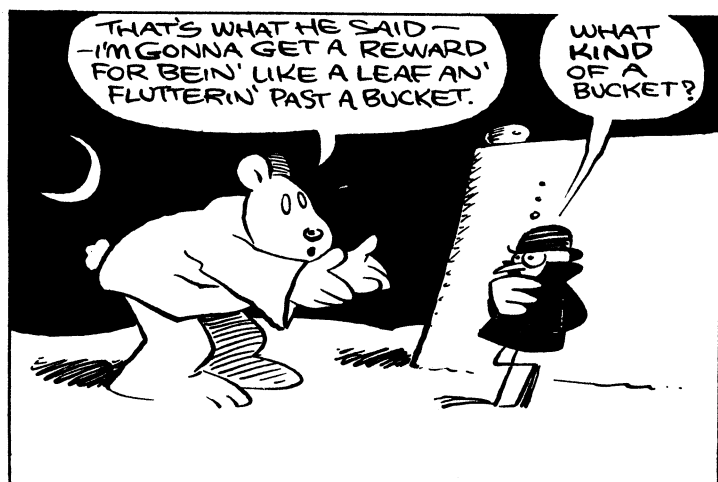
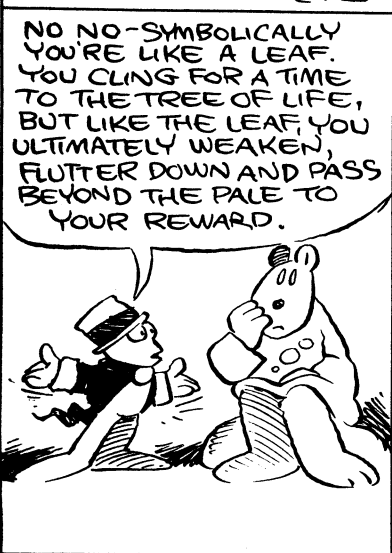
NO STRINGS — NO WIRES —

RIGHT —

JUST HOT AIR!

VAN HORN

AMBROSE



VAN HORN

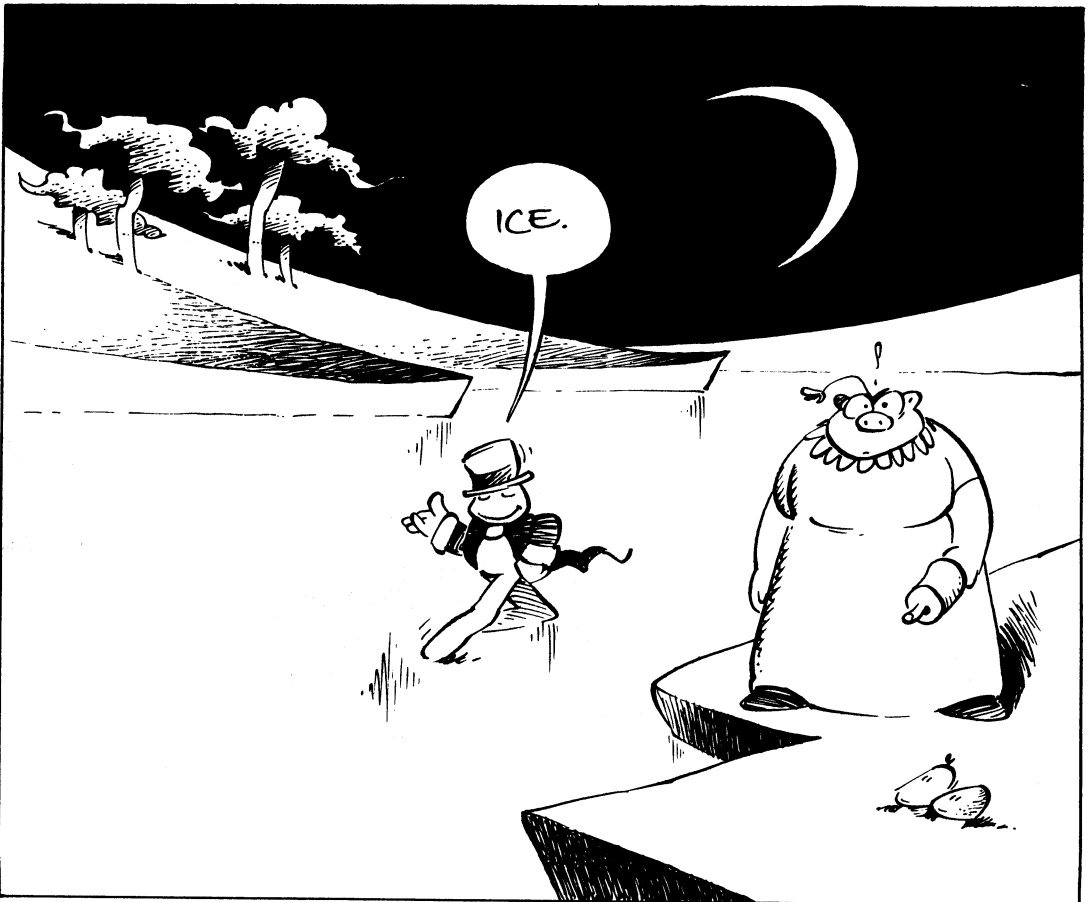
AMBROSÉ

WATER: AN ENIGMATIC
MEDIUM FULL OF DECEPTION.
A SUBSTANCE OF MANY FACES
AND MOODS. BUT UPON IT—
I, AMBROSE FROG AM IN COMMAND!
I SWIM ON IT— I BOAT ON IT—
YOU NAME IT? WITH WATER
I CAN DO ANYTHING!

I SUPPOSE
YOU CAN
WALK
ON IT
TOO—
EH,
FROG?

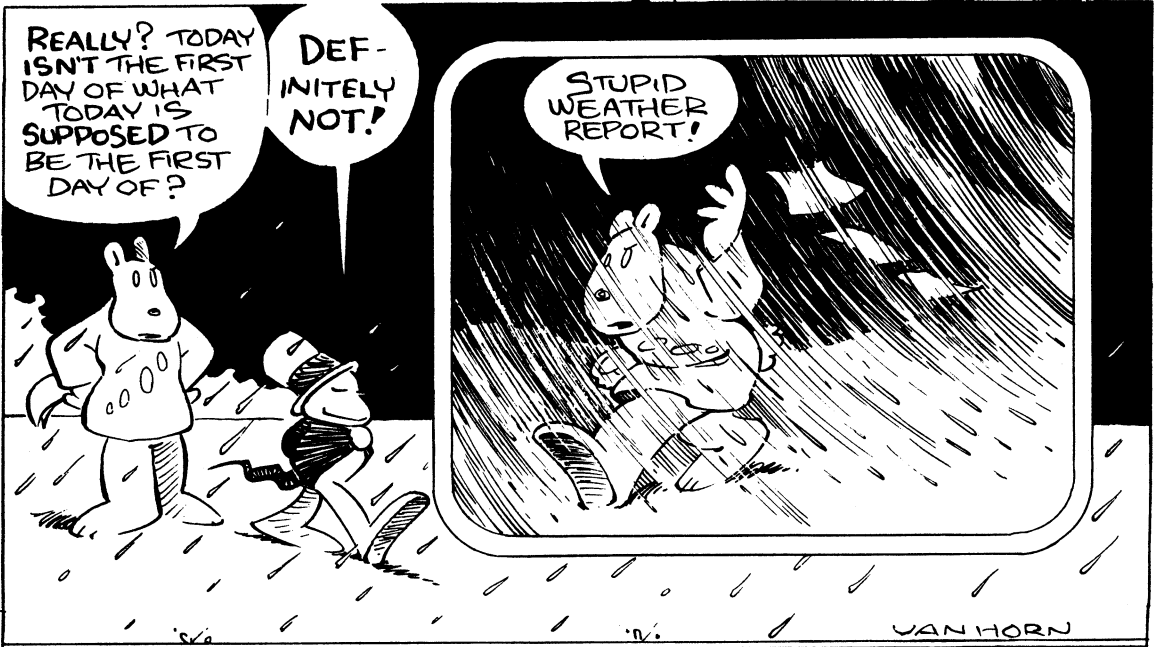
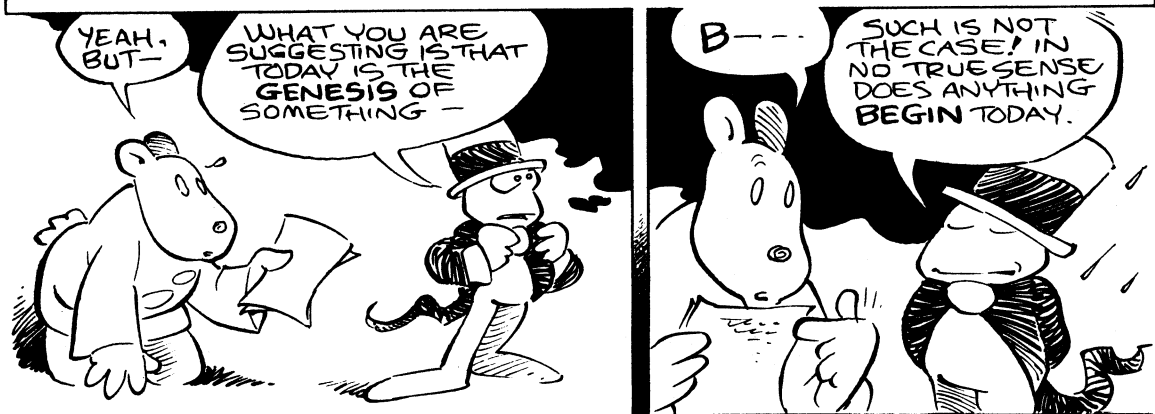
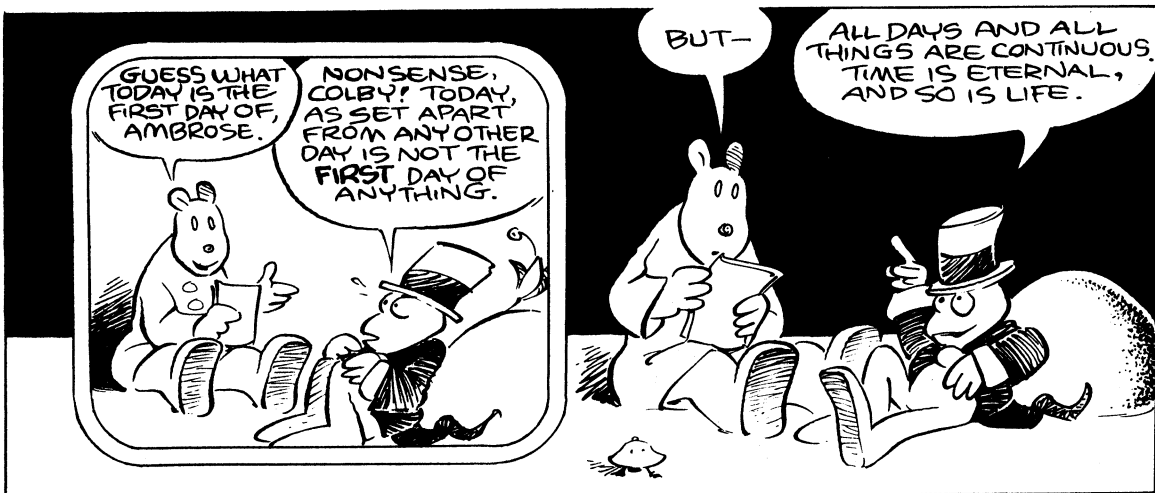
CERTAINLY.

TELL ME HOW,
FROG, AND HAVE
A GOOD **SOLID**
ANSWER—

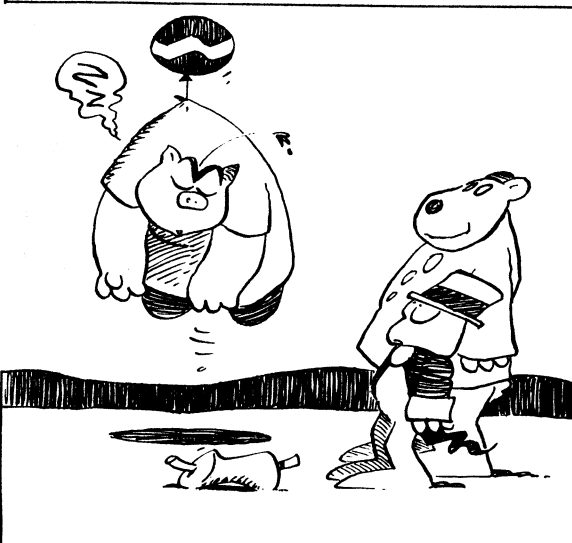
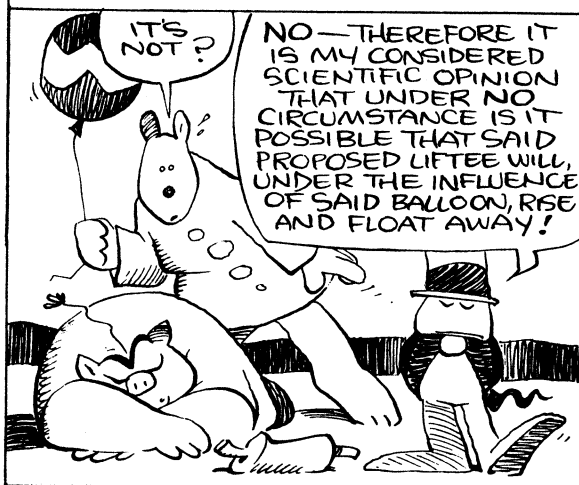
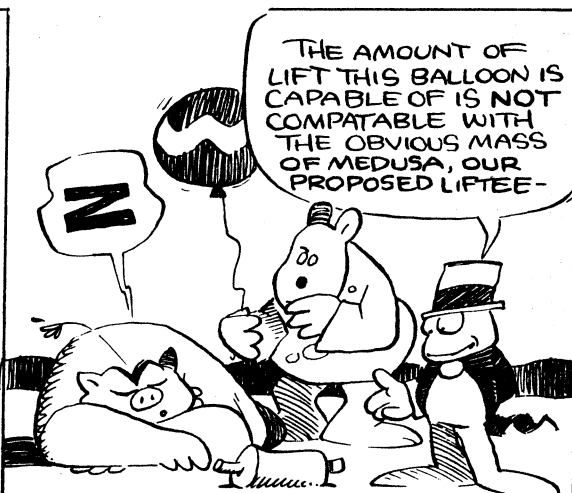
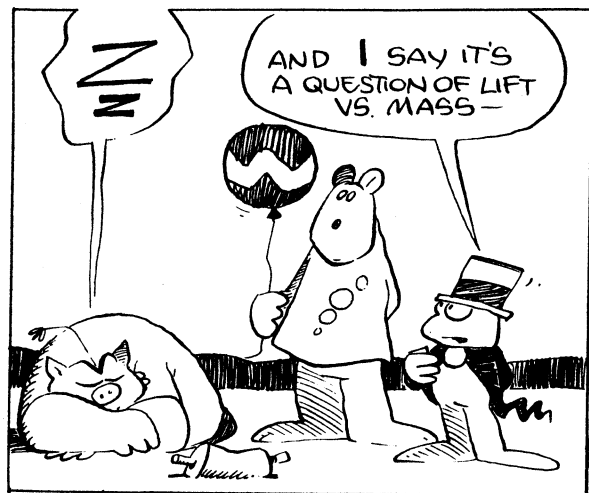


VAN HORN

AMBROSE



AMBROSIE



JAN HORN

A M B R O S E

AMBROSE, REMEMBER HOW YOU WERE TELLING ME ABOUT THE MOON EATING PIG?

YES - EVERY TWO WEEKS A GREAT PIG EATS THE MOON.



YEAH - WELL I JUST SAW TWO GIGANTIC PIGS THUNDERING ACROSS THE HEAVENS.

TWO?



NONSENSE, COLBY! ONLY ONE PIG IS ALLOWED TO EAT THE MOON. THEY HAVE A VERY STRONG UNION!

LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT, AMBROSE -



ONLY ONE PIG IS ALLOWED TO EAT THE MOON - RIGHT?

RIGHT.



AND I SAW TWO.

A DELUSION. THERE IS NO LOGICAL REASON FOR TWO PIGS.

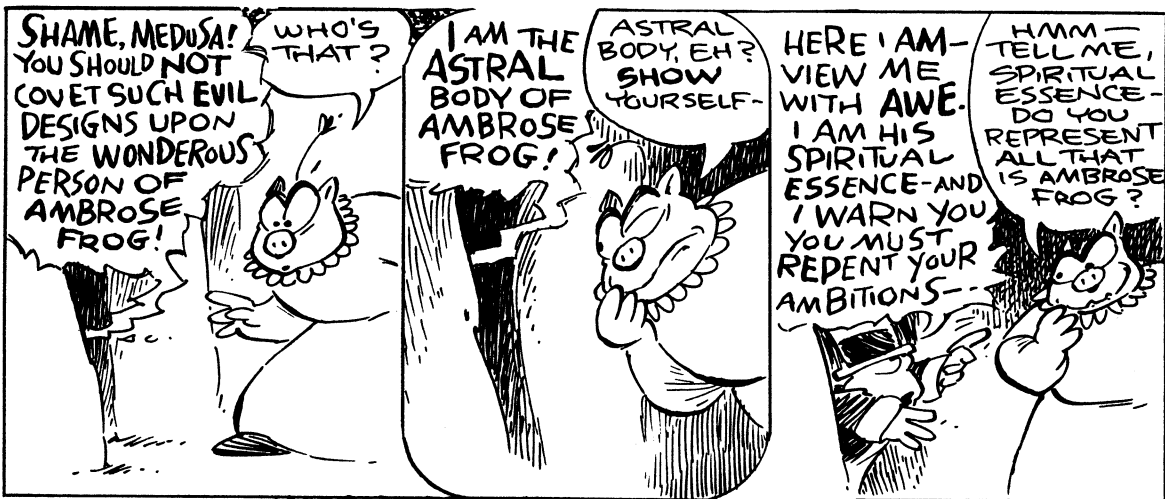


NOW WHY WOULD I SEE TWO PIGS?



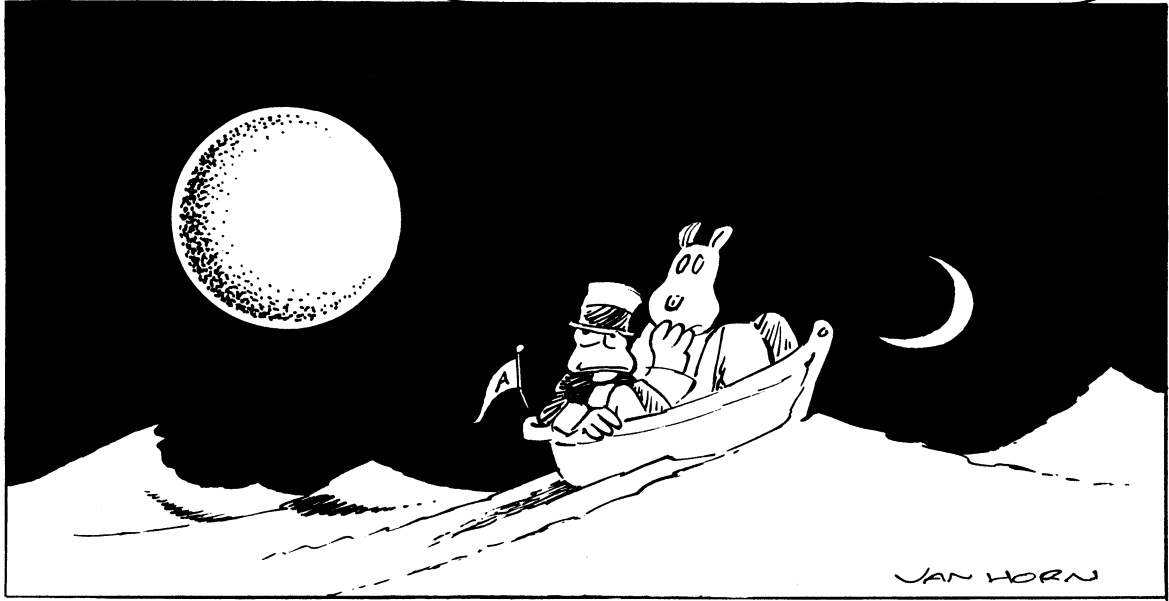
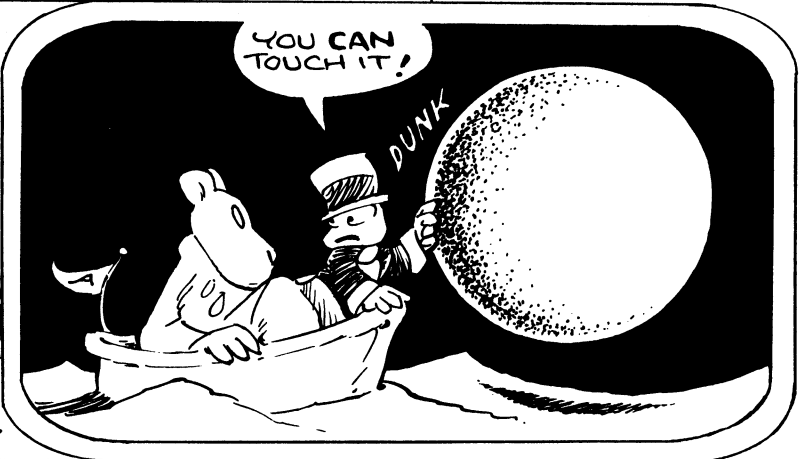
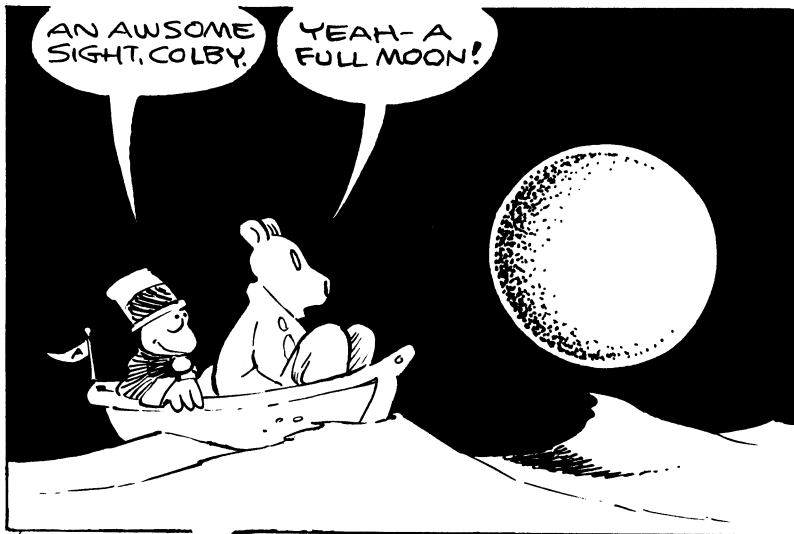
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A M B R O S E



VAN HORN

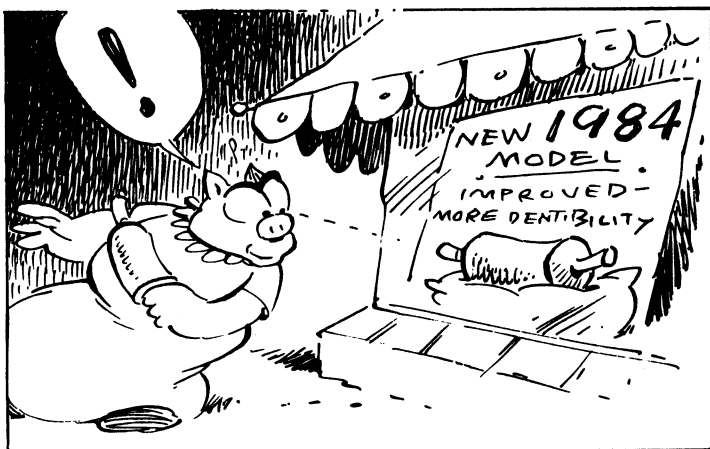
A M B R O S E



JAN HORN

A M B R O S E

THIS OLD PIN ISN'T
DOING ITS JOB
NOWADAYS - IT HASN'T
DENTED THAT FROGS
COME IN WEEKS!



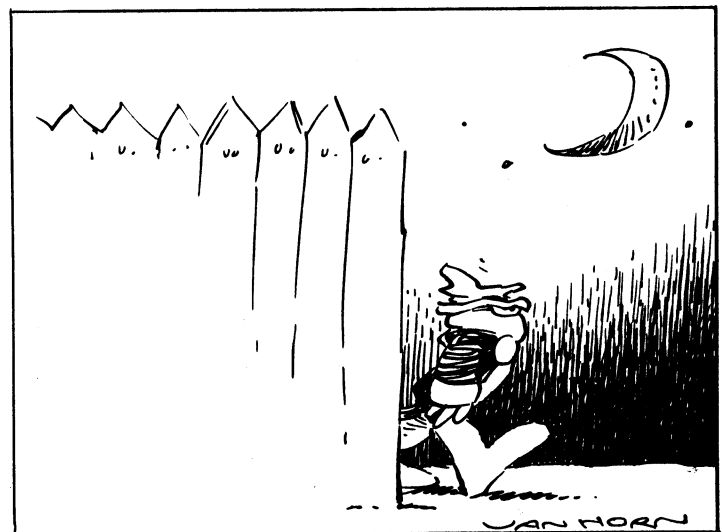
YOU'LL LOVE THAT
ONE, MADAM -
A REAL DINGER!

I'LL
TAKE
IT!

BE GONE, OLD
AND USELESS
ONE...

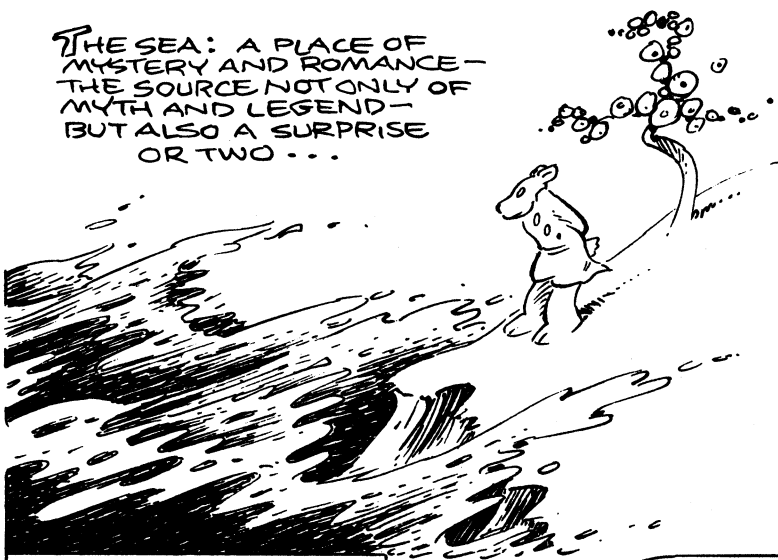


... ME AND MY
NEW FRIEND
HAVE A FROG
TO FIND--
DON'T WE?

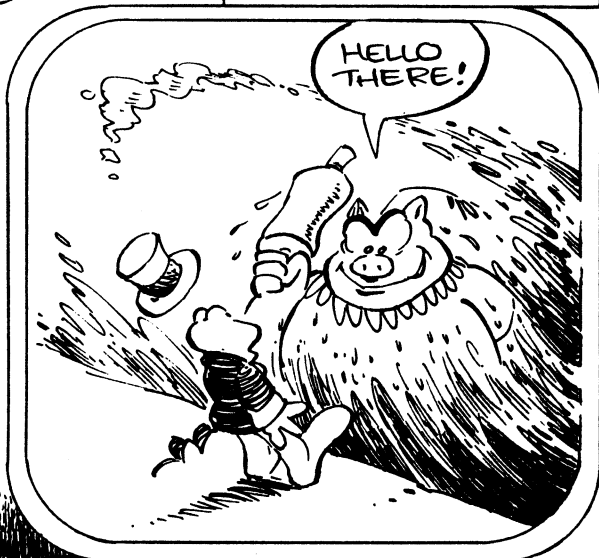


A M B R O S E

THE SEA: A PLACE OF
MYSTERY AND ROMANCE—
THE SOURCE NOT ONLY OF
MYTH AND LEGEND—
BUT ALSO A SURPRISE
OR TWO...



I SAW IT, AMBROSE!
IT CAME RIGHT OUT
OF THE WATER—
AN AWFUL
MONSTER! IT EVEN
TALKED! GO SEE—



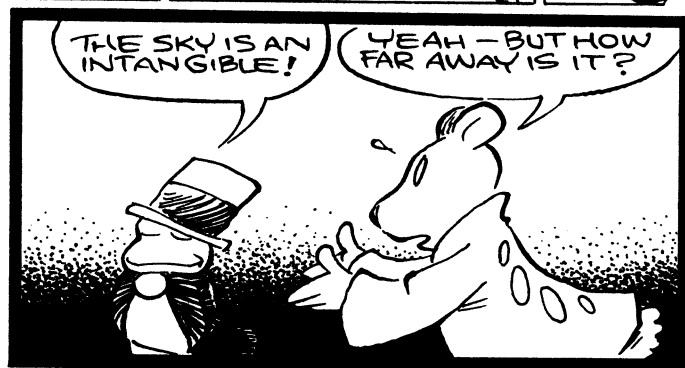
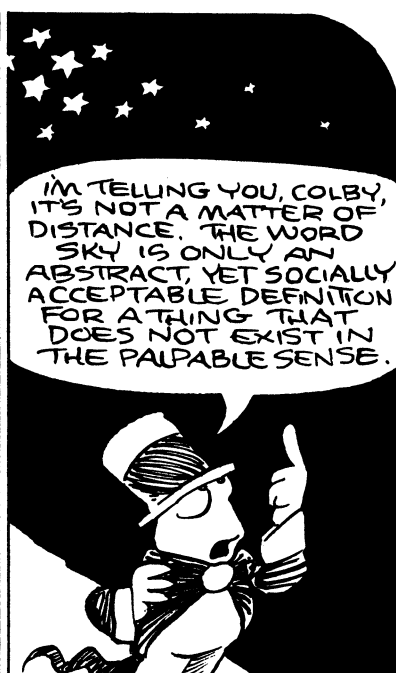
WELL, AMBROSE—
WAS I RIGHT?

YOU
WERE
RIGHT.



JAN HORN

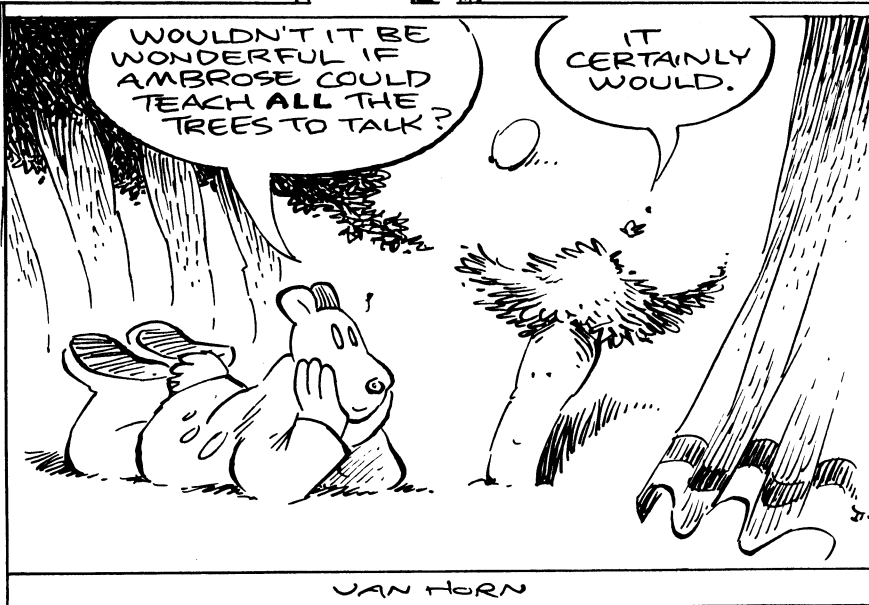
AMBROSE



A M B R O S E



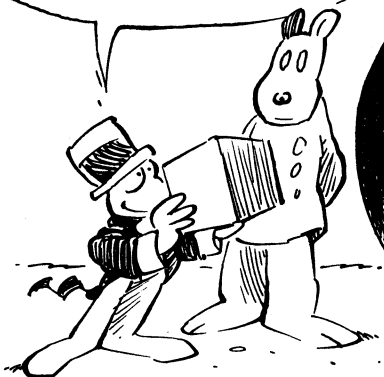
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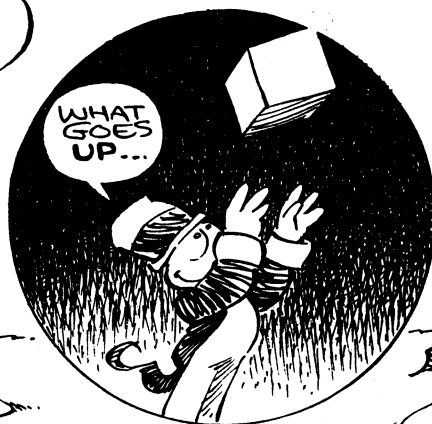
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A M B R O S E

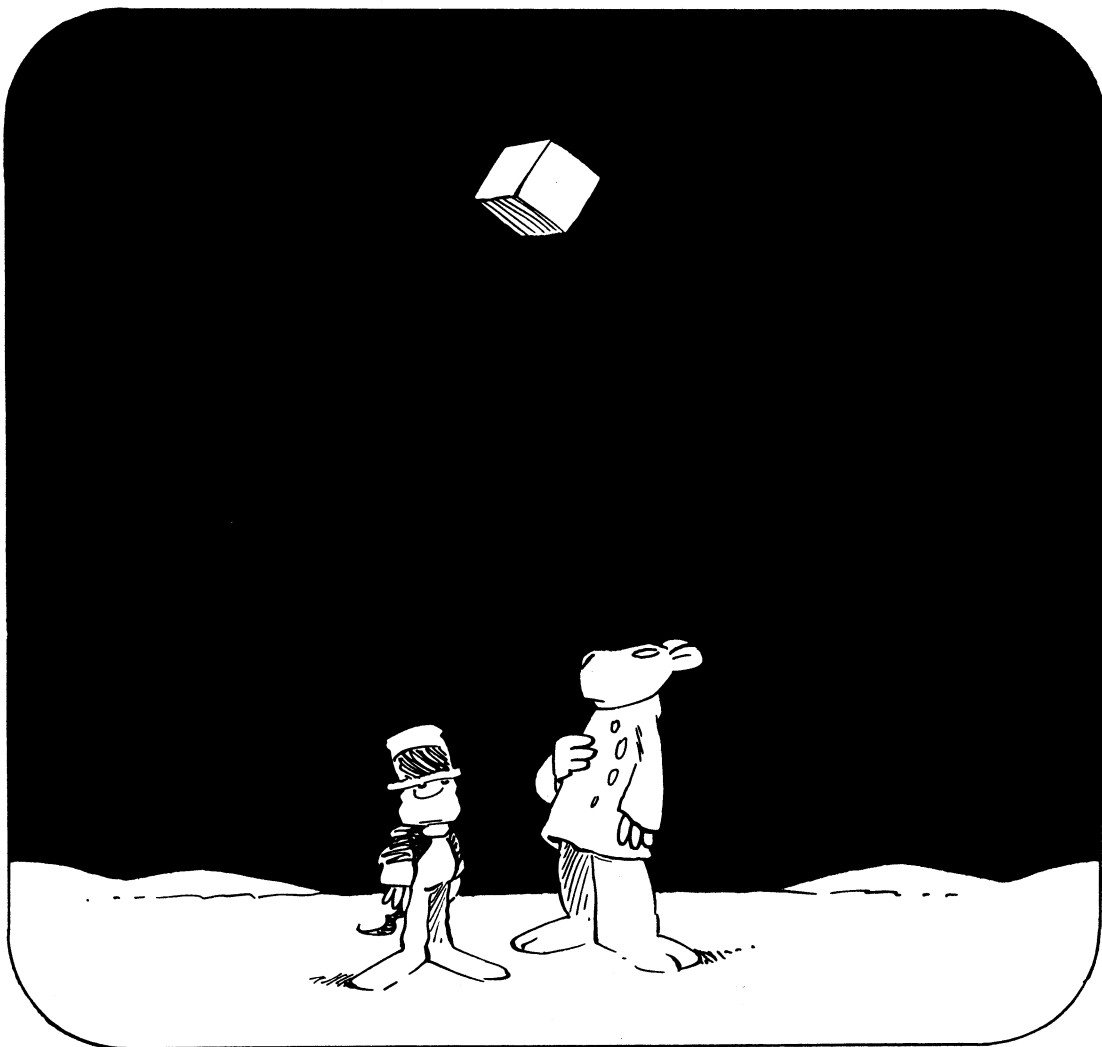
OBSERVE, COLBY—
AN IRREFUTABLE
LAW OF NATURE—



WHAT
GOES
UP...



...MUST
COME
DOWN!



VAN HORN

OH, WONDERFUL!
WE CAN'T EVEN
KEEP THE DAMN
LOGO CENTERED!

No one's
gonna want
to buy
this
book!

by Doug Gray

THE EYE OF MONGOMBO



You're a Fool,
Jumballah!!
You know it won't
take me long to find
an antidote!



Jumballah think of this!
Try to prepare antidote
without
fingers!

CURSES!



You're still
a fool, Jumballah!
I can always
get someone
else to help
me!!

Jumballah
think of
that, too!

whoops!



Well, you still
have to catch
me, Jumballah!
I'm not sitting
duck!!

AAAARGH!!

CHOP



Always you make bad
jokes, rotten puns!
Soon, you will not
make jokes! You will
only make loud, piercing
screams!!

Says you!!
outta my
way,
Nuwask!!

Heg!!

an actual scene! →

In this adventure/comedy series, anthropology professor and globe-trotting adventurer Cliff Carlson is fired due to his villainous arch-rival Professor Nuskle, and then turned into a duck by an evil witch-doctor. He and his faithful assistants take off on a journey to find the Eye of Mongombo, when they run into two old enemies: Gruber and Kawlial!

FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS

EYE OF MONGOMBO #1. 28 pages, black-and-white comic book. \$2.00 (\$2.50 in Canada)

We asked Marcel Chevalier, the famous pantomime artist, to give his interpretation of the EYE OF MONGOMBO (translations provided by Mimes of America)



"thrilling, edge-of-your-seat excitement! Suspense and drama in the Hitchcock tradition!"

"Hilarious comedy... Sophisticated... would not be out of place on a shelf next to Oscar Wilde."



"terrific characters... continues the literary tradition of Ishmael, Huck Finn, and ... Owl!"

"I think I'm stuck... I can't breathe... help! ... For God's sake, someone please help me!"



BUY IT
NOW...

while you
STILL CAN!

AAAA
HAHA!

Gray/Gray



PLEASE
PLEASE
PLEASE
Buy my
comic!

Doug Sez:

Welcome to the Fantagraphics

MENAGERIE

ADVENTURES OF CAPT. JACK

Adventures of Captain Jack #6: Herman and Janet decide to elope.

Adventures of Captain Jack #7: Beezlebub intrudes in Herman and Janet's relationship.

Adventures of Captain Jack #8: A daring escape, the Captain in drag, and more.

Adventures of Captain Jack #9: Pool hustling with Saturated Fats, and the conclusion of the Janet-Herman-and-Beezlebub storyline!

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



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 *Birthingright* continue, Tom Stazer's *Lionheart* premieres, and the first Ken Macklin cover painting!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Critters #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 written and 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*.

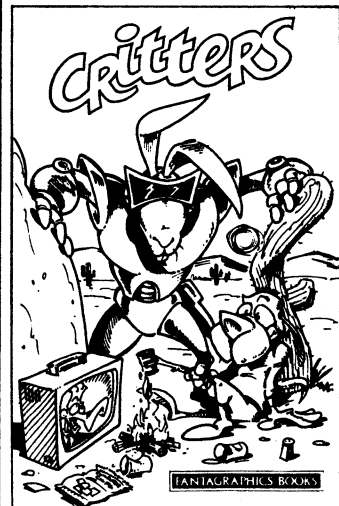
Critters #29: The climax to *Lionheart*, plus *Lizards*, the wacky German cartoonist Volker Reiche, and a one-page *Captain Jack*.

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-page.

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 Hallowe'en 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 #39: A full-length *Fission Chicken* story parodies the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.

Critters #40: *Gnuff* returns in a full-length story by Freddy Milton.

Critters #41: Book-length *Duck "Bill" Platypus* tale.

Critters #42: *Not the Adventures of Captain Jack* by Mike Kazaleh, starring Herman and Janet.

Critters #43: *Lionheart* faces a possibly malevolent alien in an apartment building.

Critters #44: The gripping climax to the *Blue Beagle* "Watchdogs" saga—with a surprise ending!

Critters #45: William Van Horn's *Ambrose* is featured in a collection of gag strips.

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

DOG BOY

Dog Boy #2: Sir Isaac Newton guest stars as reality unravels.

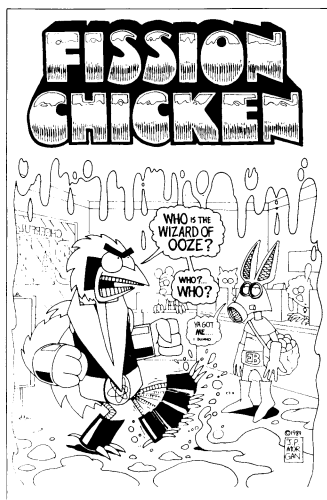
Dog Boy #3: Dog Boy shows how to publish your own comic book.

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

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!

FISSION CHICKEN



Fission Chicken #1: "The Wizard of Ooze," plus "Duck 'Bill' Platypus."

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

Hugo #1: Milton (*Midnite*) Knight's feline "Meets the Baron."

Hugo #2: Hugo becomes a cartoonist and gets into deep trouble.

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

MYRON MOOSE

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

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

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

USAGI YOJIMBO

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

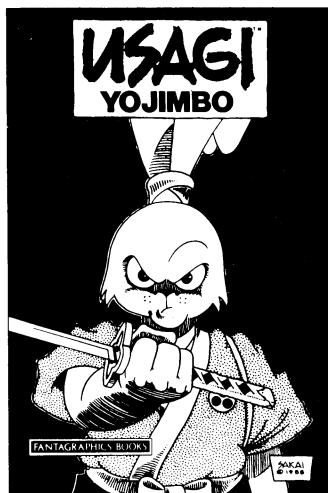
Usagi Yojimbo #8: "A Mother's Love," plus Luth's "Rockhoppers."

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: The first chapter of "Dragon Bellow Conspiracy," plus an episode of Shaw! & Evanier's "Digger Duckbill."



Usagi Yojimbo #14: "Dragon Bellow Conspiracy" continues, now full-length in every issue!

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

Usagi Yojimbo #16: "Dragon Bellow" continues.

Usagi Yojimbo #17: "Dragon Bellow" concludes.

Usagi Yojimbo #18: The epilogue to "Dragon Bellow," including the fate of the Blind Swordsbig.

Usagi Yojimbo Color Special #1: New Sakai stuff, plus classic cover reprints and a *Gnuff* story!

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!

Amazing Heroes #165: Donna Barr.

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.

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!

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

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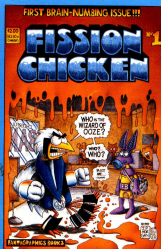
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