

Pat Sass 12

A fanzine by Taral Wayne, Esq.

245 Dunn Ave., Apt. 2111, Toronto, Ontario,

M6K 1M6, Canada, Taral@bell.net, (416)

531-8974, Kiddelidivee Books & Art 324,

produced for likely the last time for the

cartoonists funny animal apa, Rowrbrazzle.



April 2019 – Before I really get into the last issue, I want to explain that most of the issue is compiled from odd bits of material. Some of these pieces have nowhere else to go, others have been published someplace else, and some are thrown together on the spur of the moment. Now and then a zine fits together almost serendipitously ... as in *this* case. The first little article was slung together in a journal in which I exposed my overwhelming sense of ennui when it comes to internet art. But the article that follows next is a substantial piece of writing that explains much about my early influences as an artist. I think they create an interesting contrast, and hope you think so too. If not, perhaps the *Beatrix* portfolio will be more to your taste. And, if not that, by George, you're being damn picky, don't you think?

A Picture Ain't Worth a Dime

A picture was worth a thousand words to the ancient Chinese philosopher who copyrighted that expression in 1061, or then about. What he was probably thinking was that the *word* rates in ancient China were much too low. Lately, I've been thinking much the same thing ... except that *picture* rates have also been devalued. We live in a culture that has become over-saturated in images, assaulting us from all sides. It is impossible to avoid art, information and advertising of every sort coming at us twenty-four hours a day, in every conceivable form ... and now Information Technology is devising new ways for us to be immersed in imagery whether we want it or not even while we sleep!

I believe I am one of the pioneers of the next generation who will be nearly immune to the enticements of the second-by-second demands on our attention by the ads, warnings, instructions, packaging, symbols, icons, memes and all the other attention-grabbers that are designed to sucker us in. I speak not merely of the humble picture, but of the art with which it begins.

Enough already! For the last several years, I have been viewing art on several

Internet art sites for art, and have studied the work of hundreds, if not thousands of different artists. Those who I thought most interesting, I carefully filed away on my hard drive, while many others I kept as good examples of a “type,” even if it was not entirely to my taste. After all ... I might someday want to copy some aspect of a style or technique, or find it useful to have an example at hand. But then, I noticed how infrequently I ever referred to an artist’s folder once it had been created and filed away. A few favourite artists’ folders grew as I added to them, but the great majority were forgotten almost as soon as I created them, and never opened again.

After a while, I began to see this as pointless. I could probably find all the art online that I ever wanted, without storing it myself. And, although it took up only a negligible amount of my hard drive, what was the point of it taking up any space at all?

Following my usual relentless logic, I realized that I had, in fact, almost *no* interest in any of this art *at all*, for *any purpose*. Sometime in the last two or three years, I had lost any interest in the art *simply as art*. I did not want to look at it, much less save it and become even more familiar with the same old same-old.

As you might expect, I have virtually stopped saving any but special cases. When an artist has made a strong enough impression on me, I might save the art. I might even open a new folder. Not surprisingly, I regard old friends and cronies in a different light than I do newcomers ... toward whom I admit I may hold a different standard. I am no longer at an age when I pretend to myself that I am objective, or that I am obliged to possess the knowledge of all things.

So out with overstuffed files, hanging like bloated bangers on a string. No more will I spend the time to uncover new discoveries unless ... they are immediately, obvious exceptional. And I certainly will not research every artist just because I saw them listed among someone else’s favourites. Really, when I think about it, that way *always* lies madness.

One of the earliest jobs I ever had as an artist was as a forger. When I was probably just 21 or 22, I landed a job through the newspaper want ads, and was commissioned to paint in acrylics on canvas. It was the brainchild of a non-artist who had the quaint notion that his ideas were genius, even if he could not tell which end of brush to paint with. I had no problem with this ... but he had one condition. He would paint his signature on the canvas, and I was to remain anonymous. He was also extremely picky about the colours. I had no trouble rendering the lines, but matching coloured acrylic paint was more difficult ... all the more so as I had no experience with it. After so many years, all I can remember of the art in question is that it was something that resembled a box of Kellogg’s Cornflakes, with a flat, angular design of a rooster in primary colours. What the client thought was so important about this that he had to have it immortalized, I can’t imagine. He gave me a crude doodle and paid me, so it didn’t behoove me to complain. It occurred to me that signing his own name on the painting might not be entirely on the up-and-up, but it was pretty dorky job of work, so I didn’t feel any great remorse over it. I suspected he wanted to sell the painting as his own effort. But then, he had the nerve to complain that it wasn’t quite right. I’m not proud of it now, but this annoyed me. So, unknown to him, I signed my name anyway, painted over it again, and lastly added *his* name. For all I know, the acrylic bled through a few months later... I guess I shouldn’t have done it, but I was young and not philosophical about things then.



STARTING LINES

When I was very young, I had already decided to be an artist. Not the sort who haunts the Left Bank, trying to sell bad impressionist paintings to American tourists, but an artist all the same.

As would any young boy under the age of ten, I drew pictures of jet planes, dinosaurs, pirate ships, fast cars, armoured knights, cartoon characters and that sort of thing. I was not very good at it, either. The oldest thing that survives from this time is probably a crayon drawing done at about the age of five, that I seem to vaguely recall drawing in kindergarten. There are birds and a rabbit ... and possibly a squirrel. At least if it *is* a squirrel, it is easier to explain the acorn falling out of the tree on the left than if it is not. The strange yellow blobs in the sky may well be clouds ... but what is the rather enigmatic object nearby, that appears to be both the sun and a crescent moon? And what is the thing that has both an airplane-like tail and rudder, but also a bird-like head? I was enthusiastic, however, which may count for much while a boy is still at an early age.

The earliest *specific* ambition that I had was to become a medical anatomical artist. I'm not sure where I got that idea, since I have never had any actual interest in medicine or treating people. In fact, my interest may have been due to mere morbid curiosity. What's in a person, anyway? Bones, of course, but also organs and tissues, right? I began sketching stomachs and skulls in my school books, and filled pads of cheap drawing paper with dissected muscles. Eventually, I realized my ambition wasn't realistic. Medical schools cost tens of thousands of dollars ... even in 1960 dollars. Working your way through medical school was the sort of life for a fiend who is able to cope with working at a part-time job while attending university for a minimum of six years, and posting A and A+ grades. Moreover, my family could rarely pay the rent on a house for six consecutive months. Eventually, I realized that I just enjoyed drawing skulls ... so I decided to become a cartoonist instead!

Even before I gave up any idea of a career as a medical illustrator, I realized that there were more realistic ambitions available. Maybe I could draw for my favourite reading material, *Mad Magazine*?

I don't mean the *Mad Magazine* as it came to be in later years, but the *Mad* that I read in the early '60s, which was a whole different kind of *meshuggah* than the mild-mannered *Mad* of the '70s. I came too late to see the satirical comic book that folded in the '50s, but I became an ardent fan of the magazine. I think the first issue I ever saw was the October 1957 Halloween number ... although, without an allowance, I wasn't able to buy an actual copy of one to read until 1960. In some ways, *Mad* was even better as a magazine than it had as a comic. The best material from the old comic was kept in

constant print as a series of paperback books, but now there was a new monthly issue that boasted an even larger stable of first-rate artists, and even more densely written material than before. My favourites were the inimitable Jack Davis, Wally Wood, George Woodbridge, David Berg and – of course – the most outrageous *Mad* artist of all time, Will Elder!

But there were reasons to think I would never to be able to crack the market at *Mad Magazine*. For one thing, I was not Jewish. While I can't swear that everyone who worked at *Mad* was Jewish, there was a lingering suspicion that everyone was. Al Feldstein, Harvey Kurtzman, Will Elder, and Dave Berg certainly were. But Jack Davis was a good ol' boy, and I think he was no more Jewish than grits and hogback. It was even more so with the Spanish-American cartoonist, Sergio Aragonés. There was no doubt that a smattering of Yiddish vocabulary was simply not enough to work at *Mad*. It was not enough to drop words such as *chutzpah* and *kreplach* into your speech. You had to *live* in New York City.

I was about 12, so when I asked my Mom if it would be okay if I moved on my own to New York, she just said, "You don't even like to spend the day with your Granddad." It was true. I didn't. I could no more move away from Toronto than I could have ridden my bicycle to Neptune. I was probably less crushed by disappointment than showed at the time...

By then, fortunately, I had a new plan, one that would not be furthered one bit by brushing up on my Yiddish. I had a new favourite funny magazine, that would not challenge my linguistic skills ... nor my lack of cultural sophistication.

I intended to try my luck with unsolicited contributions to *CARtoons!*

The magazine had already been in publication for a couple of years before I saw a copy at the home of one of my friends. Like a lot of young boys then, I was car-crazy. It was one of the best possible times to be born into the car culture. The Fifties had blossomed into classics such as the mighty Chevy small block and the Dodge Hemi, engines that still cause hearts to rev when given the gas. After awkward starts, the tail fin would never be more glorious. Detroit experimented with hardtops that retracted into the rear deck, and sedans with clear Plexiglas panels became standard options. Continental tires enjoyed a comeback. White sidewall tires shone like spats. This was the age of the Thunderbird, the Corvette, the pink Caddy, the Buick Riviera, Pontiac Parisienne, the Chevrolet Impala, the Olds 442, the GTO, the LTD, the "Judge" and the "The Roadrunner." Was a giant hunk of Detroit Iron not to your taste? Then the Volkswagen Beetle was also sweeping the nation's campuses. For exotic tastes, there were imports such as the Porsche Carrera and the British-made MG. Nor can I forget to mention the car that almost every poll has called "the sexiest car ever made" – the fabulous Jaguar XKE.

It was every bit as exciting in my day as, no doubt, some new bauble of a cell phone is to those who are under 40 today ... after cars had become matter-of-fact.

So while I had originally set my sights higher, I changed my ambition into becoming a cartoonist for *CARtoons* instead.

The magazine was a lot like *Mad*, in fact. The issues were printed in black and white, on 8½-by-11 inch pulp paper, and ran 52 pages. But the world inside its covers was completely different. The contrast, to my 16-year-old imagination, was staggering. Whereas New York was a city of heavy serge police uniforms, crowded walk-ups, street vendors and stoops, Los Angeles was a city of cops in short sleeves and sunglasses, Spanish tile architecture, drive-ins shaped like hot dogs and palm trees in the front yard. Of course, I had never experienced either place in person, but they were constructs of the mind in any case.

Far more radical was the difference between Harvey Kurtzman's Yiddish humour and the sensibilities of Pappy Lemmons, the editor of *CARtoons*. The humour in *CARtoons* was as specialized as you probably think.

The cartoons were entirely about hot rods, drag racing and custom styling. This covered far more exotic ground than it sounds. For instance, there were "lead sleds," often sculpted from the ground up with raw lead, just as you would carve mashed potatoes for a visiting E.T. They literally weighed a ton, and the suspensions frequently broke down ... since the prevailing auto aesthetic stressed light, airy structures! On the other hand, a "A/A gasser" was little more than an old automobile shell, with a steel-tube frame under it, built expressly for speed.

However, the undisputed king of the drag strip was the "dragster." They came in a number of classes based on cubic inch displacement, but the biggest drew respect from anyone, just for sheer *noise!* The engine was built from custom parts, lovingly assembled by the mechanics, maintained with more care than a stop-watch and fueled with exotic mixtures that included measured amounts of nitromethane and methane. Engine sizes began at 426 cubic inches, based on the incredible Dodge Hemi, but could be bored larger if the drag racer had the balls. It was difficult to even measure the power of such a monster, since they were never run at full max, and would in fact be destroyed in something like *ten seconds* at full throttle. Estimates of horsepower ran from 8,500 to 10,000 HP ... comparable to a full-sized diesel-electric train engine. It was normal for such a dragster's engine to be dismantled, all the moving parts replaced, and the major components rebuilt after only two or three races. Royalty is costly. But acceleration might be 0-to-100, in well under *one second*, and speeds might exceed 335 m.p.h. (535 km/hr).

"Funny Cars" began as competition cars and became a class unto themselves. At first they were "stockers" whose showroom Ford or Chevy bodies were stripped of excess weight and their engines modified for more horsepower. Gradually, the cars became less and less stock, so modified for out-and-out competition that they were no longer street-legal. Oddly, a pretense was kept up that these were cars just like those in the street, but in reality they were "the funny cars." They were painted up like cheap tarts on Hollywood and Vine, and festooned with decals proclaiming their sponsorship ... but, underneath, "funny cars" were the same pure competition cars as the dragsters. Some of the more outrageous ones were as much for show as for go, and drew huge crowds to the track. Show-stoppers such as the *Hemi-Under-Glass* – a rearward-mounted engine under a glass window – or *The Little Red Wagon* – an open-bed Dodge van with a huge blown engine that did wheelstands on demand – were worth big money to their sponsors.

It wasn't all high-stakes competition, though. Most hot-rodders just dug their own thing, whether it was "cruising the gut" in their T-bucket with tuck-and-roll, or a chopped and channeled '49 Merc. Self-expression rather than competition extended from the track to the boulevard, and from there to every other mode of youth culture. Kids turned 18, and applied for their driver's license the next day. They listened to music by Jan and Dean and The Beach Boys, who were heavily into the car culture. They went to beach movies to fantasize over summer-long dance parties, in which kids named "Moongoogie" and "Angelpie" drove their own T-Bird or "Woody." When they could not drive or afford a car, they at least skateboarded to the neighborhood smoke shop to buy an AMT or Monogram model kit of the "Monkee Mobile" or the "Munster Koach." And if you hadn't the skill even for model making... well, at least you could wear a "Rat Fink" t-shirt.

The car culture spread even as far as Toronto, which was about as un-hip as any place that wasn't Winnipeg could be in the 1960s universe.

As I was a kid myself, I toted up my the quarters from my allowance when I wanted to buy a new model kit. I had several interests as a model builder, actually, but opening the box for the first time before beginning work on a 1965 Avanti by AMT, Monogram's "Lil' Coffin," or one of the innumerable "Weird-ohs" by the Hawk company, was always a thrill. I soon graduated from out-of-the-box kits to kit-bashing, and even scratch building. I entered a few hobby show contests, and even won a couple of worthless prizes.

It is really just about impossible to exaggerate how pervasive the car culture *was* in the '60s.

What it came down to, therefore, was to begin some serious drawing if I was going to be a cartoonist in the car culture, and not a Yiddish humorist as I had originally intended.

I began by assiduously studying the material. I didn't know a great deal about cars, and couldn't have checked the gas level without a light. But I had a huge stack of *Drag Cartoons*, *Hot Rod Cartoons*, *CARtoons*, *CYCLEtoons* and *SURFtoons* that I used as reference. Reading the stories over and over, I began to penetrate the mysteries of high-performance auto mechanics, and mastered the vocabularies. Before I knew it, I was able to speak about "slicks," "pots," "flat heads," "Moons", "Thrush exhausts" and "Hurst shifts" as though I knew what they really were. The truth was that I never *really* knew much about how cars work ... what I *did* know was how everything ought to *look* when I drew it!

There was more to the subject than most readers probably suspect. For instance, on the subject of superchargers – or "blowers" – there were two main kinds. One fed compressed air to the intake manifolds, using exhaust pressure. This method has really come into its own in modern luxury sports cars today. The other method dates back to the days of turn-of-the-century touring cars, and used mechanical rotors to force air direct into the manifold. The granddad of this method was the Roots supercharger, made famous in the 1920s by the Bentley racers. James Bond's prize possession was a vintage Bentley with a Roots-type supercharger bolted forward of the engine in a very distinctive manner. Most hot rods and dragsters favoured the Roots type also. The usual configuration was a "bug catcher" air scoop at the top of the stack, and a boxy, belt-driven "blower" bolted right to the engine. Although generally the same, different makers had their own distinctive "look" about them, and they had to be shown *accurately*.

I strove to draw what I saw in the pages of *CARtoons* as best I could, but the past masters knew their business, inside and out. They drew from the race track – some even worked on high performance vehicles in their jobs – and most were at least knowledgeable enthusiasts.

One of the best was Pete Miller, whose own self-published magazine set the tone for the rest. His art had a rather rough edge to it at times, but could be as realistic as the occasion required. George "Pappy" Lemmons was another drag cartoonist who favored realism, but with more "big foot" feel. "Pappy" was a self-syled "oldster" and editor of *CARtoons*, who had a trio of fictitious foils who would perpetually louse up his machinations. Among other favourites were Nelson Dewey (or "Ned,") Jim Grube, Dennis Ellefson and Jim Willoughby ... about whom I have been able to discover almost nothing. Ellefson is at least mentioned outside Peterson Publications, having contributed for a number of years to *Last Gasp Comics*, *Slow Death Funnies* and *Cocaine Comics*. Apparently he died in 1997. But Willoughby remains obscure. By coincidence, I turned up another Jim Willoughby, who was, by further coincidence, a native of Toronto ... but no relation to the artist. Without far more investigation, the Internet fails to reveal more.

And of course, no survey of car culture could be complete without mentioning Gilbert Shelton and Ed "Big Daddy" Roth. The creator of *The Furry Freak Brothers* was at least as closely tied to underground

comics as he was to *Wonder Warthog* and the hot rod scene. And “Big Daddy’s” handpainted monster t-shirts were probably as responsible as any other factor for the sudden efflorescence of the car culture in Southern California. Both artists had close ties to the Peterson and Miller publications.

It might seem that the stage should have been set for my future, brilliant career.

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Alas, it was never to be.

I spent the next years or two drawing hot rods, and even drew two or three comic strips that still survive. But I never submitted them for an editor’s consideration. So I didn’t even have the experience of a humiliating rejection. Instead, I just put the art away and went on to other things – in many ways, the story of my life. I have always had a disconnect between intention and action, as though by merely completing the work I had done my part, and now it was the world’s turn to follow through. Unfortunately, the world has never worked that way, and nothing I did would ever be published ... unless I first brought it to someone’s attention.

Even so, I have a suspicion that the cartoon magazines would have turned out to be a closed shop anyway. Even if I was not a Jewish cartoonist in New York, I would have not been an auto shop cartoonist in Los Angeles. One of the advantages of being easily discouraged was that I was easily let down, as well.

It may come as a surprise that in the end I never even *owned* a car. I only learned to drive in my 20s, and subsequently made long trips, covering many states and provinces, driving together with someone else, but I have never own *my own* vehicle. All these years, I kept up my driver’s license in the hope that I would someday have a use for it, but gradually the opportunities ended. The last time it came time to renew my license, I decided I had wasted enough money at the motor license bureau, and bought a photo identification card instead. It was a fraction of the cost, and – with my medical condition – I wasn’t sure I ought to be behind a wheel anyway.

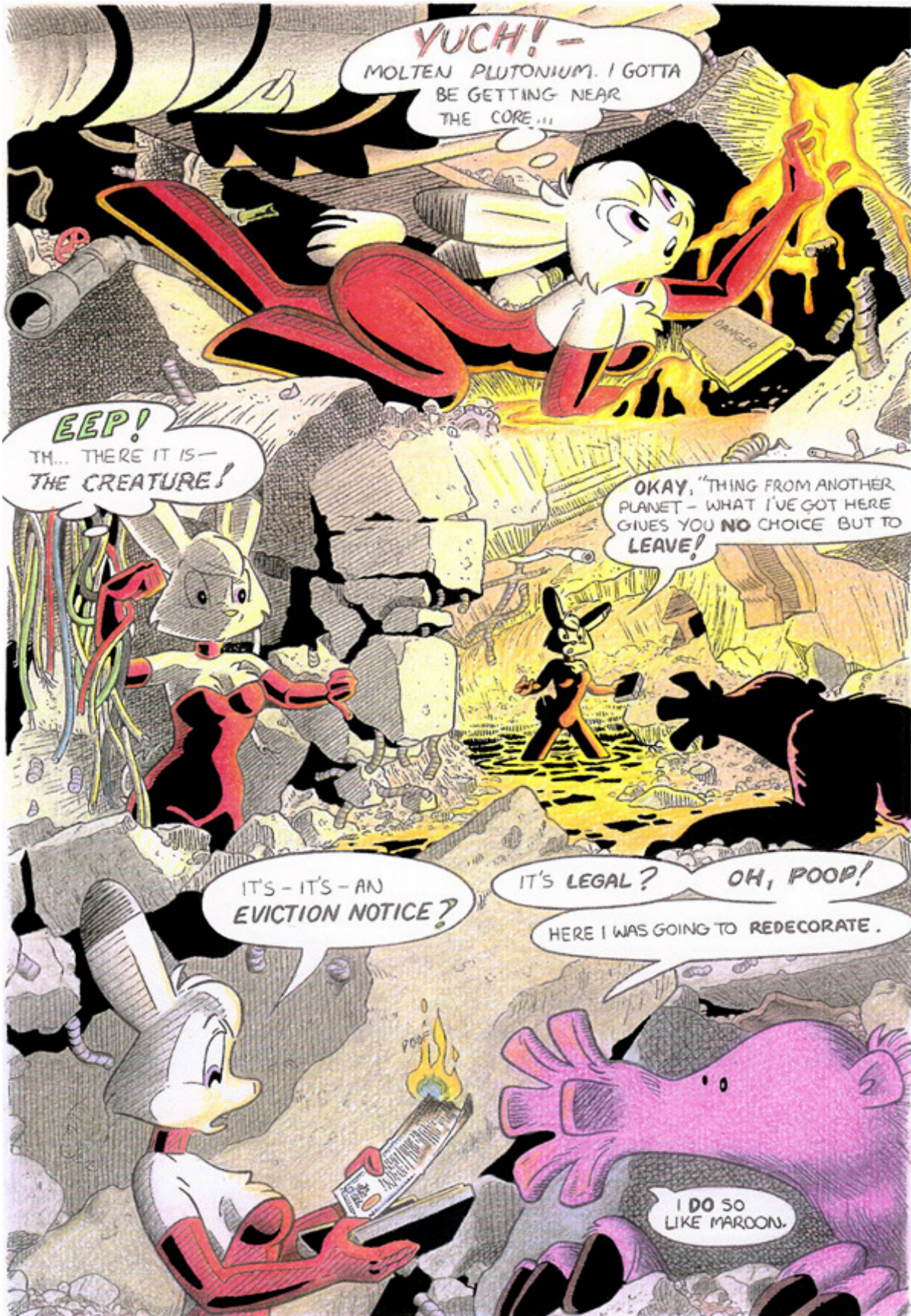
All the same, if there was any justice in life, I would have received a glowing acceptance from “Pappy,” welcoming me to the ranks of *CARtoons*’ regular artists. Perhaps I would have moved to California, where I would have bought a big ranch house near Malibu, driven a classic Lincoln or T-Bird, as well as my own little Deuce Coupe for digging the *wahines* on the beach. I would wear wrap-around shades all year round, even at night when cruising the drive-in restaurants along Sunset ... being just too cool to live. One wall of my beach pad would have been dedicated to my dozens of awards and other forms of recognition due to me for years of inspired cartooning, with a conspicuous Eisner right in the middle. Ringo Star and Harrison Ford would have sought me out at pool parties to have a word.

You unlock this door with the key of imagination. Beyond it is another dimension – a dimension of sound, a dimension of sight, a dimension of mind. You're moving into a land of both shadow and substance, of things and ideas. You've just crossed over into the Twilight Zone...

One has to know where one’s place in life has been, I suppose. But now and then I like to imagine...

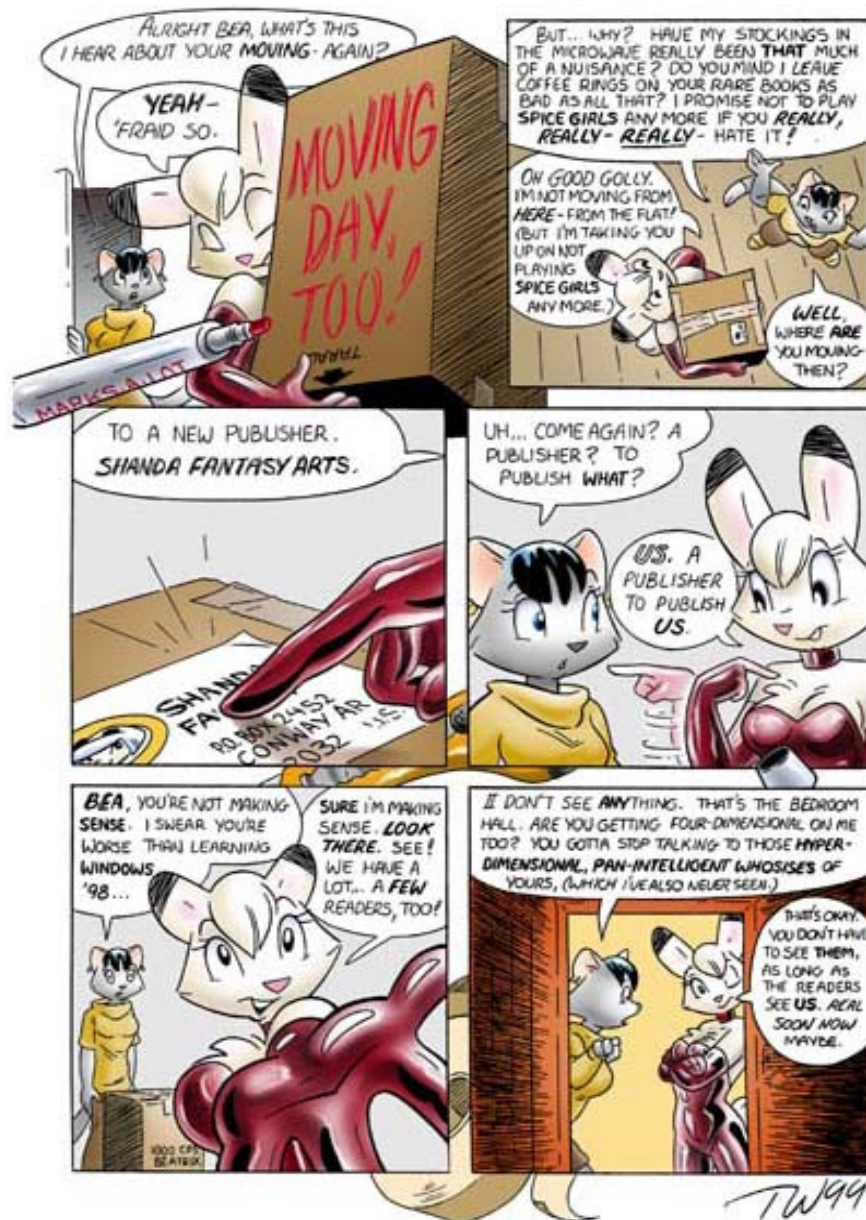
[This article was first published in a British fanzine called *Inca*, edited by Rob Jackson. It appeared in October of 2018. Since the piece is mainly about my early preoccupations and ambitions as an artist, I thought it would be of interest to the readers of *Rowrbrazzle* as well. However, to conserve space in *Rat’s Sass*, I’ve left out the illustrations I picked from various hot rod magazines that originally went with the article. If anyone wants to see them badly enough, you can view a free download of the entire British zine, and see the illos there. You should take a look. Or you might get “the pink slip,” daddy!]

A PORTFOLIO FROM TALES OF BEATRIX



The truth is that this isn't *complete*, but it is everything I could think of that was in my possession. I don't have the pages from Terrie Smith's two stories, for instance, nor Steve Gallacci's own Beatrix artwork. So, at best, this is the complete *Tara Wayne* Beatrix Portfolio.

The lead artwork was a sample page I did to show how I hoped the colour issue would turn out. I chose page 23, in which Bea was forced to climb through the red-hot, radioactive wreckage of a nuclear reactor in order to confront an alien intruder. Fortunately, he turned out to be fairly benign ... overlooking the carnage around the melt-down. It was one of my favourite pages from the entire first issue. However, I would be lying if I said I was happy with the outcome.

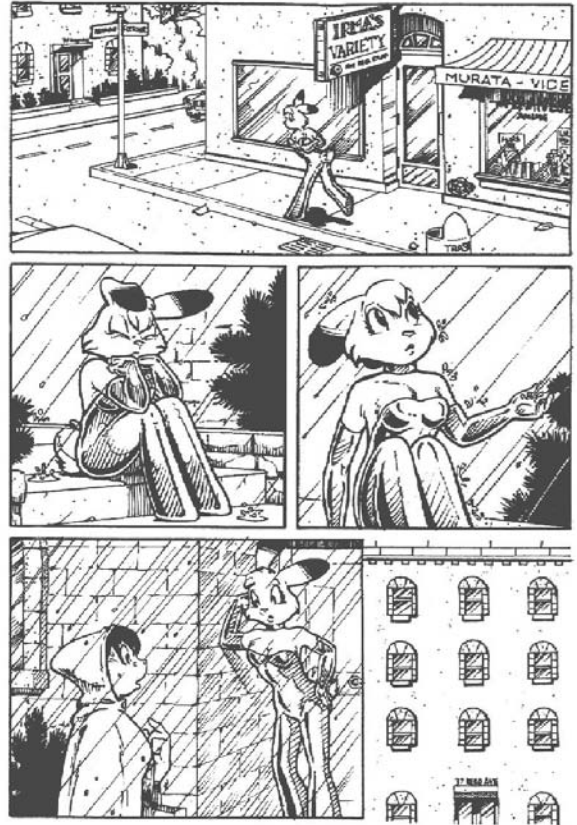


There had been a *fair* chance that there might be a third issue. I had written part of it for Shanda Fantasy Arts, and we did the back cover ad pictured above. As far as I recall, however, we never came to an agreement that we found acceptable. I wanted to publish whenever I was finished, but the publishers wanted a quarterly schedule and a deadline to satisfy regular distribution. That couldn't have been possible without taking on one or more collaborators to keep up with the work, something I was very much opposed to. Having reached deadlock, the book was dead.

Below: These two pages were inked by Adrian Kleinbergen, a talented Canadian artist who re-inked some of my pages as a trial. Under other circumstances, we might have been able to work together on this, but I suspect two of us sharing one \$5-per-page fee would not have worked out for long.

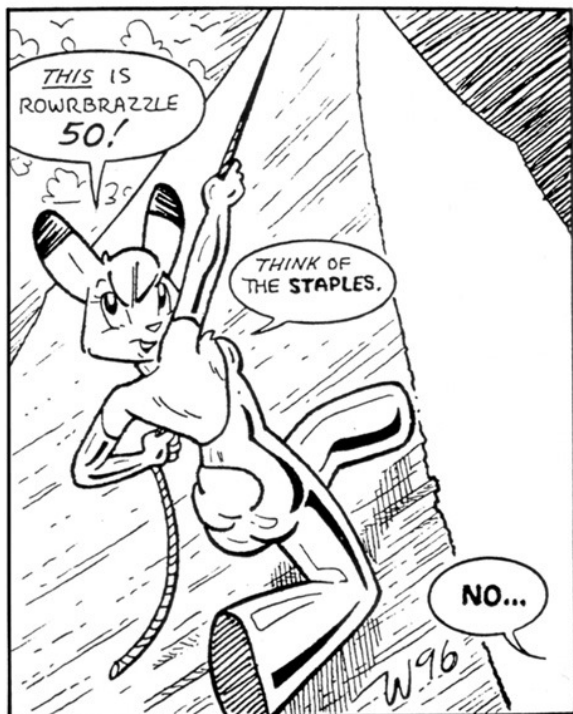
Beatrix (1st. Ish) Pages Pencil Taral Wayne -- Ink Adrian Kleinbergen

Bea -- Taral Wayne, Ink Adrian Kleinbergen, Page 2



Art for the 50th issue of Rowrbrazzle.

Pin by Steve Gallacci, produced by Edd Vick.



Beatrix Pin



Produced by Mu Press
Art by Steve Gallacci

Three never-before-seen pages expanding the first issue's story, written and drawn by Albert Temple. Also known as Gene Catlow, Al actually lost the original pages and re-drew them for me. By happy coincidence, 1999 was The Year of the Rabbit ... as involuntarily celebrated by a hapless Beatrix.



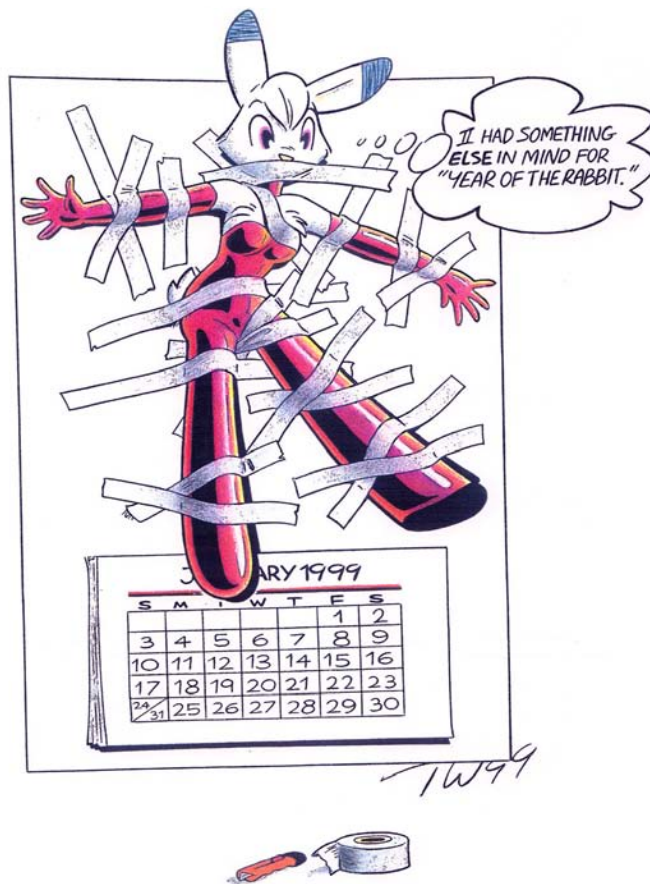
"Untold Story" p1 -- Albert Temple



"Untold Story" p2 -- Albert Temple



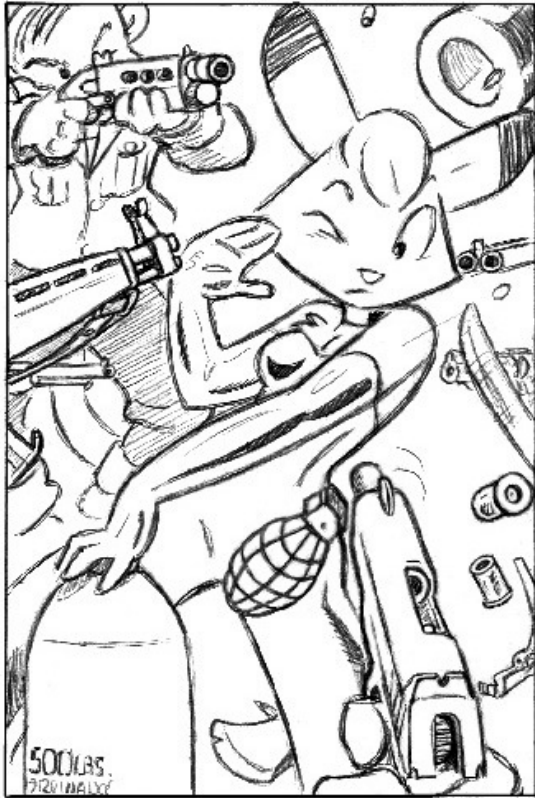
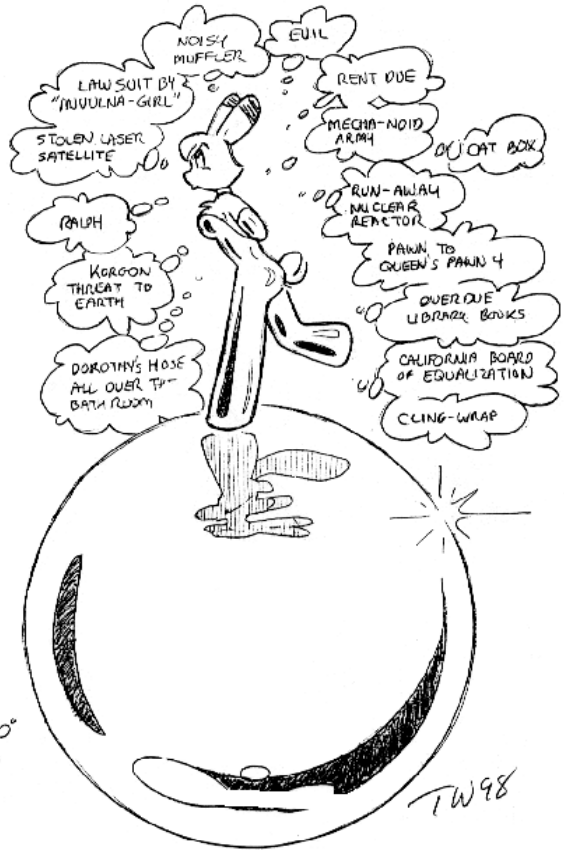
"Untold Story" p3 -- Albert Temple





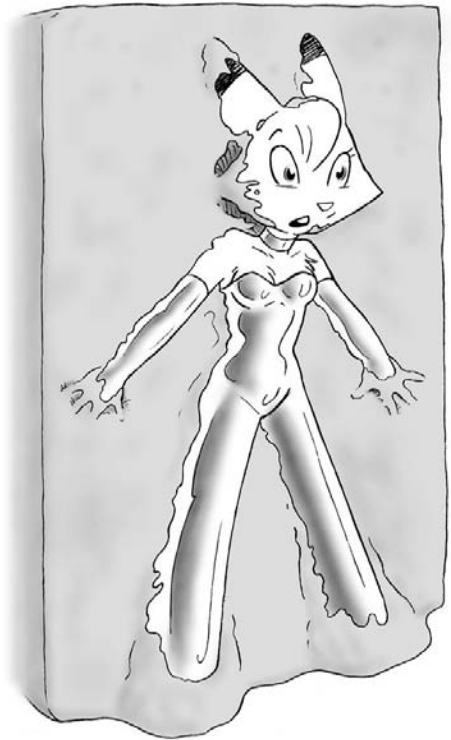
Another one of those landmark issues ... but I don't remember which one. To bring the list of official editors up to date, I ought to add Edd Vick and William Earl Haskell. The illos on the following pages are random drawings of mine, though the third may have been a commission for art to be used on an audio-cassette. Remember those?

I REMEMBER THE TASTE OF BUTTERSCOTCH CANDIES FONDLY. THEY WERE LIKE ASPERAGUS TIPS, RIGHT? OR MAYBE SOMETHING LIKE SWEDISH MEATBALLS?





I recall doing this for some reason, but I can't think what it was. I have a vague idea that it was never used as expected, and I was disappointed for reasons now forgotten.



ARE YOU SURE THIS IS THE RIGHT WAY TO MAKE A MODEL? DID THEY DO THIS WITH HOMER SIMPSON OR MISS PIGGY OVER AT McFARLANE TOYS?

TW08



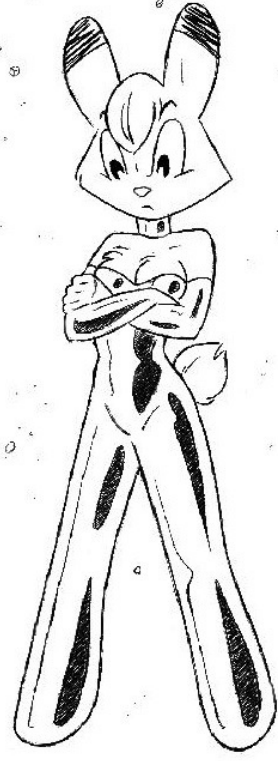
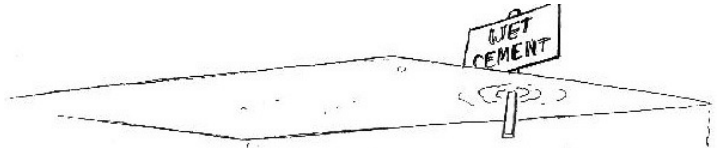
ANTE-BELLUM BEA

TW03



TW00
-CONIFUR-

EVER HAVE ONE OF THOSE MOMENTS WHEN SOMETHING SEEMS OUT OF PLACE AND YOU CAN'T QUITE PUT YOUR FINGER ON IT?

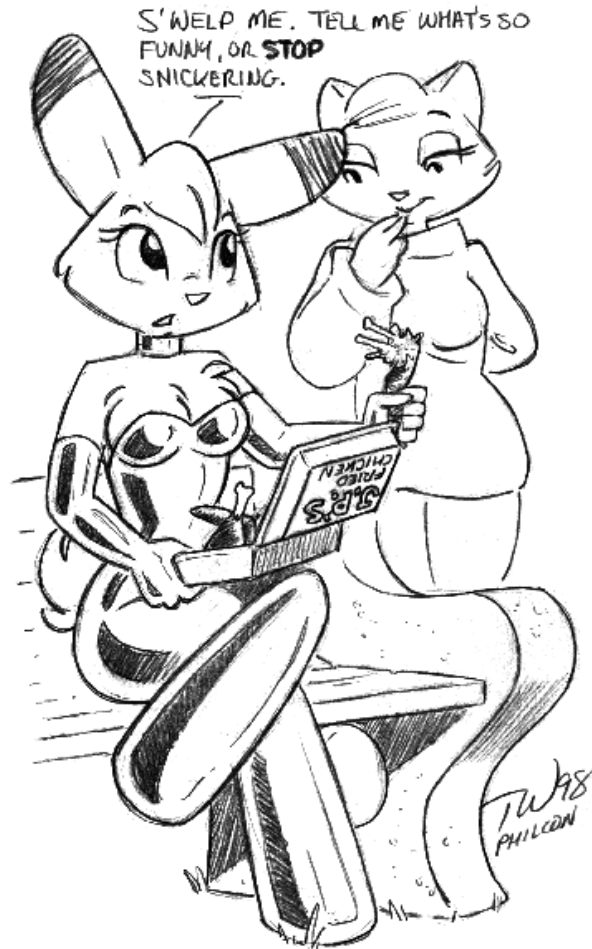
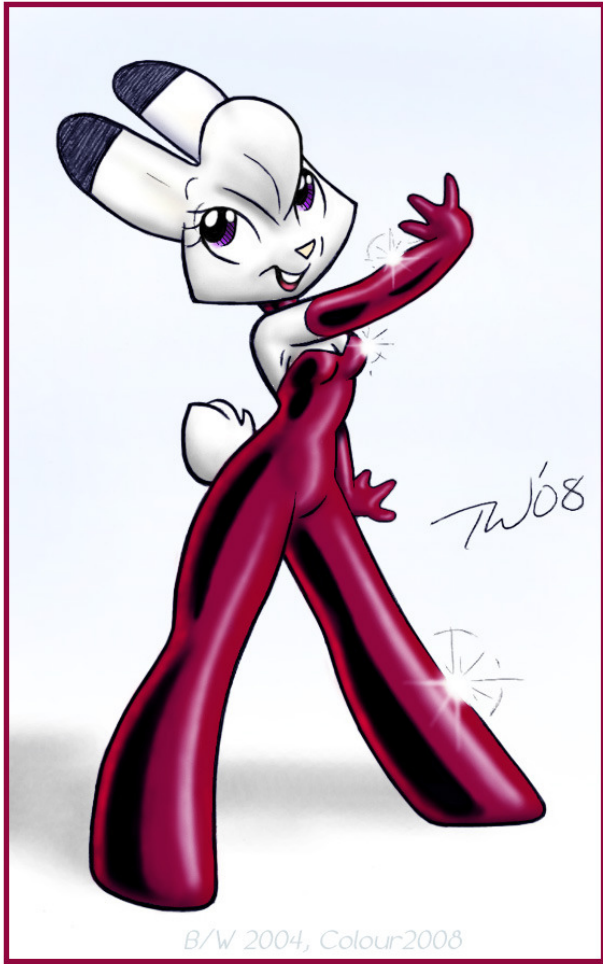


TW03
TODD03

More of my randomly inspired drawings, plus one of a "Beatified" Sawyer Cat. It was drawn for a fan at Conifur, who may have been confused about cats and rabbits, but knew shiny silver suits okay.



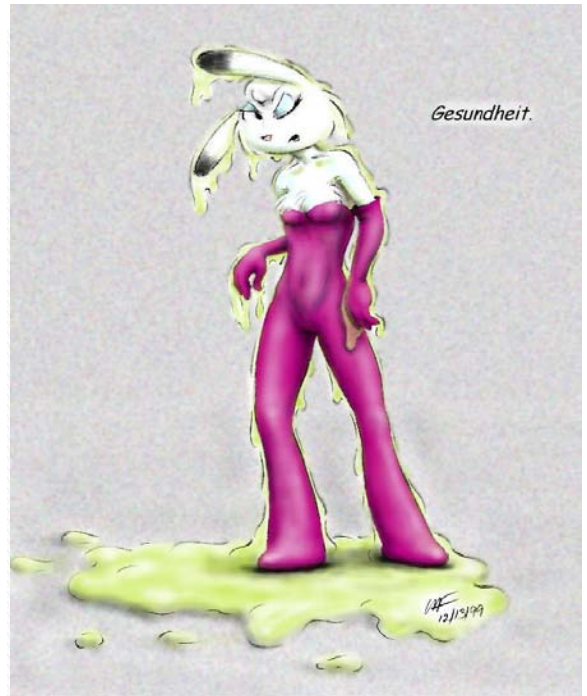
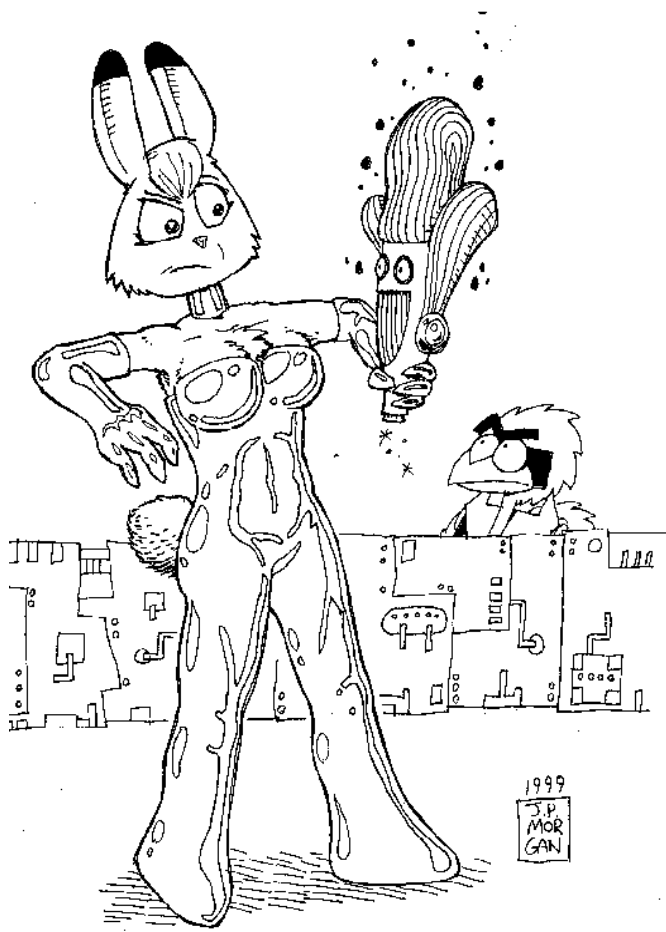
Another elaborate portrait of Bea and Dorothy, this time at the Rain City Beach. I had never seen Seattle, and imagined it might look something like this when I drew it.

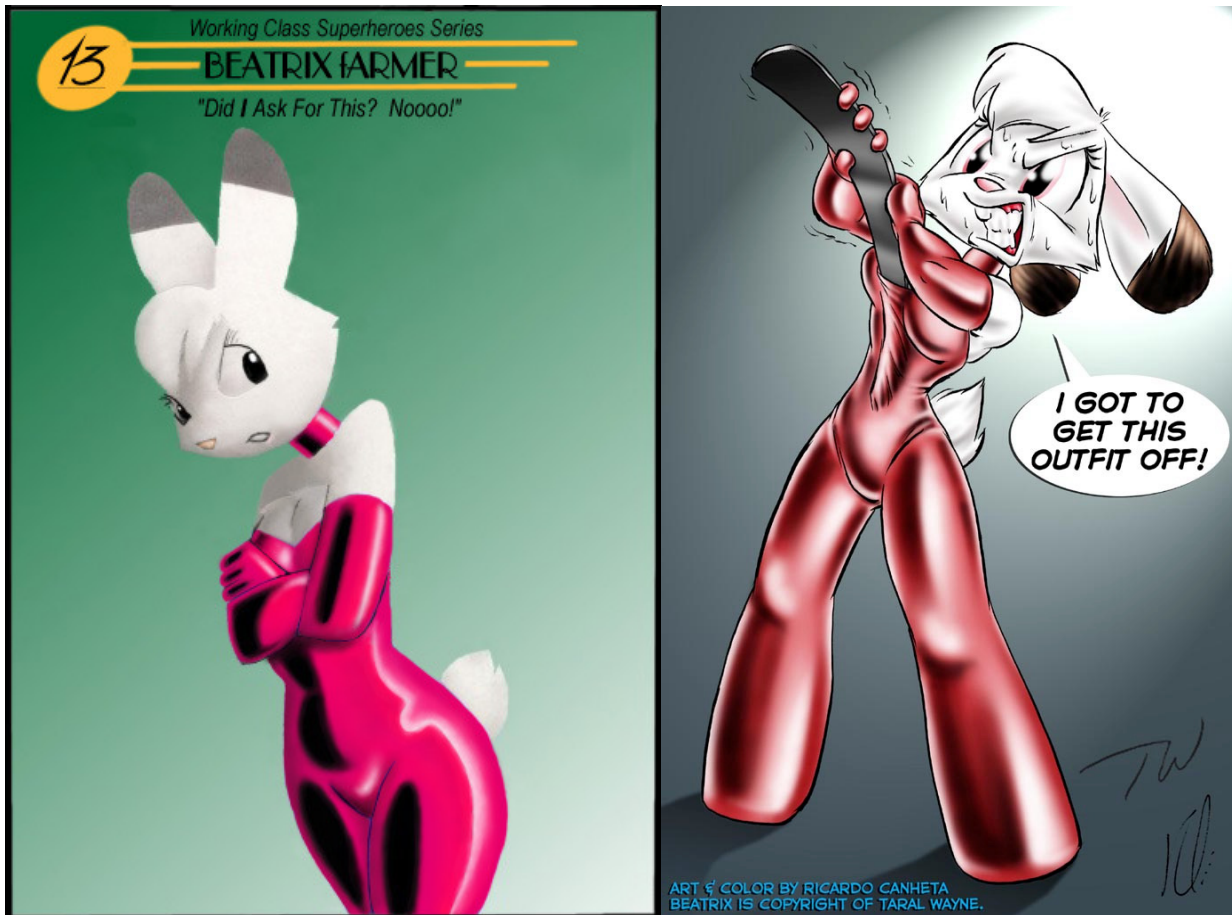


Faux Pas - (Fr.) Fō-Paw. 1.
 Two females attending a party or other social event, attired in identical dress.



I've chosen a few examples of the "fan" art sent over the years, and hope no one objects to using it. The first was by J.P. Morgan, creator of *Fission Chicken*, whose work I miss. The next few are by William Fortier, if I have that signature right. Again, I hope he doesn't mind a little publicity.





Important note: I always lay down a quarter inch of balsa wood on top of which I create the sculpt. This enables you to "carefully" cut through the balsa and armature wires, and simply pop off the excess balsa before moldmaking.



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I have to plead guilty to adding the “bubble gum” style graphics to Bill’s art. The colour drawing (above right) was by Ricardo Canhata ... a classic Crow Bar joke, at last. The final entries to this portfolio are from the work done by Dave “Sharpener” DeGrooyer limited issue of Beatrix sculptures. I don’t know how many were actually made – at least three, but perhaps as many as six.

Mailing Comments

First if all, I want to thank those of you who sent cards for the holidays. I had made an effort to keep a record, but unfortunately it has been lost in the periodic inundations of paper that have to be bulldozed out of the way if anything useful can be done around the apartment. Sorry. But it was much appreciated. Even the one that didn't arrived until late January...

Matt McAndrews — The Barks pastiches (there are two different ones, with different female characters of my own invention), are not based on the old Disney *DuckTales* ... which I accept only conditionally. Then there is the **new** *DuckTales* re-launch that I haven't seen much of — only the first episode. I'm not sure what I think of it, but I suspect I won't like the attempt to re-invent Huey, Dewey and Louie. For one thing, the designs are awful. Why try to improve on Cark Barks when all you can do is make it *different*, and probably worse? But I am also suspicious of the idea of making the boys have different characters, when they seemed have a sort of strength that they gained as *collective* personalities. [] Which *Loony Toons* remake is that? A new one since the '90s? I don't think I've seen it ... unless it was that horrible travesty with the new version of Lola Bunny, who was ruined by Warner?

Steven Scharff — This may sound utterly absurd, but I have recently heard that Robert Hill may have faked his own death a *second time!* I've heard nothing more about it, however, and I'm not very sure how reliable my source is. But I figure that a man who has done as many strange things as Bob Hill has, cannot be entirely trusted even to be dead ... just because he is supposed to be!

J.W. Kennedy — I think I've finally gotten too old for this sex-pot stuff. I just like to count my savings over and over, watch movies, waste time on FaceBook and write harmless stories about puppets without genitals... sigh.

Don Chisholm — I've had no training of any kind, to speak of. In public school we had art classes, where we got to make a mess with water colours or poster paint, but if we learned anything it was likely by accident. The teachers were not very good, as I remember, just yammering about the "Quattrocento" or "Dutch Masters." One told me that I wasn't doing real art because, just "illustration," because it had spaceships in it. Then again, there was one instructor who told me I *should* become an artist ... much to my mother's horror, who thought I should grow up to get a good job. My mother was almost certainly where my talent came from, though. Her brother was also talented, but never used it for anything but his hobbies. The bacon didn't put itself on the table. I was self-taught everything. I did once visit LA and met one of the chief animators of DIC, who was pretty unimpressed by my efforts, and waved in the direction of his own art, pinned to his cubicle. It was all classical studies of DaVinci and Rembrandt, so I slunk out of the studio, thoroughly defeated. I can't say I've ever tried again. Looking back on it, what did *he* ever do? Animated *Inspector Gadget*... Wowsers!

Edd Vick — I was happier with Corflu last year than I expected, and it felt like a kind of homecoming. I was always an SF fan at heart ... even though I don't read much of it

anymore, or find book reviews interesting. But the fandom was, and is still, a sort of home. Furry fandom was a place I found equally fascinating in the first years ... but as it drifted away from its original intentions, it was harder and harder to feel that I belonged. From its original intentions, role-playing and costuming have absorbed the entire fandom. Nor did I ever feel any special affinity for animals. I like them. I was deeply attached to my cats. But I have no totem animal, feel no bond with a spirit guide nor, indeed, find animals very interesting. I suppose I protest too much, but this may be my last time to say it. [] The colonoscopy was averted but it was a total botch, that accomplished nothing, and left me to worry for another two or three months about what might be next. I was finally given an appointment to discuss the problem with Dr. Elfassy in early February, and he said there was nothing more we could do ... which sounded like a death sentence. We could not do an MRI or a CAT scan if I was inflated like a circus balloon, and couldn't breathe. But then the doctor said that I had had no symptoms, and that my blood tests were fine. If I had a tumor, I would have had signs of anemia, and I *didn't*. In fact, I have tests monthly as part of monitoring my Warfarin use, and - if a problem arose - it would reveal itself almost immediately. Basically, I was in the clear and would never see Dr. Elfassy again. Everything seems to have worked out well in the end, but it was annoying when I heard that these "poop" tests were unreliable in the first place! [] I think the medical profession tells everyone over 50 that they are "pre-diabetic," as a way of controlling them. [] The full origin story for Darl has yet to be told, and there will be many more surprises! But first, a story mainly about Darl nearly ending Gobo's and Wembley's friendship. [] I have only seen the first episode of the *DuckTales* reboot, and I don't know whether I like it or not. The designs suck, in my opinion. Square heads? Why? The new Webby/Webbigail is better, I think. But Huey, Dewey and Louie having different personalities seems all wrong. Part of their being a sort of unified personality was part of their strength.

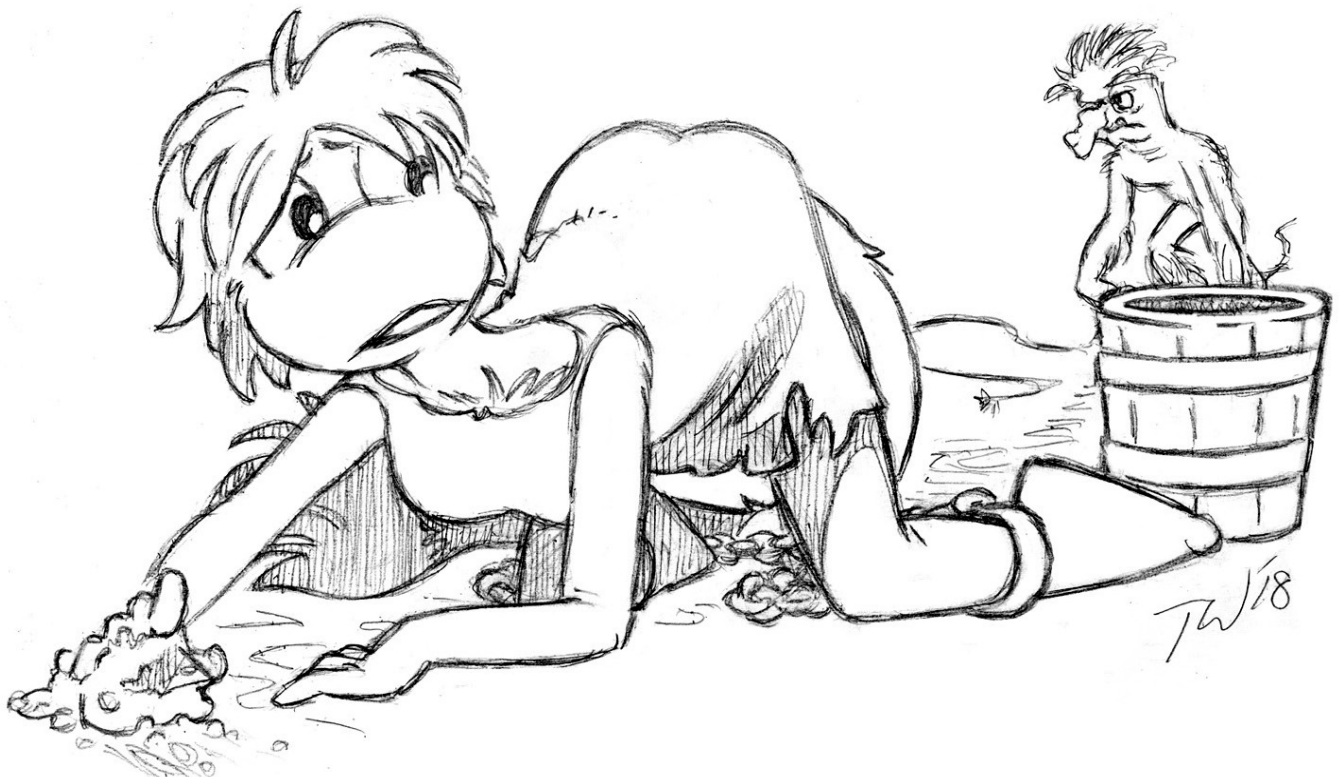
David Bliss — You can find full episodes of *Fraggle Rock* on YouTube, though I think they are mainly first season. But if you watch three or four episodes from the first, you have probably learned all you need to know, and can watch more if you want. [] Fictional RVs are probably more fun than the real thing! For instance, an early *Simpsons* story pits Homer's need to upstage Flanders by buying the largest model on the lot, though he can't afford it. In a *Freak Brothers* comic, the three hippies take paying passengers on a cross-country trip. There are monster RVs in *My Dad the Rockstar*, and in one *Ren & Stimpy* cartoon that I recall.

Robert Alley — "Hey, you, get out of the way!" is often good enough to get people to yield to my Traveling Matt, but winter is a challenge. Apart from their earbuds, people often have their hoods up, and road noise is always louder because of road conditions. The real danger is in malls, however, where people not looking scoot unexpectedly from stores, and I have no time to react. [] I know someone who would love to have one of those watch-fob TV remotes. She despised TVs in bars. If she could, she would disable them everywhere in the world, forever. She may be only somewhat more tolerant of television in general. [] Yes, I mean *that* "Heroes and Villains." The story will involve a number of both, in different contexts. [] The Royal Canadian Mint makes ... well, a mint ... striking those coins. They are very high quality silver and well made, but they have limited collectors' value aside from the silver. The coins aren't for serious collectors, and they cost more to buy than the value of silver in them. My principal dealer calls the RCM coins "flash and trash." That's what

happens when you semi-privatize the mint – dignity is sold by the silver-or-gold ounce. But, if you have some particular fancy, like Canadian dinosaurs or maybe Winnie the Pooh, they aren't very expensive. Go for it. I have three or four, and one is Superman. However, I won't touch coloured ones. It seems pointless to paint over that lovely silver finish! [] Glad you liked "Where the Magic Is." I will never make a dime from it, and can't safely publish the story to be read widely. Disney is a Jealous God.

Jeff Wood – You shouldn't *have* to do a colonoscopy every year! Not unless you have a history of cancer that goes three generations back on both sides of the family! You might almost think someone is running up medical expenses on purpose... [] I don't think there is a typical Aardman film, other than for its British humour. Pirates, rats, chickens, Christmas, and – of course – *Wallace and Gromit*. There have only been two misfires, in my opinion. First of all, *Early Man*. But also *Creature Comforts*, a sort of slice-of-life show in which animals talk about ordinary things like the weather, or how there's nothing on the telly, or what the point of reincarnation is if you only have to do it all over again. It was deadly dull, I thought. Yet there was also brief-lived, "Americanized," US version.

And so we seem to have come to the end of *Rat Sass 12*, my participation in *Rowrbrazzle* and possibly *Rat Sass* in any other guise. But whether by that name or another, I think you can be sure that I will surface again with a new fanzine sooner or later. Until then, thanks, Edd ... and to all of you, *thanks for all the fish*.



---CLEANING UP AFTER THE PARTY IS OVER!

Feb/April 2019 ENDIT