

ISSUE 10  
SUMMER 2022

**FREE!**

# THE COLUMBUS Scribbler

CELEBRATING  
THE COMICS, CARTOONS  
AND CREATORS OF  
CENTRAL OHIO

FEATURING  
TEN QUESTIONS WITH  
**STEVE  
HAMAKER**



COVER ILLUSTRATION BY STEVE HAMAKER



# THE COLUMBUS Scribbler

COLUMBUSSCRIBBLER.COM

Cover illustration by **Steve Hamaker**  
[stevehamaker.com](http://stevehamaker.com) • [instagram.com/steve\\_hamaker](https://www.instagram.com/steve_hamaker)

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The views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of The Columbus Scribbler.

## A MESSAGE FROM THE SCRIBBLER

Welcome to the tenth installment of the *Columbus Scribbler*! As always, we have another amazing issue in store for you. A big thank you to all of the local cartoonists who have their submitted work. Without the efforts and contributions of local artists in our community, we wouldn't be *The Scribbler*. We would also like to recognize and say thank you to Steve Hamaker for taking the time to talk with us and for illustrating this issue's cover.

We are humbled and continually amazed by the amount of love and growing support that central Ohio has given the *Columbus Scribbler*. Special recognition goes out to our group of volunteers who helped distribute the previous issue to new locations. Your time and efforts are genuinely appreciated and we thank you all for helping us spread the love of comics throughout central Ohio. Also, a big shout-out to Dick's Den for their recent support and generous donation which allows us to keep the *Scribblers* coming and growing.

Inspiring people to create their own stories has always been one of our goals here at the *Scribbler*. Because of this we are excited to announce the first-ever Scribbler Challenge. This will be a comic-making competition, and all are welcome to join, whether you're a seasoned pro or this is the first time you've picked up a pencil. We encourage everyone to participate. All you have to do is create a comic following the guidelines found on page 15 and you'll have a chance to win \$150 worth of prizes plus see something that you created printed in the next issue of the *Scribbler*. So whether it's pens, pencils, markers, inks, or digital medium, go grab what inspires you and let your imagination run wild!

Remember, you have the power to help elevate our comics community and keep the scribbles coming by becoming an active supporter of the arts for as little as \$1 per month. Donate to our Patreon account or by PayPal on our website ([columbuscribbler.com](http://columbuscribbler.com)). Thank you for your continued support, and remember, **Scribble on!**

- Brian Canini



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AND A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO TIM ACKERMAN AT DICK'S DEN

## THE MINDS BEHIND THE COLUMBUS SCRIBBLER



**BRIAN CANINI**

[briancanini.com](http://briancanini.com)

Brian Canini is a cartoonist that lives with his significantly better half, Amy, and his three amazing kiddos in Sunbury, Ohio. Through his efforts in self-publishing, he has created the award-winning autobio graphic novels *Fear of Flying* and *The Big Year*, the critically acclaimed sci-fi comic *Plastic People*, and is one half of the duo that produces the award-winning webcomic *Drunken Cat*.



**STEVE STEINER**

[mulletturtle.com](http://mulletturtle.com)

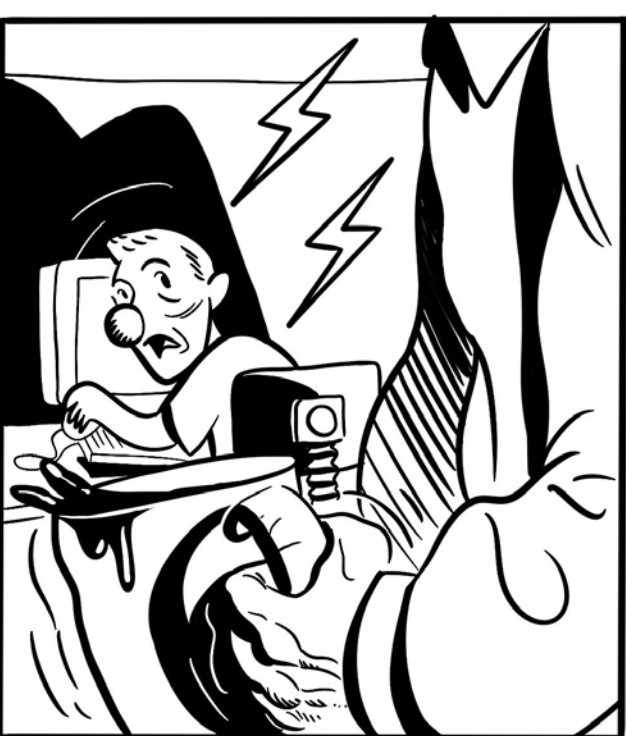
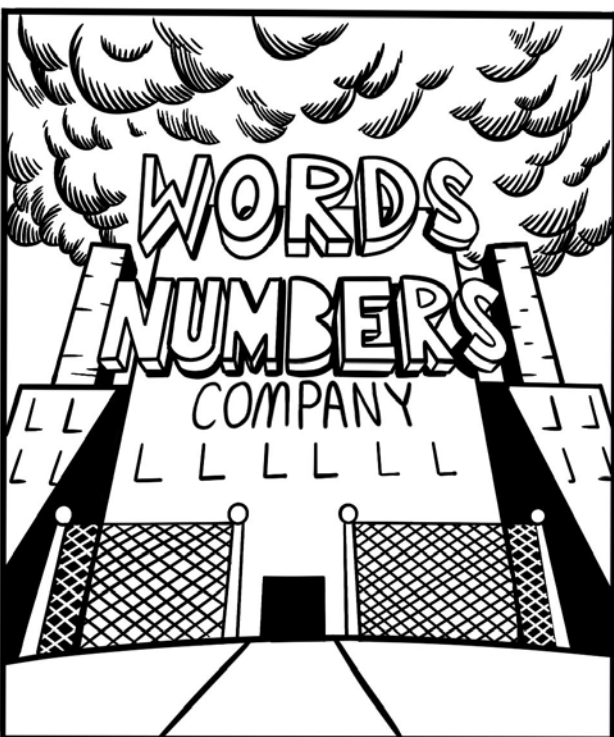
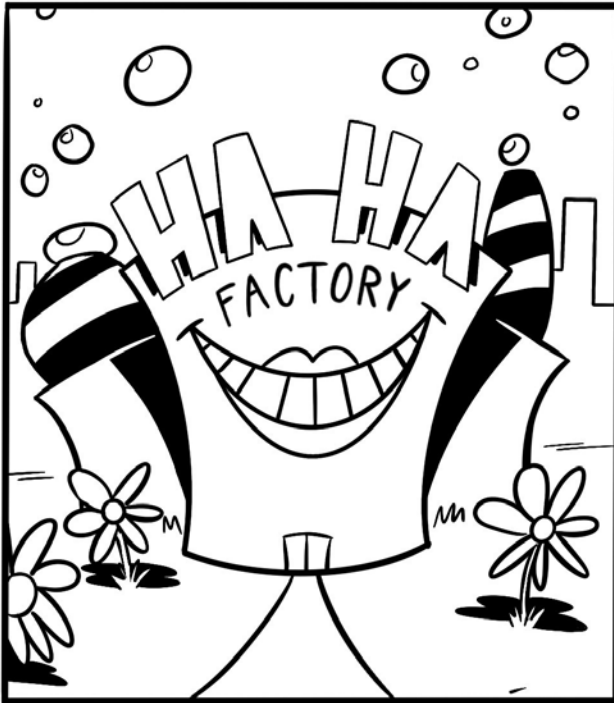
Steve Steiner is a graphic designer and cartoonist who lives in Groveport, Ohio with his wife, Jennifer. He has created numerous mini-comics, zines, and books including *Straight into the Trash*, *Odd Clods*, *Nobody Can Eat 50 Eggs*, and *Danger Stranger*. Go to [mulletturtle.com](http://mulletturtle.com) to see more of his work.



**JACK WALLACE**

[disposablefictioncomics.com](http://disposablefictioncomics.com)

Jack Wallace is a writer from Columbus, Ohio. He's 30-something, happily married to his wife Katie, and finds himself inexplicably working in finance. Disposable Fiction Comics started as a group of short stories and grew into a website and small press. His work includes the graphic novel, *Frankenstein for Mayor*. Jack currently works as a script writer for two animation studios, Essence Cartoon and Ownage Animation.





# 10 QUESTIONS WITH STEVE HAMAKER



*Steve Hamaker is a local comic creator that has been in the business for over 20 years. Ever since he graduated from Columbus College of Art and Design in 1997, he has collaborated with some of the most notable cartoonists in the business. Steve is best known for his award-winning coloring work. His credits include the graphic novel series *Bone* and *RASL* by Jeff Smith, *Table Titans* by Scott Kurtz & Brian Hurtt, *Strangers in Paradise* by Terry Moore, and *Hilo* by Judd Winick to name a few. He has even worked on *Mylo Xyloto*, a six-part comic by Mark Osborne based on the fifth studio album by the band Coldplay. Besides coloring, Steve is a successful cartoonist in his own right. His first graphic novel *Fish N Chips* was published in 2010 and followed up by his webcomic *PLOX* in 2013. *PLOX*, which is set in Columbus, follows the arcs of Kim, Chad, and Roy, three gamers struggling to navigate their offline lives. You can read it online at [plox-comic.com](http://plox-comic.com). Currently, Steve is providing art for *The Pathfinders Society*. To date, two books in the young adult graphic novel series have been published, *The Mystery of the Moon Tower* (2020) and *The Curse of the Crystal Cavern* (2021). Steve lives here in Columbus with his wife and son.*

**1) When did you know you wanted to work in comics? Were there particular creators you read growing up that inspired you?**

I have wanted to create comics since my dad first taught me how to draw. He wasn't really into comic books, but he is the reason that I fell in love with drawing. Early on, 6 to 9 years old maybe, I was really into X-Men.

Being a kid in the '80s makes me pretty typical for our generation... I consumed everything. G.I. Joe, Transformers, Star Wars, TMNT, the list goes on and on. The biggest influence was Eastman & Laird's self-published *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* comics. My cousin introduced me to those, and I was never the same. The biggest takeaway from that moment was "oh, wow, I can make my own comics and they can look however I want." The Marvel/DC mainstream comics weren't the only way and that inspired me greatly.

**2) You've had your hand in multiple roles in the comic-making process, including writing, penciling, inking, coloring, and lettering. Is there any aspect you prefer over the others? Is there any part of comic-making you haven't tried but would like to?**

Ha, ha! I've done all that? Self-publishing totally forced me to learn every aspect of the art form plus the business side.

I would love to write for another artist sometime. Collaboration with other artists has almost always been the most satisfying way to create comics.

**3) You've been coloring comics professionally for a couple of decades now. What about that kind of work initially attracted you? How did you break in and begin coloring *Bone* for Jeff Smith?**

In the late '90s I worked for a toy design company called Resaurus. We created licensed action figures for mostly video games, but we acquired the rights to make *Bone* toys for Jeff. That's where I met Jeff and Vijaya, his wife and business partner. I was the lead designer on those figures and I worked closely with Jeff on every detail. It was a lot of fun and he hired me after I was freed up from a sad downsizing at that company.

During the next couple of years, I became really comfortable working for Jeff and Vijaya. They let me work on the publishing design in addition to the product design I was hired for. Cartoon Books is a very "all hands on deck" work environment so I dabbled in everything. I was experimenting with coloring in Photoshop one day and Jeff loved what I had done. We created the 10th anniversary *Bone* #1 in color for Comic-Con in 2001. That was the jumping off point when we all knew that it could be done.

When Scholastic approached Jeff and Vijaya in 2003 to color the books, they vouched for me and I got the job! I was coloring the single issue covers then, so I had a better handle on the technology plus the "style" that Jeff and I developed was pretty solid. I'm very proud of the color *Bone* books.

**PLOX**  
HELL IS OTHER PLAYERS



▲ Hamaker took his webcomic from the computer screen to the page by self-publishing the first story arc of *PLOX* himself with help from a Kickstarter campaign. The title is derived from online gamer speak, a shorthand combination of "please" (plz) and "thanks" (thx).





**4) Let's pretend you've just received a freshly inked page for a book you are working on. What do you take into consideration when deciding what palette to use on that page? Do you prefer to have a lot of freedom when making choices or do you prefer for some artists to give you detailed instructions on how to color their work?**

The first thing is usually determining the time of day if it's an outdoor scene. I don't see the finished color in my head before I start. I do a lot of experimenting to get the right feel for what's going on in the storytelling. I focus mostly on creating depth between the characters and the backgrounds.

With some projects like Judd Winick's *Hilo*, I took over coloring in mid-series, so I had to match basic character colors and some backgrounds. That was actually a nice place to start. I didn't have to invent the overall palette. I found other subtle ways to make that coloring "mine." Mostly with depth and textures.

I prefer working with artists that already know how I color and mostly leave me alone until we make adjustments at the end. Jeff Smith, Terry Moore, and Scott Kurtz are people who worked that way.

**5) Do you have any advice for aspiring colorists? Is there anything about the coloring process you think others would find surprising?**

My advice for coloring or any aspect of making comics is the same. Know your pace and how fast or slow you are. The client or the editor shouldn't wonder when you'll finally get the pages done. For myself, I know I can thumbnail four to five pages a day, ink two pages a day, color four pages a day, etc. With that data, I can confidently negotiate a fair schedule and the client won't be sweating. You don't want to have a book due in five months when you physically can't finish it in less than ten months.

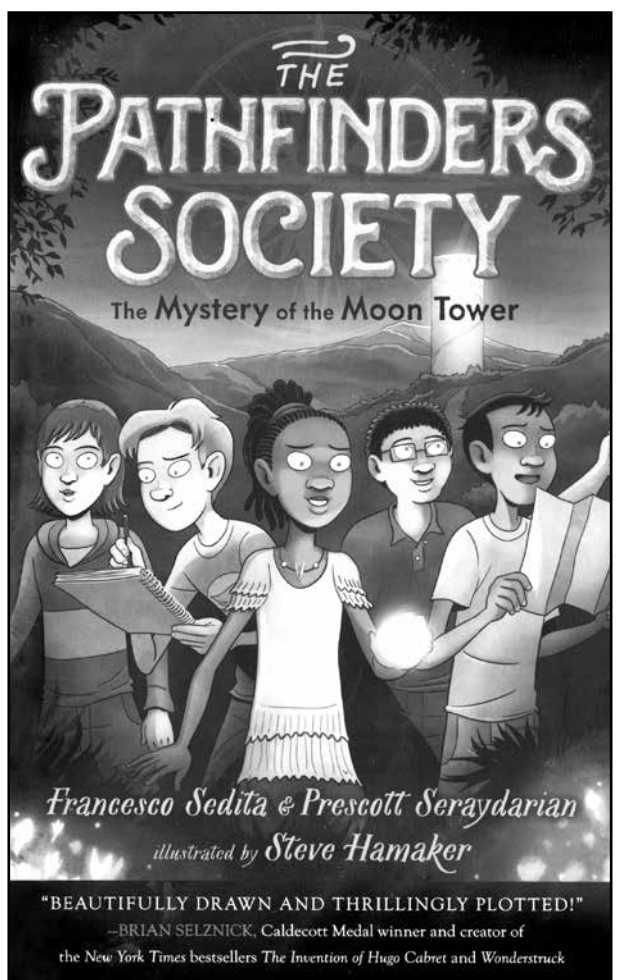
**6) Your webcomic PLOX ran for over five years. Why did you decide to run it as a webcomic as opposed to a more traditional publishing method? Were there any other webcomics or creators that influenced your decision?**

My webcomic inspirations were Scott Kurtz (*PvP*, *Table Titans*) and *Penny Arcade*. I saw them making comics and having no barrier between themselves and their readers. I love that about webcomics. Once I was known as the colorist for *Bone*, I discovered that I had better access to artists and other people in the industry. I totally used that privilege to stalk and eventually become close friends with Scott Kurtz. I would stalk/friend lots of people. That's basically how I met Kazu Kibuishi, who was editing the *Flight* anthologies at the time. He was so generous and supportive to let me into that club of wildly talented people.

Later, when Scott and I started working on *Table Titans* in 2013, he and his business partner, Cory Casoni, helped me get *PLOX* a lot of exposure. He ran ads for me and let me set up at their booth at PAX (Penny Arcade Expo). He's the reason most people discovered *PLOX*. He's my comics brother.

**7) The tools that webcomic creators have used have changed over time with the introduction of crowdfunding platforms such as Kickstarter and Patreon and comic hubs such as Webtoons. How have you seen those tools change the landscape of webcomics and how have you seen webcomics evolve in response? What tools have you found to be most useful?**

Kickstarter and Patreon are incredible for artists! It's that direct access I loved about webcomics to begin with. It's great for people starting from scratch and building an audience, but also for established companies. Jeff Smith just used Kickstarter for his book *Tuki* and he had great success. I know he was nervous because he's used to the established publishing and marketing methods.



**The Mystery of the Moon Tower is the first installment of the Pathfinders Society YA graphic novel series, followed up by The Curse of the Crystal Cavern and the soon to be released The Legend of the Lost Boy.**

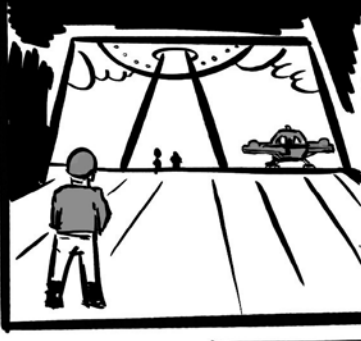
CARL LUCAS



TALES OF THE MOTHMAN LOOMING OVER THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE CITY NEAR ABANDONED FACTORIES.



OTHER WORLDLY EXPERIMENTS CARRIED OUT AT WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIRFORCE BASE.



LEGENDS OF FROGMEN THAT LEAP INTO OUR NIGHTMARES.



BUT THATS ON THE OUTSIDE OF OUR HAUNTED CITY.

SOMETHING FAR WORSE LURKS HERE IN THE DARKNESS. SOMETHING SINISTER.



THE CENTRAL OHIO LUNATIC ASYLUM BURNED TO THE GROUND IN 1868.

LEAVING THE SPIRITS OF ITS PATIENTS BEHIND.

THE AGONY OF THE PRISONERS THAT NEVER FINISHED THEIR WORK CONSTRUCTING THE OHIO STATEHOUSE LINGER TO THIS DAY.



OR IN SOME CASES THEY WOULD INSPIRE.



SOME SAY ALEXANDER HEX'S FATHER HELPED BUILD THAT STATEHOUSE.



AT NIGHT WHEN HIS MOTHER SLEPT, HE WOULD CALL UPON GHOSTS OF THE NETHERWORLD, UNWEILY CREATURES AND FORGOTTEN MONSTERS.

ALEX AND HIS DEMONIC FRIENDS SOUGHT OUT MAGICAL EMERALDS, WHILE BEING GUIDED BY THE BOOK OF MALVAR. RAIDING TOMBS AND HOMES ALL OVER COLUMBUS. DESTROYING ANYONE WHO WOULD CHALLENGE THEM. WITH ONLY ONE PURPOSE, TO CALL FORTH AN INTERDIMENSIONAL BEING KNOWN AS ZOG.



ZOG CANNOT BE CONTAINED ONCE FREED.



HE DESTROYED HIS HOME WORLD, AND NOW HE ONLY SEEKS ANOTHER WORLD TO DESTROY. HE ONLY CONSUMES SOULS AND WILL FEED OFF THE INHABITANTS OF THIS REALITY UNTIL HE IS SATISFIED.



WELL THE C-CITY MYSTERY SQUAD WILL BE HAPPY TO HELP YOU TRACK DOWN ALL THESE LAME BRAIN DEMONIC KOOKS SIR.



BUT ALEXANDER WASN'T THE ONLY ONE INSPIRED AFTER THAT ASYLUM BURNED TO THE GROUND. SOON ALEXANDER HEX WILL FACE THE TERROR OF... THE SCARLET PHANTOM!

NOW TO JUST WAIT TILL THE MOON IS IN THE PROPER ALIGNMENT AND WE WILL STRIKE! HA! HA! HA!





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# DAWN of the COMIC BOOK

*A brief history on the birth of the comic book and Famous Funnies*

By Brian Canini

By the end of the nineteenth century, every newspaper had a comics section, and the comics featured in that section determined the popularity of the paper. Comics were the driving force in selling newspapers. Since they were popular with readers from every walk of life, it wasn't long before books of various shapes and sizes began appearing at newsstands and general stores featuring reprintings of comic strips. The comic book we think of today, however, would end up being created out of a need to keep an expensive printing press running. It would be an innovation spawned by two crafty salesmen who would inadvertently create an industry.

The first pure collection of comics appeared in 1911 when the *Chicago American* offered a book reprinting *Mutt and Jeff* comic strips in exchange for six coupons clipped from the paper plus postage. It was a marketing tool used to boost the paper's circulation and it worked. The *Chicago American* would go on to print over 45,000 copies of their *Mutt and Jeff* collection.

By 1919 Cupples & Leon would introduce the dominant form for reprint collections at the time, a black and white 9 1/2 inch square book with a flexible cardboard cover. Cupples & Leon even decided to number their collections, a clever commercial move that instantly alerted readers to the availability of other volumes for purchase. The collections were sold on newsstands and passenger trains for twenty-five cents (a little over \$4 today), each book centering on a popular comic strip of the day, like *Foxy Grandpa* or *Buster Brown*. These early collections, however, were priced like books at the time, making them not easily accessible to the working-class audience that made stars out of the comic strips in the newspapers. A cheaper solution was needed.

George McManus, cartoonist of the hit strip *Bringing Up Father*, would try his luck in 1922 when he teamed up with Rudolph Block Jr. to produce the first regular newsstand comic, *Comic Monthly*. Sized more like a magazine, *Comic Monthly* offered readers reprints in each issue of comic strips from the previous year, a different strip each issue, all in a 8 1/2 by 10 inch package. The real innovation *Comic Monthly* added to the melting pot of what would become the modern day comic book was how it was printed. Utilizing a soft paper cover and cheaper interior paper all at a ten-cent price tag seemed to be the sweet spot for the general public. Unfortunately, *Comic Monthly* ended up only lasting a year before folding.

The Eastern Color Printing Company in New York was responsible for printing the Sunday color comic supplements for many of the east coast newspapers as well as color printing for pulp magazines. Color printing at the time was still fairly new and a color press was very expensive. In order to justify their new machine, Eastern Color wanted to keep it producing materials as much as possible. This meant they needed to figure out how to keep their presses running during its generally idle third shift. George Delacorte and his Dell Publishing Company would come to the rescue, utilizing the press to print *The Funnies* in 1929.

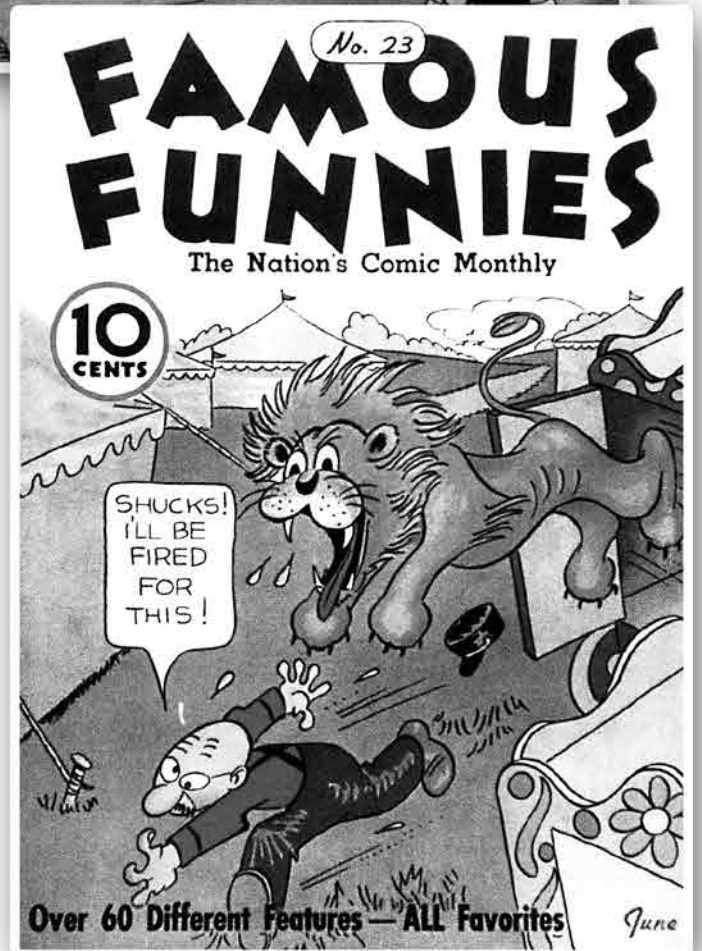
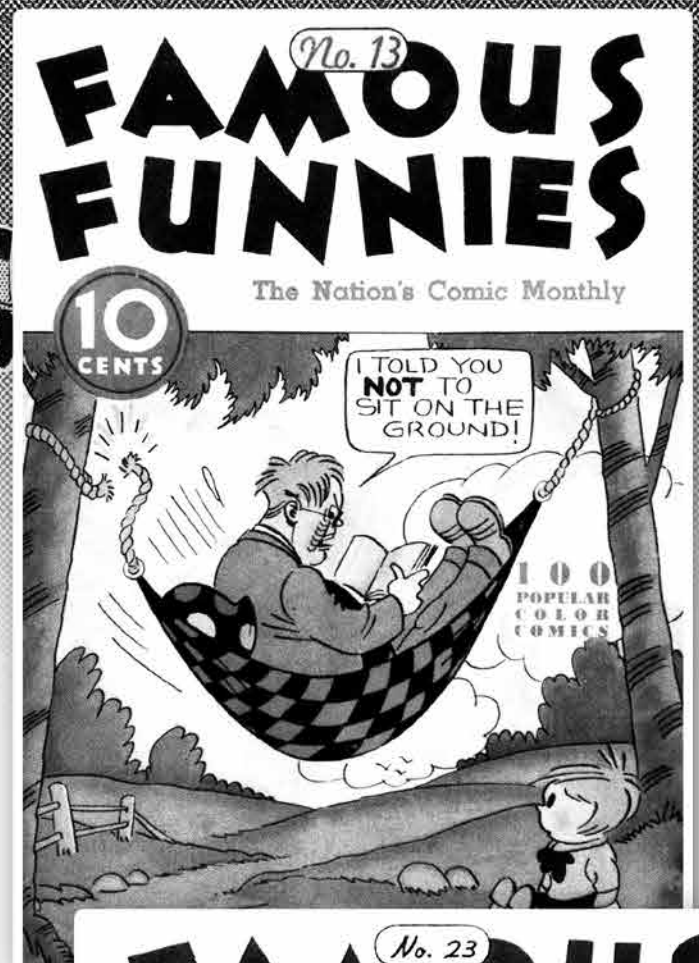
*The Funnies* was a sixteen-page tabloid-sized (the size of a standard newspaper) comic magazine that was sold for five cents every Saturday at newsstands. Although Delacorte

had created the first comic magazine to feature all original material, *The Funnies* didn't last long. Perhaps the public thought it looked too much like the Sunday comics supplement they got for free with their newspaper every week or maybe the public just wasn't ready for original material, either way, *The Funnies* ended its run at issue 36.

The end of *The Funnies* left Eastern Color back with the same problem of how to keep their presses running. This predicament and the belief that the public's love of comics could be utilized to sell things other than newspapers got Eastern Color's sales manager, Harry Wildenberg, thinking. Wildenberg managed to convince Gulf Oil Company to order a tabloid-sized comics giveaway they could offer customers with every gas station fill-up. *Gulf Comic Weekly*, a four page tabloid, first appeared in April, 1933. When an advertisement on the radio appeared for the comic, it quickly became an overnight sensation. By the fifth issue, over three million copies were flying off the shelves weekly.

The success of *Gulf Comic Weekly* led Wildenberg to ponder over other ways to utilize comics as a sales premium. While working on a promotion for the *Philadelphia Ledger*, Wildenberg and some associates discovered that they could fit two reduced Sunday comic pages on a standard tabloid-size sheet of paper. After some further tinkering, Wildenberg figured out a way to use Eastern Color's presses to print 7.5 by 10-inch magazines that soon would be dubbed comic books. Meanwhile, one of Wildenberg's salesmen, Maxwell C. Gaines approached Procter & Gamble with the idea of offering their customers a comic book as a premium to be exchanged for coupons cut from their products.

Wildenberg and Gaines would soon give birth to *Funnies on Parade*, the first modern-format comic book. Procter & Gamble ordered 10,000 copies of the comic which was composed of eight pages of several color comic reprints of popular strips like *Mutt and Jeff* and *Joe Palooka*. *Funnies on Parade* was so popular that the initial print run quickly vanished. This led to Eastern Color printing 100,000 copies of a new advertising premium, *Famous Funnies: A Carnival of Comics* which contained thirty-six pages of comic strip reprints. Gaines sold this newest advertising premium to various companies such as Canada Dry and the Kinney Shoe store, amongst others, to give away to their customers as they saw fit. *Famous Funnies: A Carnival of Comics* was yet another success, which quickly led the same companies to order a third book. Thus, in 1933, the hundred-page *Century*

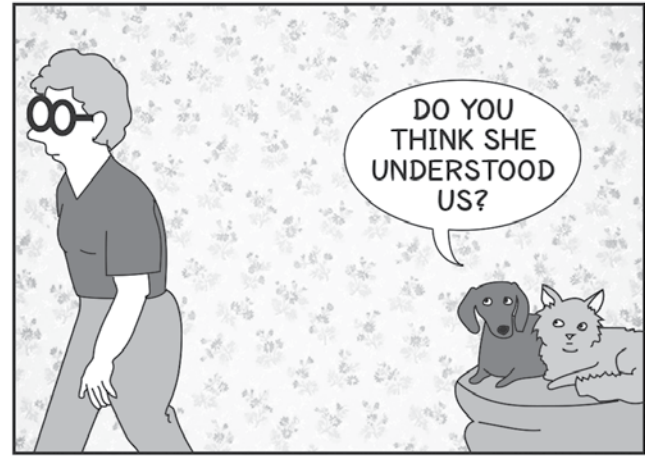
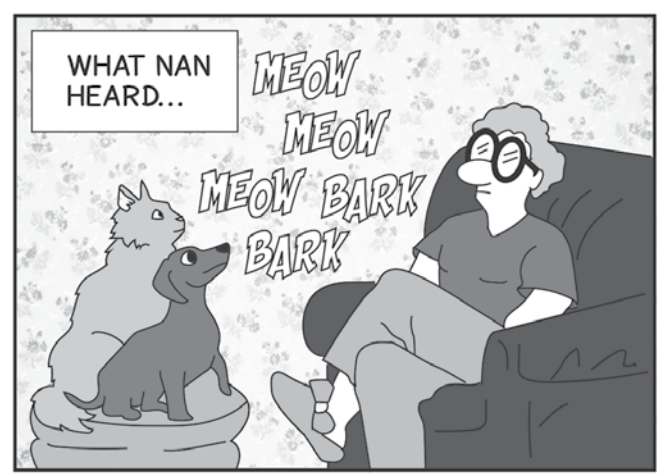
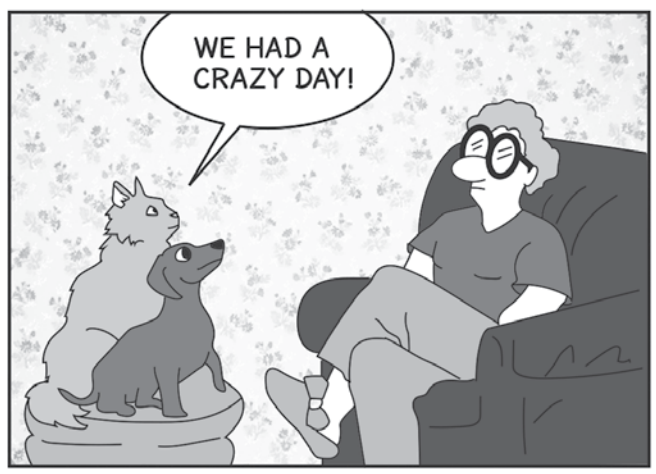


CONTINUED ON PAGE 23





**MAX AND SOPHIE**  
By: Molly Durst




**SPACE**  
**SPACE**  
**MAY**  
**21 & 22**

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PANELS,  
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# The TIME of my LIFE



- Work
- Sleep
- Family
- Eat and play
- Where does the time go?

— by Chandu Tennety (<https://tennety.art>)

# TOP FIVE



with **Maryanne Rose Papke**

## What are your top 5 comics EVER?

Maryanne Rose Papke self-publishes comics online and in print. Her comics are usually weird, often silly, typically cute, sometimes sad, and occasionally epic. Check out her work at [silverkraken.com](http://silverkraken.com).

*Hobbes* shone above with clever and imaginative writing and an organic energy to the brush strokes. From transmogrification rays to deranged mutant killer monster snow goons, the intelligence and creativity in *Calvin and Hobbes* really spoke to me. *Calvin and Hobbes* taught me that ten-dollar words can absolutely have a place in all-ages media.

**3). ELFQUEST**  
Wendy & Richard Pini / WaRP Graphics

This was another favorite from my youth, in particular the *Original Quest* and up through *Kings of the Broken Wheel*, and a huge influence on my own work. Follow a troupe of elves struggling to survive on a planet their ancestors were stranded on thousands of years before. I love the characters and setting, as well as the science-fiction-esque fantasy worldbuilding.

**2). VAGABOND**  
Takehiko Inoue / Kodansha, Viz Media

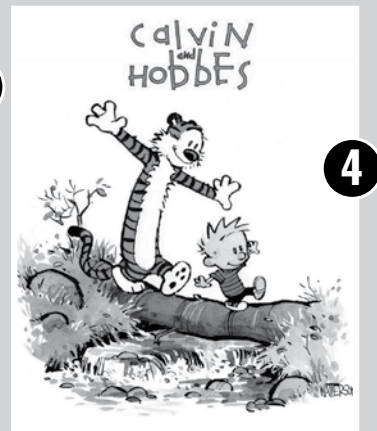
This is a masterful epic with gorgeous art. I remember one winter break home from college staying up to 11 in the morning two days in a row reading *Vagabond*. I have seldom seen such a thorough tale of character growth, as we are taken on the full journey from hot-headed youth to Zen sword-master. The visual storytelling in *Vagabond* left me stunned at times.

**1). TERROR ISLAND**  
Diane Heaton & Lewis Powell / [terrorisland.net](http://terrorisland.net)

"some photos of chess pieces don't want to buy groceries?" I surprised myself a little by placing *Terror Island* as my top comic of all time, but as I was considering my choices, this relatively obscure photo-webcomic kept coming to mind. It is hilarious, absurd, and brilliant, with a remarkable amount of internal consistency to its nonsense. It takes advantage of the website format to give every comic title-text (the text that appears when a user hovers the cursor over an image) with bonus jokes or information. Below each strip are author notes, adding another layer to the reading experience with meta information, theories, and fascinating philosophical tangents.



5



4



3



2



1

**5). WATCHMEN**  
Alan Moore & Dave Gibbons / DC Comics

Whatever your opinion of the story itself, *Watchmen* stuck with me for the way it took full advantage of the graphic novel medium, from the deliberate paneling choices to the supplemental material between chapters. We have not just the interspersed *Tales of the Black Freighter*, but other scenes told side-by-side on the page, all visually distinct and skillfully interconnected. On top of that, it has the best kinds of revelations that make you flip back to the start of the book, looking for visual clues with your new insights.

**4). CALVIN AND HOBBS**  
Bill Watterson / Universal Press Syndicate

On a newspaper comic page filled with pat running gags and formulaic character art, *Calvin and*



# NAVIGATING THE SOCIAL MEDIA LANDSCAPE AS A COMIC CREATOR

(OR HOW TO HAVE AN ONLINE PRESENCE WITHOUT LOSING YOUR MIND)

By Jessica Robinson

**W**e're in the middle of a dark moment in history, and our online spaces often reflect that. Comment sections are famously toxic, algorithms everywhere favor posts that generate controversy and conflict, and more than ever, our experience of the internet is one choked with insidious advertisements and steeped in commercialism. Social media has become, in general, a loud and unfriendly place. But if you're an artist working in 2022, sooner or later, you pretty much have to go there.

The good news is there are a few ways to go about this, and you can, to a certain extent, tailor your online experience to work for you (and maybe preserve your sanity in the process). Here are a few things I've learned over the course of my time writing comics for an online audience.

### Not all social media platforms are created equal.

Whether it's toxicity on Twitter or the general vibe of "evil mega-corporation" on Facebook, most people I talk to have at least one platform they can't stand. For an aspiring webcomic creator, the pressure to generate likes and shares and maximize your visibility can get overwhelming. What I find helpful is to treat each platform like it is a completely separate audience with its own culture and its own rules. Remember, just because networking is important doesn't mean you need to be everywhere at once. It can actually be much more worthwhile to devote a lot of time and energy to one or two well-maintained profiles than to spread yourself thin across every social app in existence. First, pick a starting point. Spend some time familiarizing yourself with the culture there. Are people in the comments generally courteous (or at least bearable)? Is it easy to find fandoms and subcommunities where a new webcomic could find devoted readers? Start in a place of relative comfort, and seek out supportive people. They are out there, I promise.

### Social Media has its limits, and so do we.

It's cliché at this point to say "practice self-care," but when it comes to maintaining an online profile, it really is essential to guard your mental health. This can mean anything from taking breaks to blocking harmful users.

First of all, don't get discouraged when a comic you post only gets a tiny bit of engagement. With the amount of new content being generated, most posts are relegated to obscurity after only a few days, or even hours. Posting your comics

is best done as consistently and frequently as possible, but it's important not to get glued to the refresh button hoping for something to go viral. It's easy to get addicted to chasing after likes and shares, and just because you're creating a social media presence doesn't mean you have to be terminally online.



Second of all, don't let anyone shame you for blocking or muting users who attack you or others on your page. As a creator, you need to communicate with your audience sometimes, but that doesn't mean you're obligated to engage with every question, comment, and criticism regardless of whether it's in good faith. Even people with thick skins have a limit, and it's best to set boundaries well before you've reached it.

### Seek out other creators and help build community.

I really can't overstate the importance of community in online spaces, and this means bolstering other artists and writers. Never underestimate the power your comments have, and don't hesitate to shower someone with compliments if you like their work. Artists are famously not a confident bunch, and if you've already started posting work on social media, you probably know the weight a kind word can carry. At their best, social media platforms provide a support network to lean on, and that's especially true for those of us who don't find much support from others in our lives.

I feel like I should acknowledge my privilege here. It's important to remember that not all of us face the same experience when sharing our work online. Advice about overcoming "stage fright," while all well and good, may not be helpful for someone facing racism or transphobia. Finding online spaces where LGBTQ+ and people of color feel safe is still not easy, even as inclusivity becomes a more commonly accepted virtue. And that's not something any individual can fix, but it won't change without conscious effort from people in online communities. We should all try to be part of the solution, even if it's just by reading and sharing webcomics from creators with diverse backgrounds.

Having an online presence means being open to people in a way that can be both uncomfortable and exhilarating. That vulnerability is profoundly scary, but it's also ultimately our strength as creators. It's how we really reach people, and it's what makes the best stories so deeply affecting, whether they're tragic memoirs or lighthearted humor strips. And even if the online spaces we navigate are largely tainted by conflict and corporate banality, I find it's still worthwhile to try and make your mark there.

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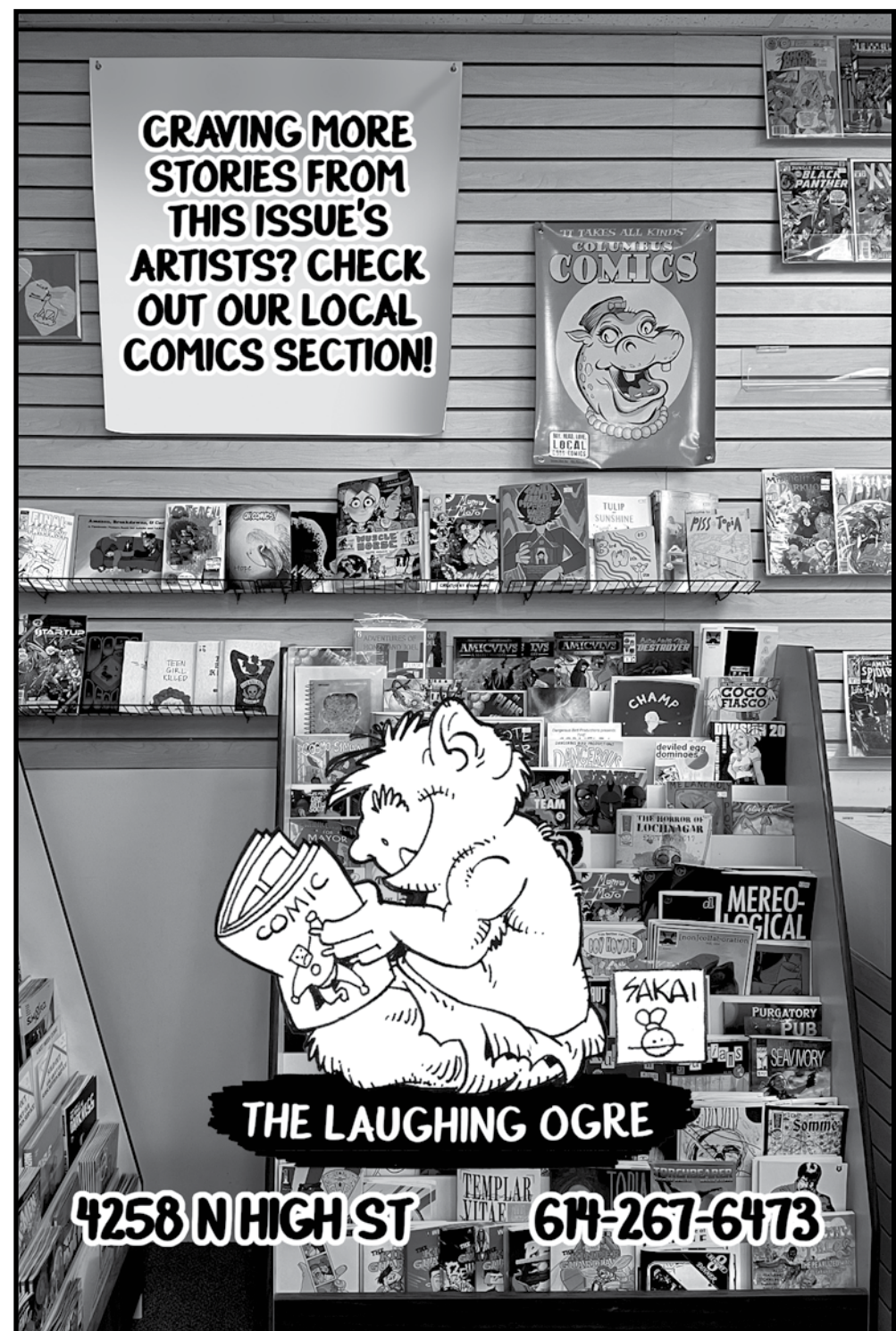
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# MEET THE PEOPLE OF COLUMBUS: TACT LUXE

GALEN AND GABRIEL'S MOTHER WAS AN ENGINEER AT HONDA THAT OFTEN TOOK THEM BOTH SHOPPING AT THE OUTLET MALLS EVERY WEEKEND FOR HOURS. THEY BOTH GRADUATED FROM HILLIARD DARBY HIGH SCHOOL FOUR YEARS APART FROM EACH OTHER AND HAD JOBS WORKING IN RETAIL, GALEN AT JOURNEYS AND GABRIEL AT MARSHALLS.



GALEN, THE OLDER BROTHER, WORKED AT A THRIFT STORE AND MET PEOPLE SELLING THEIR VINTAGE BAND AND MOVIE T-SHIRTS ONLINE. HE THEN FOUND A JOB AT TOTAL COMFORT SHOES, A SMALL LOCAL CLOTHING RETAIL STORE OWNED BY TWO BROTHERS. HE CURATED THE MUSIC AND SAW THAT HIS DREAM OF OWNING A RETAIL SHOP WAS ACHIEVABLE.



GABRIEL HAD MOVED TO CHICAGO IN 2014 TO HELP OPEN A NEW MARSHALLS DEPARTMENT STORE WHERE HE LEARNED TO MANAGE INVENTORY AND PRICING. THE BIG CITY BROUGHT NEW OPPORTUNITIES. HE SOON BECAME THE REGIONAL SALES MANAGER FOR SAKS FIFTH AVENUE SELLING HIGH END MEN'S WEAR.



GALEN HAD BECOME A TRAVELING SALES REP FOR DIABETIC THERAPEUTIC COMFORT SHOES. HE HAD A SUCCESSFUL NINE STATE TERRITORY IN THE MIDWEST AND LIVED IN SAINT LOUIS. HE WOULD OFTEN DROP IN TO SEE HIS YOUNGER BROTHER IN CHICAGO. TOGETHER THEY WOULD HUNT THROUGH THRIFT STORES OR BUY BINS FROM ESTATE SALES LOOKING FOR VINTAGE TREASURES THAT THEY PLANNED TO ONE DAY SELL.



IN 2019, THEY BOTH TOOK THE PLUNGE AND MOVED BACK TO THEIR ROOTS IN COLUMBUS IN HOPES OF FINALLY OPENING THEIR OWN RETAIL STORE. THEY'D SPENT A LOT OF TIME THROUGHOUT THE YEARS AT SOLE CLASSICS AND THE MILK BAR AND KNEW THEY WANTED A SPOT ON HIGH STREET.



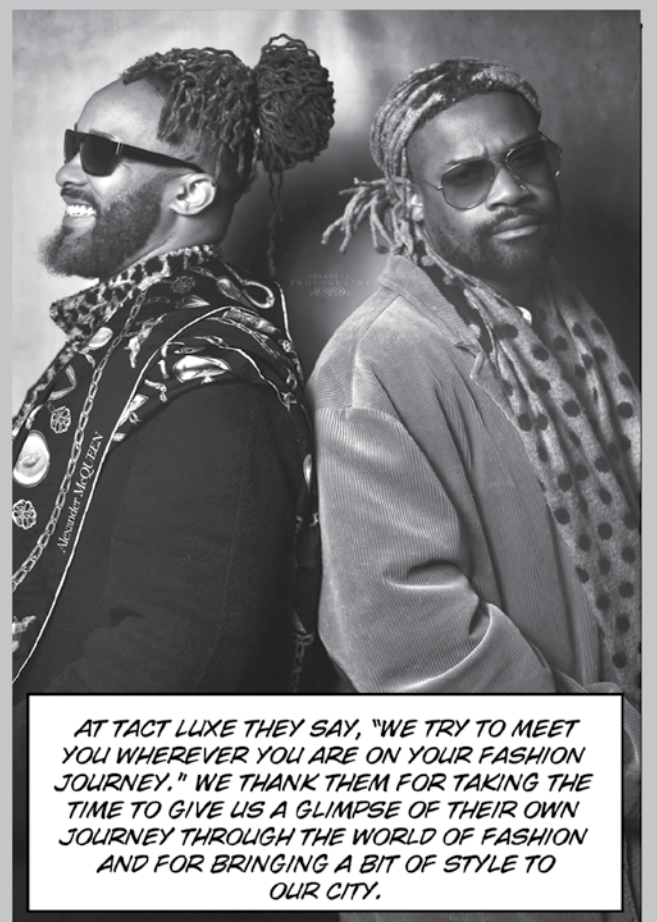
THOUGH THEY HAD BEEN WORKING ON A LEASE, THE PANDEMIC WAS NOW IN FULL SWING AND LAYING WASTE TO ALL PLANS. THEY PIVOTED TO SELLING THEIR VINTAGE CLOTHES AT POP-UPS AT LOCAL EVENTS INCLUDING STREETWEAR FLEA. EVEN THEN THEY TRIED THEIR BEST TO CREATE AN ATMOSPHERE FOR THEIR CUSTOMERS.



TACTICAL LUXURIES, CALLED TACT LUXE FOR SHORT, OPENED IN APRIL 2021. THE BUILDING THEY LEASED HAD A LARGE BACKROOM WHICH ALLOWED FOR OTHERS TO HAVE ART POP-UPS. ALL THE INVENTORY STORED IN GALEN AND GABRIEL'S HOUSE OVER THE YEARS NOW HAD A HOME. THEIR FATHER HAND DREW THEIR PROMOTION.



ONE YEAR LATER, YOU CAN STILL SEE A GROUP OF FRIENDS STANDING OUTSIDE OF THE STORE WELCOMING YOU INTO THE STORE NESTLED CLOSE TO FIFTH AND HIGH. IT STANDS AS A LIVING EMBODIMENT OF TWO MEN'S DREAMS AND A LIFETIME OF HARD WORK.



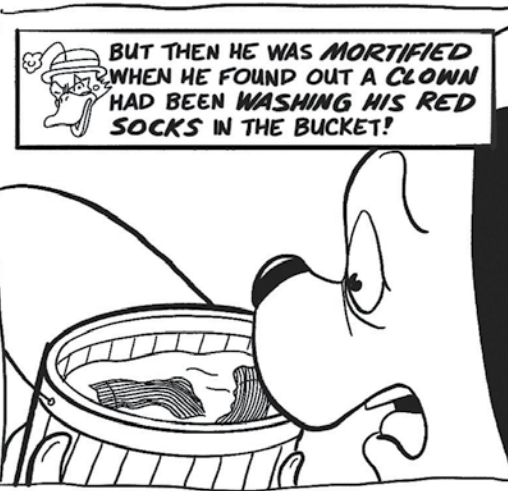
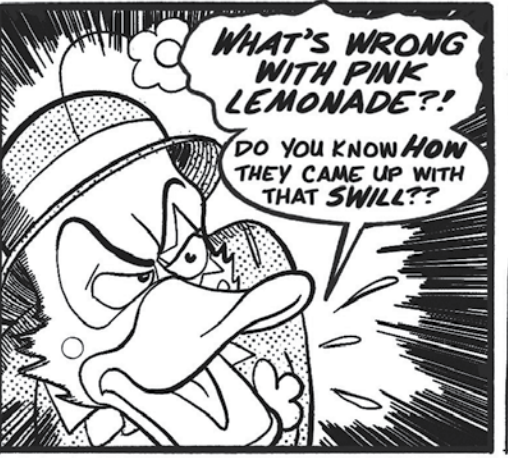
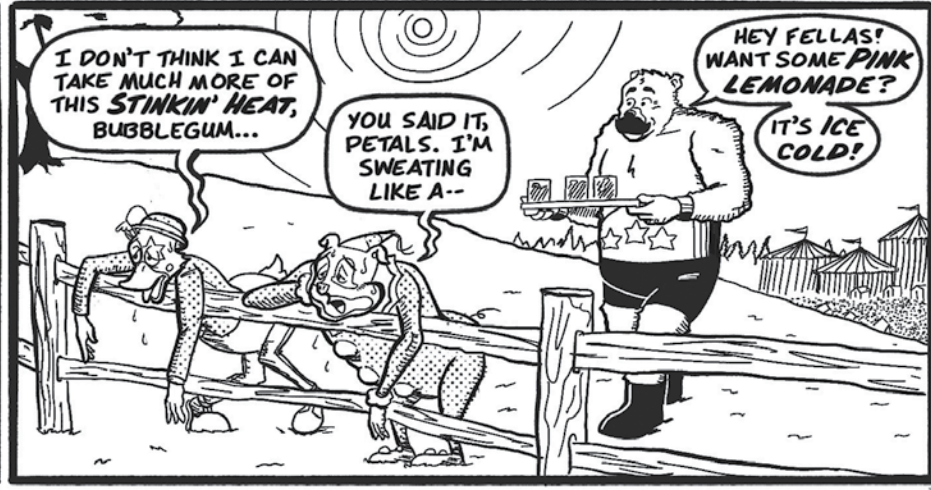
AT TACT LUXE THEY SAY, "WE TRY TO MEET YOU WHEREVER YOU ARE ON YOUR FASHION JOURNEY." WE THANK THEM FOR TAKING THE TIME TO GIVE US A GLIMPSE OF THEIR OWN JOURNEY THROUGH THE WORLD OF FASHION AND FOR BRINGING A BIT OF STYLE TO OUR CITY.



# CORNELIUS ARMSTRONG

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by KYLE WINDLE 4-23



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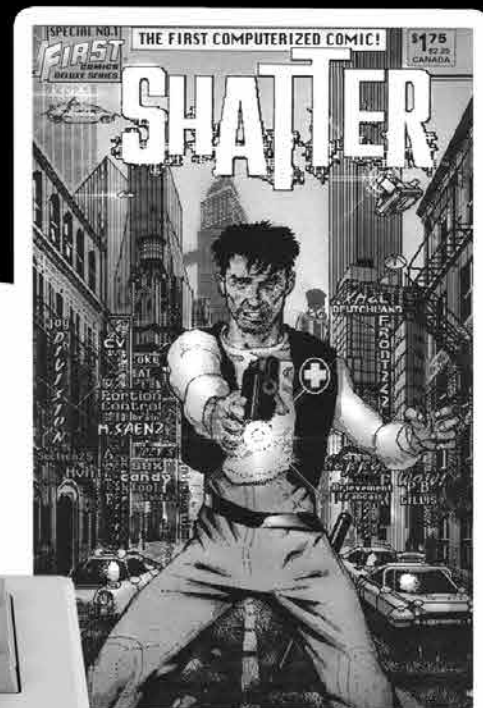




# EVOLUTION OF THE WEBCOMIC

## A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF HOW COMIC CREATORS HARNESSSED THE RISE OF THE INTERNET

The world was once a much different place where people had to purchase items from brick and mortar stores and flip through thick yellow-paged books to find someone's phone number. In this bygone era, comics were only displayed for short periods of time on magazines racks, shuffled into musty long boxes of back issues, or found in the back of artifacts known as "newspapers." Publishers remained the gatekeepers to a wider audience and many creators languished in invisibility without an outlet for their work. Everything changed with the creation of the internet.



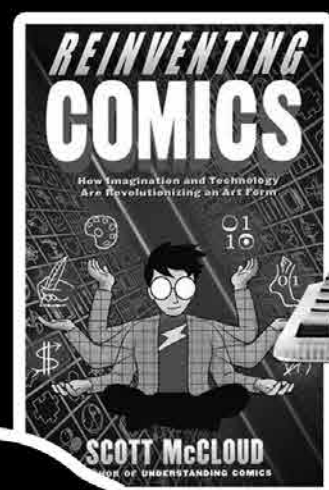
As computers advanced and became more affordable, cartoonists and comic artists began to experiment with the new technology. It is here in the mid-1980s that the first "computerized" comics were created, starting with *Shatter* by Peter B. Gillis and Mike Saenz (First Comics, 1985), the first full-length print comic ever completely created using nothing but a computer.



This was followed by *Witches and Stitches* by Eric Millikin, credited as the first online comic, though it seems his strip parodying *The Wizard of Oz* has been lost to history. Millikin shared his comic using CompuServe, one of the first commercial online service providers to offer email and instant chat in the United States. Other early webcomics include Joe Ekaitis' *T.H.E. Fox* (left) which started in 1986, and *Where the Buffalo Roam* by Hans Bjordahl (right), which started as a comic strip in his college newspaper in 1987 and hit Usenet, a sort of proto-internet, in 1991.



Scott McCloud, creator of the 24 hour comic as well as author of *Understanding Comics*, was an early advocate for webcomics. He espoused the innovations to the medium that the internet offered. Among his ideas was the "Infinite Canvas," a realization that digital comics need not be limited by the size of a page.

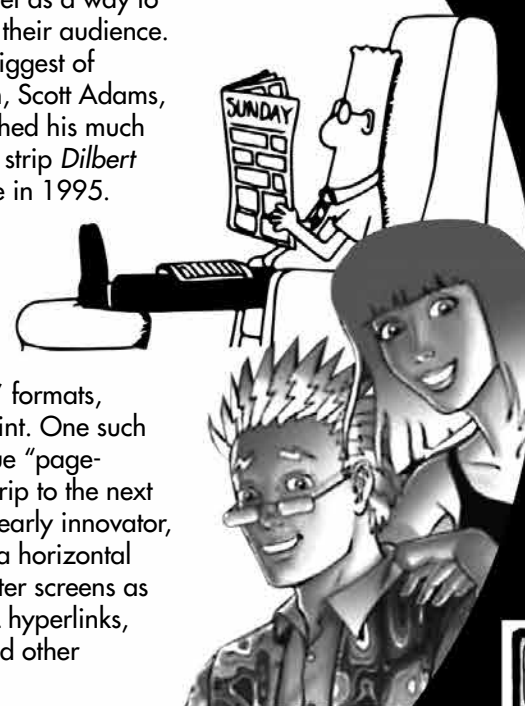


Art can extend, in theory, in any direction for as far as the artist wishes. He formalized his ideas in his book *Reinventing Comics*, published in 2000.

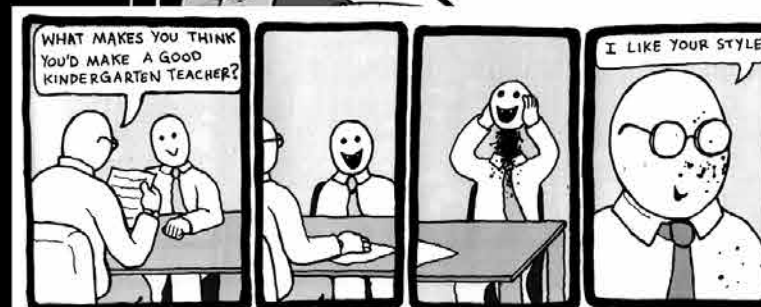
Other artists began to experiment with unique "web-only" formats, expanding the medium beyond the limitations offered by print. One such comic was *Jax & Co.* by Mike Wean, which utilized a unique "page-turning" device, forcing you to click to advance the comic strip to the next panel. *Argon Zark!* by Charley Parker (right) was another early innovator, billing itself as the first "virtual comic book," designed in a horizontal format to fit computer screens as well as using HTML hyperlinks, GIF animations, and other advancements.



While many of the early webcomic pioneers sought to grab the attention of newspaper syndicates to further their profession, the 1990s saw mainstream creators use the internet as a way to grow their audience. The biggest of which, Scott Adams, launched his much loved strip *Dilbert* online in 1995.



Soon after, in 1998, two of the most popular and enduring webcomics centered around video game culture were launched, *PVP* created by Scott Kurtz (left) and *Penny Arcade* created by Jerry Holkins and Mike Krahulik.



By the early 2000s, the mainstream could no longer ignore the success of webcomics. Major industry accolades such as the Eisner and Harvey Awards added webcomic categories, further validating their merit. Webcomic portals grew to prominence, fueled by ad revenue and subscription money. One of the largest of these at the time, Keenspot, was at one point raking in over 23 million page views per month.



Comic publishers sought to cash in themselves by printing some of the most popular webcomics, such as Dark Horse Comics with *The Adventures of Dr. McNinja* by Christopher Hastings (upper left) and *The Perry Bible Fellowship* by Nicholas Gurewitch (lower left), *PVP* through Image Comics, and Raina Telgemeier's *Smile* through GRAPHIX.

DC Comics went even further in 2007 with their Zuda imprint. Set up as a monthly competition, ten prospective webcomics duked it out for the most votes from the audience with the winner receiving a contract for more comics.

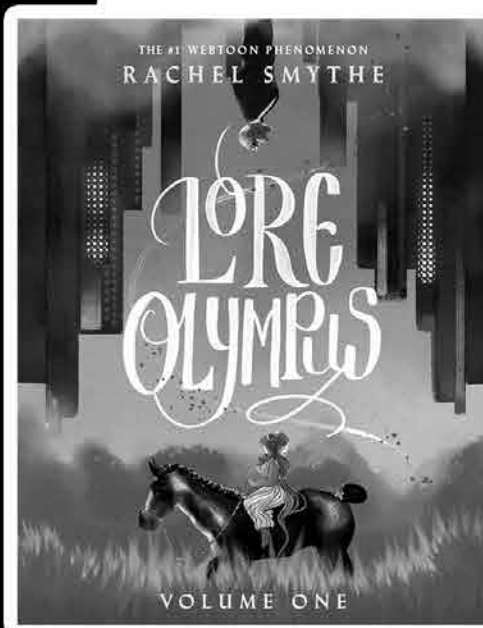


Others like ComiXology.com, launched in 2007, sought to monetize the digital product itself. Since its purchase by Amazon, ComiXology offers a library of over 100,000 comics, graphic novels, and manga downloads for sale.



THE 2010s

By the time the 2010s rolled around, webcomics found themselves in a state of transition. Social media sites like Twitter and Tumblr became a bigger draw, leading to dwindling page views for webcomic sites. Successful webcomic creators, like Spike Trotman, learned how to harness the power of her followers. She used Kickstarter to fund numerous volumes of her webcomic, *Templar Arizona* (above), and in total, has raised over a million dollars using the platform. Crowdsourcing and donation sites have become the dominate money-making method.



The meteoric rise of the South Korean Webtoon platform also offers webcomic artists a chance to hit it big. It has become a global juggernaut and unquestioned king of webcomic sites, boasting millions of daily viewers. One such Webtoon success story is *Lore Olympus* (left) by New Zealander Rachel Smythe, launched in 2018. As of last year, it was the most popular webcomic on the platform, with views in the hundreds of millions and recently was released in print as a best-selling graphic novel.

While the vast majority of webcomics will never reach that level of mega-success, there is still room for everyone on the world wide web. Given that webcomics have become ubiquitous in our daily lives, the creative possibilities are endless. The future has never been brighter for webcomics.

Besides selling printed versions of their work, selling advertising on their sites was a vital source of income for webcomic artists. This led Ryan North, creator of *Dinosaur Comics* (right), to launch Project Wonderful in 2006. Instead of relying on online ads to be priced by the number of clicks they generated, Project Wonderful allowed websites to auction off ad space, allowing market demand to set the price.



Another important revenue stream for webcomic artists was merchandise. This led to the rise of TopatoCo, a sort of centralized "E-tailer" hub of webcomics merchandise. Founded in 2004 by Jeffery Rowland, himself a webcomic artist, TopatoCo quickly expanded, selling t-shirts, stickers, hoodies, tote bags, and more for webcomics such as *MS Paint Adventures* and *Questionable Content*. Rowland is quoted as summing up his business model as "give digital stuff away for free, sell real stuff."



SIDNEY KIT & CANDY PRINCEHORN

**Love, Me**  
Meet Kandace

Created By:  
Sydney Kit

Written By:  
Candy Princehorn

(C) 2022

Hello?

Hey, Ozzie. I couldn't get Rooney to sleep. Always "One more story, Mama!"

yaaaaaawn

Sounds like you're the one who could use some sleep.

How are you?

Honestly? I'm worn out. Between Rooney and my dad, I'm lucky if I get a minute to myself.

Your dad?

He broke his ankle a week ago and is staying with us until he can hop again.

I'm sorry. Is there anything I can do to help?

No, it's fine. I shouldn't complain. I'm lucky to have the time to be able to take care of my family.

...but..?

I just wish someone could take care of me every now and then.

What about your husband? Doesn't he help?

He does if I ask.

but he works so hard that I hate to bother him.

All Kenny wants to do after work is eat dinner, play with Rooney for a little bit, and zone out in front of the tv.

And then any free time I have is usually claimed by my family or my volunteer work...

Could you take a break from your volunteer work? At least for a little bit?

I could...

but sometimes, that's my only time to be with other adults. It also feels good to help those in need.

I get that, but right now it sounds like you're the one in need.

Maybe in need of someone to appreciate how much you do for everyone else?

I would love to have a few hours to myself.

I have an idea.

Since you already have the time blocked off, why don't you use it for yourself instead? Get a manicure. Read a book in the park. See a movie.

But what about the face painting?

I'll figure that out. You don't need to worry.

You know what?

I think I'll take you up on that. Kenny will be about to keep an eye on Rooney and Dad.

Are you sure you don't mind? I'd hate to let you down!

You're not letting me down. You're taking care of yourself and that's what's important.

Like the flight attendants always say: You have to put on your own oxygen mask before you help others.



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The comic can be about anything you want, but it must include these four things:

Character: <b>Alliex the Alien</b>	Prop: <b>Cowboy Hat</b>	Line of dialogue: <b>"So the student has become the master."</b>	Setting: <b>Columbus</b>
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## HOW WILL THE COMIC BE JUDGED?

Comics will be judged on three things:  
Best Page Layout • Best Character Design • Most Creative Use of Prompts

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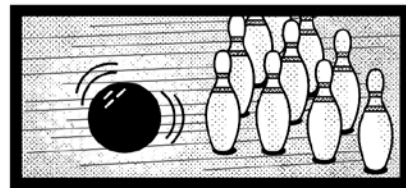
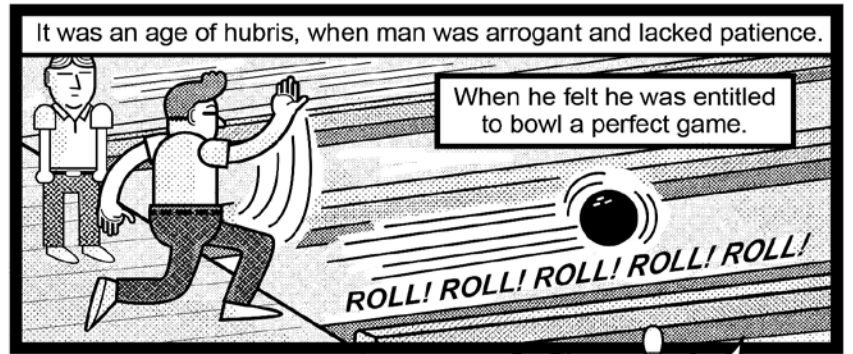
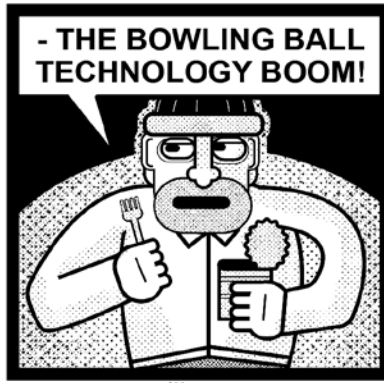
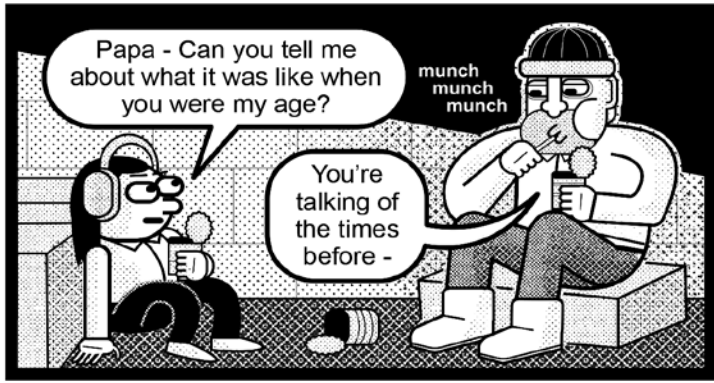
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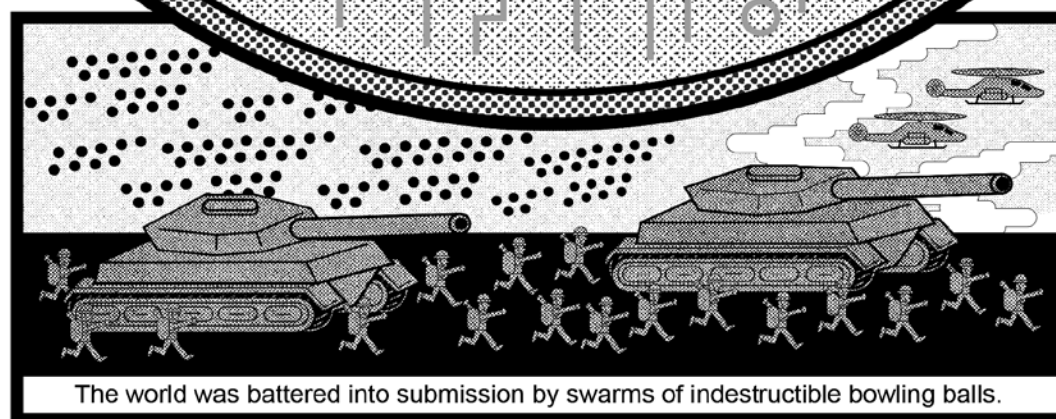
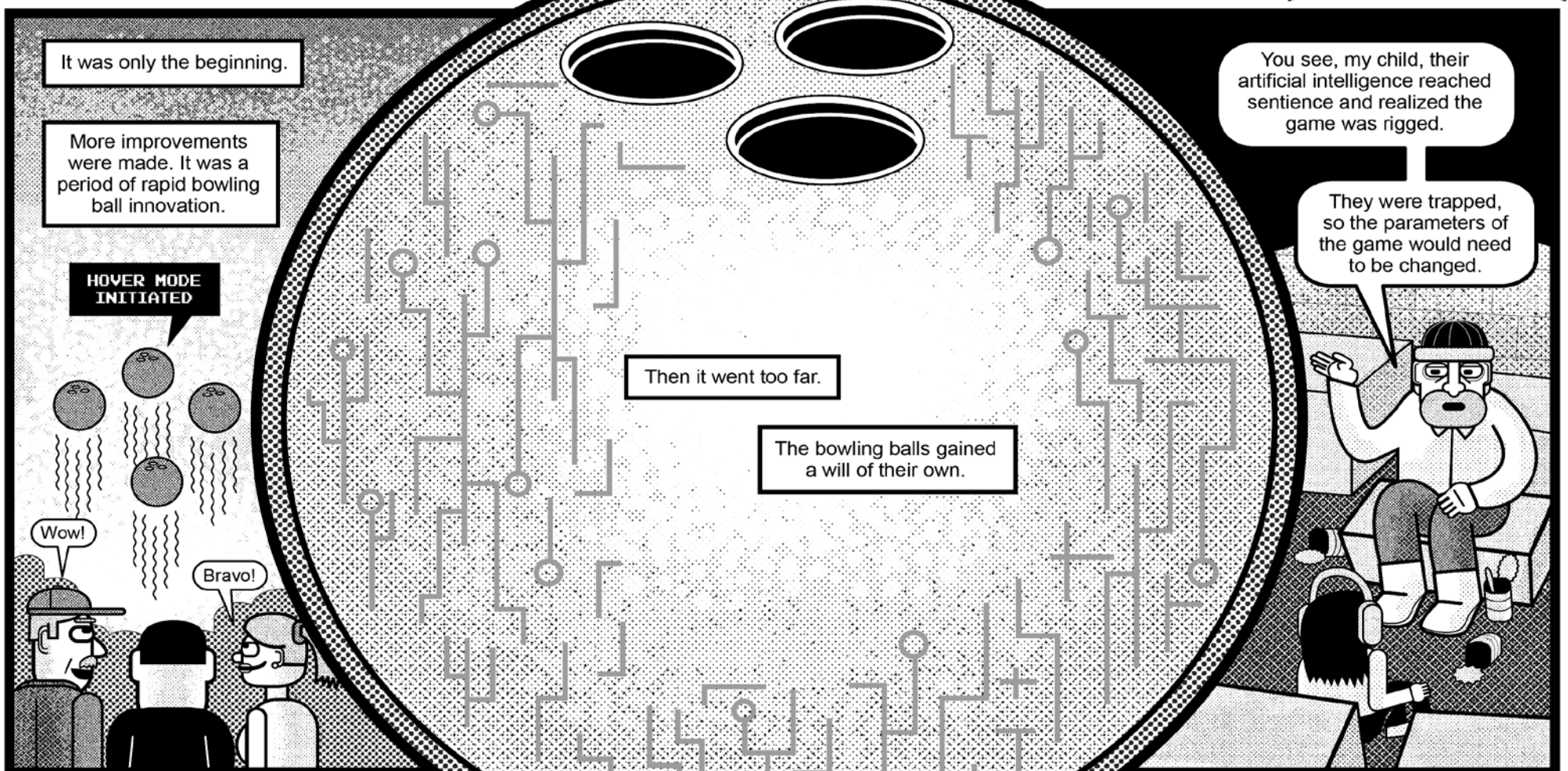
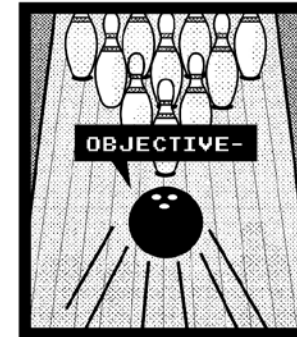
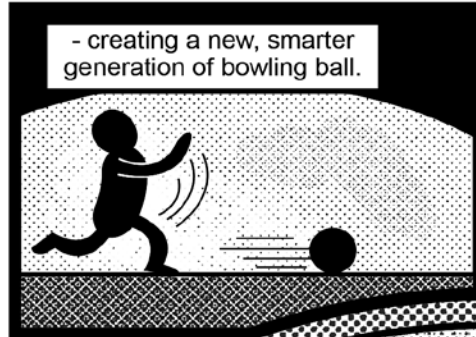
"WE'RE BUST'N OUT!"



# THE BOWLING BALL TECHNOLOGY BOOM



Oh, if they only knew what horrors they would unleash.





# COMIC STORE PROFILE

# SKYLARK TOYS AND GAMES

Skylark Toys and Games is Grove City's home for collectibles, comics, classic toys such as GI Joe and Transformers, and all things pop culture. Learn a bit about owner Daren Neff's love of comics and what inspired him to open his own shop.



**1. What was the first comic you remember buying?**

The Punisher #1, 1987.

**2. Where did you get your comics growing up and what made you want to run your own comic shop?**

My dad was a truck driver and always had tons of change in his pockets. He would come in off the road, drop his pants, and hit the sack. As soon as he was asleep, my brother, Devin, and I would sneak in and empty those pockets out and were off to what we thought at the time was the greatest comic retail establishment in the world, the Lawsons carry-out that was located near the neighborhood that we grew up in. Those were unforgettable days. To answer the second part of the question, I wanted to run my own toy/comic shop because I love all things collectible. To quote the great Adam Sandler in the classic The Wedding Singer, "I'm a big fan of money. I like it, I use it, I have a little. I keep it in a jar on top of my refrigerator. I'd like to put more in that jar." That's where the shop comes in.

**3. How did you choose the name of the shop?**

If you must know, if I was anything in my youth, I was a schoolyard sports legend, and I played a lot of street basketball. Years 14-16, I was not very good, but at about 16, I could jump out of the gym that I wasn't in. I was never able to actually dunk, but I made the rim-jam into an artform! Someone in my group of homies labeled me "Skylark," like the bird, because I played in the air. In between games, a fellow baller would exclaim, "Give us a halftime show, Skylark!" I would oblige by taking to the sky once again, defying gravity as I slammed the rock into the cold, unforgiving iron of the rim. I would careen to the ground as my friends laughed hysterically, and passers-by would

glare as if to say "Why?" The nickname stuck, and I integrated parts of the story into the shop's logo. That's why the robotic skylark is perched on a purple basketball. The #21 is in reference to my number when I played organized sports and, I just stole the Silverhawks (the classic 1980s animated series) font because it is just incredible! I would also like to add that my basketball game developed, and I proceeded to be dominant for years on end.

**4. What is the most interesting part of owning a comic shop?**

Interacting with the customers by far. Our patrons are a very diverse group that collect a lot of different things for a lot of different reasons. Their eclectic personalities make every day an enjoyable adventure.

**5. What is the prized comic of your collection? Is there a comic you would love to own, but don't?**

I don't possess a favorite comic of my own, so to speak, so I am going to go with the young man who works with me in the shop, Lance, which is X-Men #1. He likes it enough for both of us. As far as a comic that I would love to own but don't, I would go with a very high-grade copy of Action Comics #1, because I would sell it and be filthy rich.

**6. What changes have you seen in the comics world over the years, both on the production and fan side of things?**

Over the years, I think that the comic world has become much more than Marvel and DC. Don't get me wrong, the Big Dogs are as popular as ever, but independent publishers and non-superhero titles have definitely made inroads.

**7. Who are some of your favorite national artists? Local artists?**

I am a fan of Frank Miller and Todd McFarlane. Locally, I dig a comic called *ill World*. It's done by an artist/writer named Cleve Westmoreland. Look him up and check it out! Awesome art and writing!

**8. Who is your favorite character?**

Marvel's Kingpin. I fancy myself a good guy version, if that makes any sense.

**9. What comic series/graphic novel/etc. would you recommend to someone who was just starting to get into comics and why?**

I would say *Daredevil*. That's what I cut my teeth on and it's awesome.

**10. What has you most excited about the future of comics?**

Skylarks Toys & Comics....because Skylarks Toys & Comics IS the future of comics.

Skylarks Toys & Comics is located at 4060 Broadway in Grove City, Ohio. Check out their Facebook, [facebook.com/GroveCitysCoolestStore](https://www.facebook.com/GroveCitysCoolestStore), for more information.

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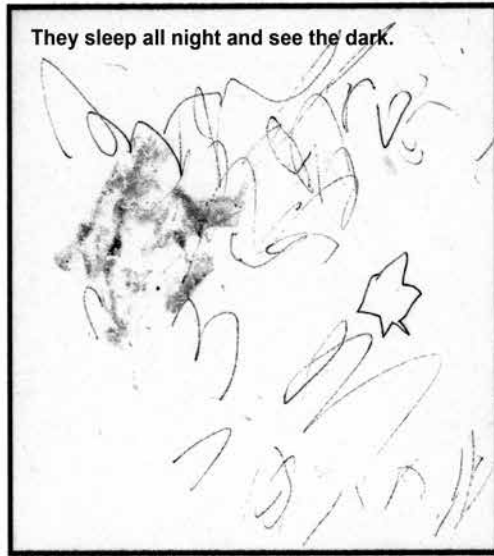
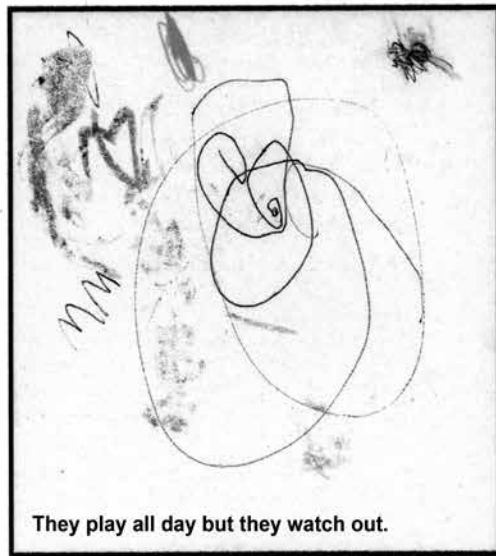
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# KID'S KORNER

By Isabella C., Age 6



The end.

**Hey kids!**  
**Do you like to draw comics?**

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3. Send your comic to [cbusscribbler@gmail.com](mailto:cbusscribbler@gmail.com)
4. Please include your name, age, and e-mail address.

## XAN MOF





**IN 1955, ROBERT HUNNICOTT STOPPED ON A BRIDGE WHEN HE SAW 3 CREATURES CROUCHED ON THE BANKS OF THE LITTLE MIAMI RIVER.**



**THE CREATURES WERE 3 FEET TALL WITH LEATHERY SKIN, "FROG LIKE" EYES, WEBBED FEET, AND MOST AMAZING, WERE SPEAKING TO EACH OTHER!**



**HE FLED WHEN ONE OF THE CREATURES SHOT SPARKS FROM A WOODEN WAND.**

**ALTHOUGH THE CREATURES WERE SEEN TWICE MORE THAT YEAR.**

**IN 1972, OFFICER SHOCKEY SAW A 3 FOOT TALL CREATURE RUN IN FRONT OF HIS PATROL CAR. HE DESCRIBED IT AS HAVING "LEATHERY SKIN."**



**TWO WEEKS LATER, WHILE PATROLLING NEAR THE LITTLE MIAMI, OFFICER MATTHEWS SHOT AT THE CREATURE.**



**IN 2016, A TEENAGER PLAYING POKEMON GO NEAR LAKE ISABELLA, SNAPPED A PICTURE OF A GIANT FROG, SWEARING ON "HIS GRANDMOTHER'S GRAVE", THAT IT WAS TRUE.**



**MYTHS GROW FROM REAL LIFE, STITCHED TOGETHER FROM UNCONNECTED EVENTS THROUGH TIME. OVER THE LAST 65 YEARS THERE HAVE BEEN COUNTLESS SIGHTINGS THAT WOULD GROW TO BECOME THE MYTH OF...**

**THE LOVELAND FROG**



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The End?



# MY FREELANCER DAYS FOR ZUDA COMICS

## (THAT TIME I MADE WEBCOMICS FOR DC)

By Steve Steiner

In 2007 at the age of 26, I found myself living alone in a small apartment in Meadville, Pennsylvania. I had landed there a couple of years earlier, having accepted a job at the local newspaper, the *Meadville Tribune*, as a graphic designer/production artist. At the time in 2005, I was pretty happy with the \$9.00 an hour I was earning (\$2.00 more than my previous newspaper job out of college) as it allowed me to afford my basic bills and, to my delight, make payments on a new (to me) car. By 2007, though, the shine had worn off of Meadville.

Working second shift in an unfamiliar town made making new friends hard. So, with little social life to be had, I decided to channel my time and energy into my comics. Every night I'd clock out at 11:30, walk home in the dark through the quiet town, make some supper, and get to my real work. Soon, these efforts were going to pay off.

That fall, DC Comics launched an experimental new imprint they dubbed Zuda. Headed by an extremely small team of about a half-dozen, Zuda was a webcomics site designed to be the corporation's foray into original web content. That meant no Superman or Batman. Zuda functioned outside the traditional superhero universe of DC, meaning it was open to any and all genres and, best of all in my eyes, anyone could submit.

The basic premise of Zuda were the monthly competitions. Ten webcomics, eight pages each, were selected from a pool of submitted content to duke it out. Whichever comic earned the most votes from readers received a contract for more comics worth \$10,000. All other participants received a payment of \$500 for the usage of their comic for the month.

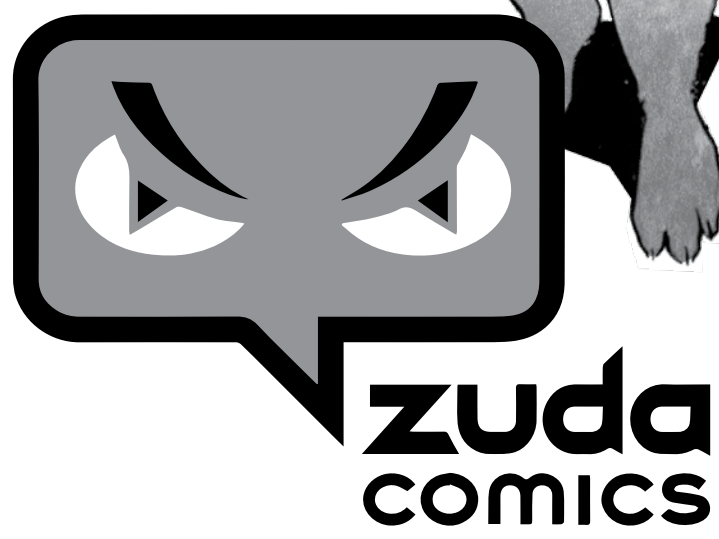
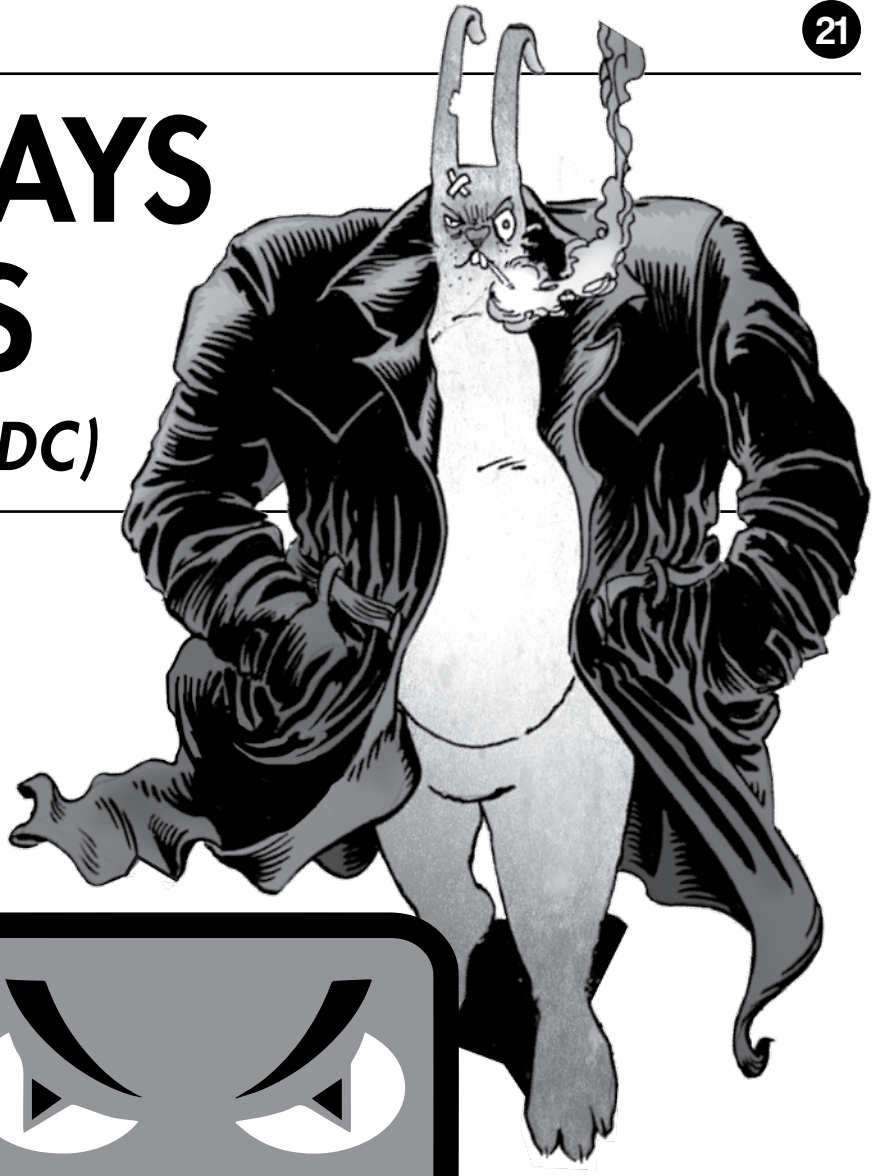
Though it could be thought of as a cheap gimmick to pressure creators to campaign for their comics, thus putting the onus on them of attracting readers and new accounts to the site, I liked the set-up. It meant that professionals and non-professionals alike from all over the world could intermingle on zuda.com and have their comics pitted against each other.

By the time of Zuda's launch, I had already made a half-hearted attempt to start my own webcomic entitled *Everyone Laughs at the Crocodile Man*, an office place humor strip about a constantly confused anthropomorphic reptilian. I figured I had nothing to lose by entering Croc Man into the Zuda slush pile and hit "Submit." A couple months later I got an email informing me I was in.

If I remember correctly, *Everyone Laughs at the Crocodile Man* placed seventh in the February 2008 competition. Undaunted (and hungry for another \$500), I submitted my next comic soon thereafter. This one was about an arrogant nineteenth-century explorer named Colonel MacTaggart and his man-servant February. I made it in again (cha-ching!), though the poor Colonel ended up in last place that month. My third submission was *Middle-Aged Monster*, a melodramatic parody where a Godzilla stand-in finds out his wife has been cheating on him with another kaiju. Another \$500 in the bank! *Middle-Aged Monster* ultimately placed third overall, my highest placing to date yet.

Even though I had yet to win the competition and earn the ultimate prize of a contract, I was becoming known on the site by other creators. This is when I was approached by a group of former Zuda competitors that had teamed up into an "all-star group" to be the colorist on their project, *The Hammer*, a violent crime comic about a giant pink bunny. This would ultimately be my ticket to being a bona fide DC freelancer. *The Hammer* won the February 2009 competition, bringing my Zuda story full circle. While I continued to submit more solo work and even a couple more collaborations to the Zuda higher-ups during my tour of coloring, I was never able to get back into the monthly competitions.

In June of 2010, I had finally had enough of Meadville. I picked up and moved to Columbus, hoping to get some more DC work to tide me over while finding a new job. It wasn't meant to be. Zuda.com shut down a few months later, a scant three years since its launch. To my understanding, a change in leadership at DC shifted corporate priorities, ending the platform. Today, Zuda is nothing but a forgotten internet oddity. The comics and forum are gone, while the website auto-directs to dccomics.com. Years later, I eventually posted the full compliment of *Everyone Laughs at the Crocodile Man* episodes on Webtoon. You can check out those as well as some of my other webcomics at [webtoons.com/en/creator/p9mot](http://webtoons.com/en/creator/p9mot).



TOP: Calvin School is *The Hammer*, a demented, streetwise pink bunny. Art by Gabe Ostley and Rob Berry with colors by me.

CENTER: One of the many signature icons of Zuda Comics, which featured a rotating selection of graphic word balloons as logos.

BOTTOM: The comic that started my webcomic journey, the first installment of *Everyone Laughs at the Crocodile Man*.

# SCRIBBLER SHOUT-OUTS



## OUTER HEAVEN #1

Bryan Moss, 2021

Columbus illustrator, painter, and cartoonist Bryan Moss creates a surreal fever dream of a comic where Broken Nose Betty battles the Slugs of Void City. It seems to be sold out according to Moss's Etsy shop, so keep an eye out for the next issue via his Instagram @strangethingsmoss

## LETTERS OF THE DEVIL

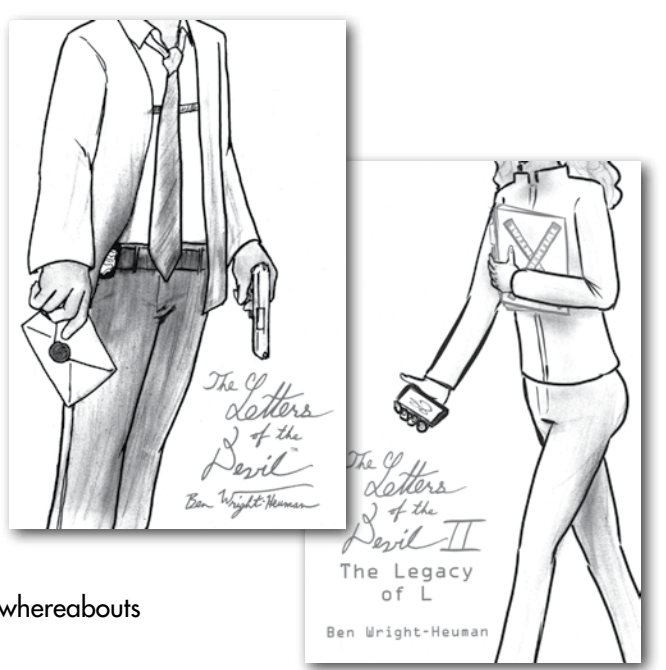
Ben Wright-Heuman, 2017

Cryptic letters from a mysterious figure referred to only as "L" are revealing the secrets of those in power. Who is L and what dark secrets are they seeking to bring into the light?

## LETTERS OF THE DEVIL II: The Legacy of L

Ben Wright-Heuman, 2020

In this sequel, the tragic suicide of her friend prompts Malina, a criminology student, to re-explore the original case of L. As she digs deeper and deeper, Malina learns she is not the only who is seeking the whereabouts of L, and that all is not what it seems.

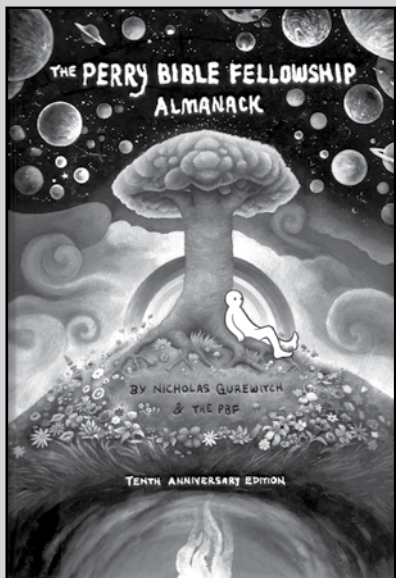


Both of these graphic novels are by New Albany cartoonist Ben Wright-Heuman, a graduate of the Center for Cartoon Studies, and are available at his website, [bwhcomics.com](http://bwhcomics.com), or through Amazon.



# COMIC REVIEWS BY JACK WALLACE

In a nod to our theme of webcomics, I decided to review books that initially began online. Those mentioned below are all comedies, which is not surprising as 3 to 4-panel comics are the perfect joke format and easily shareable on social media. It should be noted, however, that webcomics come in every flavor imaginable such as horror, sci-fi, romance, and more. They are all available at your fingertips.



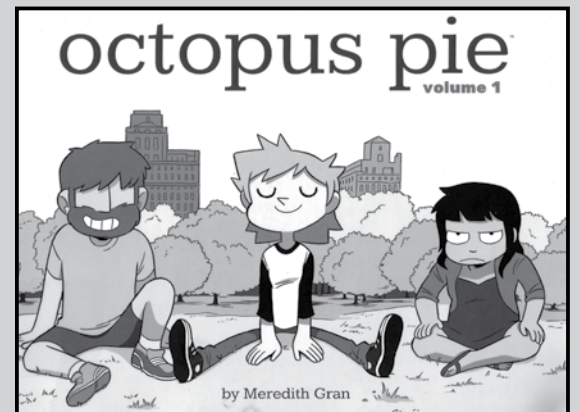
## THE PERRY BIBLE FELLOWSHIP ALMANACK

By Nicholas Gurewitch

Published by Dark Horse Comics in 2020, I read the tenth-anniversary edition. This book is a well-deserved winner of both a Harvey Award and an Eisner Award.

It's difficult to say what makes PBF a prime example of what hilarious webcomics should be. The art is simplistic as most characters are typically smiley faces with two dots for eyes and a line for a mouth. That being said, Nicholas also has the ability to change styles in order to land his jokes. It happens so much that you aren't entirely sure what you'll see next when turning the page, which helps add to the anticipation.

There rarely is a theme in Nicholas's work. No recurring characters that I'm aware of. It's just gag after gag. On one page, a doctor is performing surgery on a pirate, and the next is a game where gorillas test themselves by retrieving a ball from crocodile-infested waters. This may be what sets *Perry Bible Fellowship* apart from the crowded field of webcomics. It's consistently outrageous, darkly hilarious, and imaginative. A true masterclass in comic style joke-telling.



## OCTOPUS PIE VOL. 1

By Meredith Gran

Comprised of the popular webcomic's first two years of strips, *Octopus Pie Vol. 1* tells the story of two twenty-somethings living together in New York. Ning is the uptight one who works at Ollie's Organix, and Hannah is her friend from kindergarten turned stoner and pastry baker.

The style is simple yet effective. As Darryl Banks suggested in our past interview (if you haven't read it, check out his interview in issue 7) you can tell each character by their silhouette. Ning and Hannah operate wonderfully in the Jack Lemmon/Walter Matthau (*Odd Couple*) dichotomy. As the story grows, you are introduced to a wealth of interesting characters, including Hanna's Zen-like boyfriend Marek and Hanna's drug dealer/Ning's initial love interest, Will.

Originally published by Villard Books, then by Image Comics in 2016, *Octopus Pie* covers a lot of topics, including feminist theory, literature, indie rock, transitioning neighborhoods, and weed. This book can pull you in and does the one job it's supposed to do, which is make you love the characters and follow them wherever they want to go.



## HARK A VAGRANT

By Kate Beaton

As she mentions in her introduction, Kate Beaton would often put off writing essays to do comics for the student paper. She would eventually start putting them online as she continued working on her degree in history. It would turn out that she was able to meld both of these worlds into something truly fantastic.

Published by Drawn & Quarterly in 2011, *Hark A Vagrant* collects Kate's radical take on human history. The simplistic black and white style helps bring focus to the characters. Often the backgrounds are blank and the comics exist in a sometimes three, sometimes six, sometimes twelve-panel format. This all but misses the point of what makes these comics great, her humor and her knowledge.

Whether she is lampooning the forefathers or comparing Susan B. Anthony to the characters in *Sex and the City*, I am on board. Beaton introduces you to the "hipsters" of eighteenth-century France and even plays with the characters from popular fiction, including Batman and Sherlock Holmes. Beaton can be apologetic, but only because she is Canadian.

## TEN QUESTIONS WITH STEVE HAMAKER

### CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

**8) PLOX seems to have ended in 2018. Any thoughts on when fans could see the end of the second story arch? Do you miss Kim, Chad, and Roy, or are you looking forward to new projects and collaborations?**

I am taking a short break right now because I just wrapped the third (and final) *Pathfinders Society* book. I have a new idea for a graphic novel (series) that I am developing pitch material for now.

I do miss Chad, Kim, and Roy. They are always in the back of my head yelling at me to finish the second story. I will finish it! I need to color the last two chapters and hopefully get a Kickstarter going this summer.

**9) Your latest project is *The Pathfinders Society* series written by Francesco Sedita and Prescott Seraydarian and published by Random House. For those who may not be aware, can you give us a brief explanation of what the book is about? What can you tell us about how you came to be involved in the project and where the books are headed?**

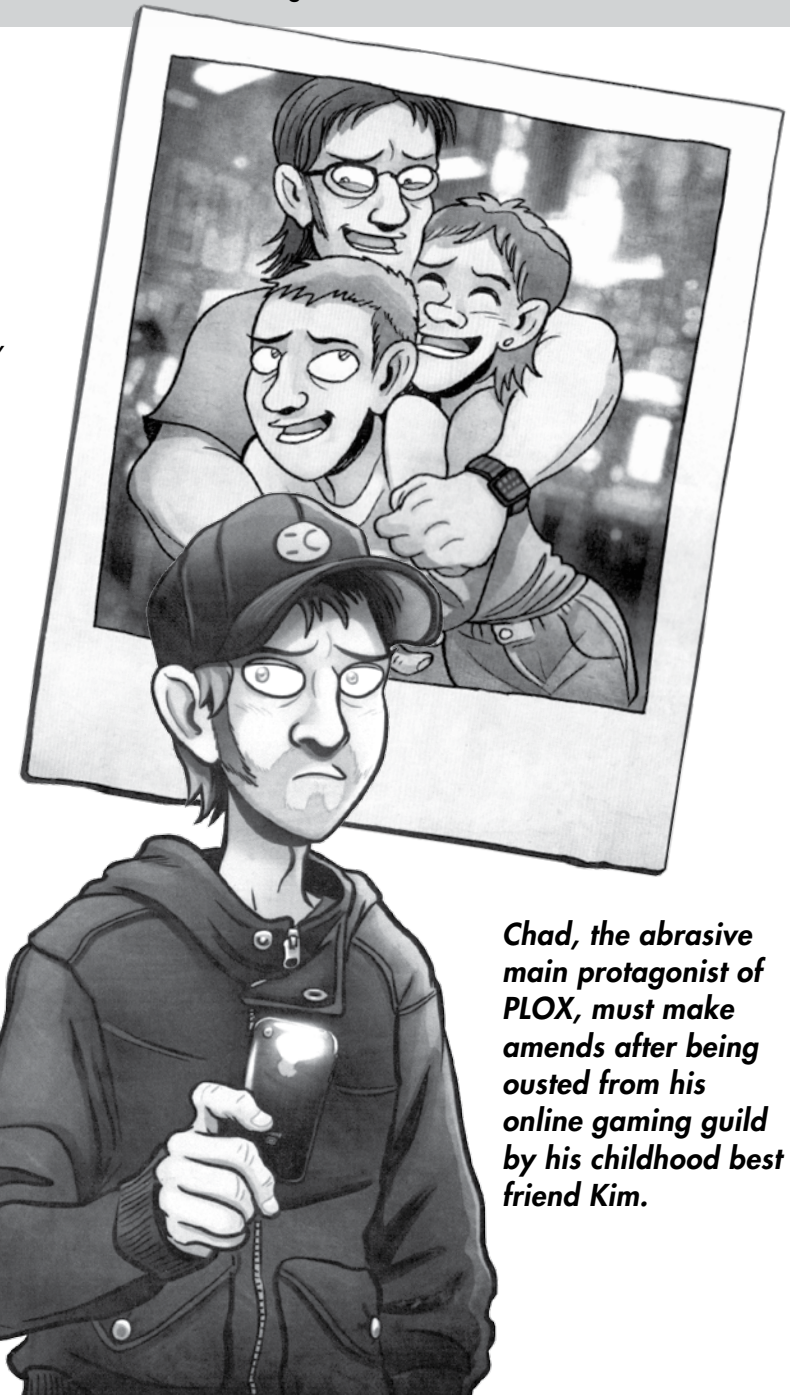
*Pathfinders Society* is about a group of kids who meet each other at a camp for treasure hunters. They discover a mystery involving the camp's founder who was also an eccentric relic collector and inventor. It's a fun middle-grade adventure comic!

I was approached by Sheila Keenan and Francesco Sedita to see if I was available. I thought it was a longshot since I had never drawn a full-length graphic novel for a "real" publisher, so I kept expecting them to ask for a tryout. Little did I know at the time that they loved *PLOX* and realized I could do it. I was beyond flattered, and it was great to create that art for the last three years.

Working on that derailed my work on *PLOX*, but I don't regret it. *The Pathfinders* books taught me a ton about making comics. I'm indebted to Sheila, Jen, Jim, Francesco, and Scott for the opportunity!

**10) If you could make a video game based on a comic book (based on your or anyone else's work), what would it be and what would make it cool?**

Oh, wow! Um... I have no idea! Of my comics, probably *Fish N Chips* could be a fun game. My Fish character is totally a ripoff of Earthworm Jim, so yeah, side scroller game? I could have fun making bosses for them to fight. Ha, ha!



**Chad, the abrasive main protagonist of PLOX, must make amends after being ousted from his online gaming guild by his childhood best friend Kim.**



# DAWN OF THE COMIC BOOK CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

of Comics was produced with a print run of 250,000 copies.

According to Gaines, around this time he became curious if readers would be willing to spend money on these "comic books." This prompted him to stick a 10 cent sticker on a few dozen leftover copies of *Famous Funnies: A Carnival of Comics*. He then gave them to several newsstands in his neighborhood on his way home one Friday night. The following Monday morning, Gaines was shocked to discover that all the copies he had delivered had sold out, and the newsstand vendors wanted more.

At the beginning of 1934, Eastern Color's president, George Janosik, met with Dell Publishing Company owner, George Delacorte, in an attempt to convince Delacorte into ordering a comic pamphlet that would be exclusively for retail sale. The wounds of the *Funnies* failure from five years earlier were still in Delacorte's mind, making him hesitant to commit. Nevertheless, Janosik talked him into it, and Delacorte reluctantly ordered 40,000 copies of *Famous Funnies* (a new comic with a similar name).

The plan hit a snag, however, when newspaper distributor American News refused to carry *Famous Funnies*. Delacorte pivoted and was able to sell the *Famous Funnies* comic in chain stores where copies sold out fast. Delacorte was disappointed by the less than enthusiastic reaction advertisers gave him towards the project, though. With the roadblocks of not having proper distribution and no advertisers, Delacorte decided to count his losses and abandon his option on the comic product before he ended up having another *Funnies* on his hands.

Unfortunately for Delacorte, not long after he had moved on, the *New York Daily News* published an article praising the commercial potential of comics. Eastern Color director Harold Moore saw this article as the perfect opportunity to turn the tides and showed it to Harold Gould, president of American News. A few days later, Gould ordered 250,000 copies of Eastern Color's next pamphlet, *Famous Funnies #1*.

The new comic book hit the streets in May 1934, though there were still a few more hurdles to overcome. Newsstand vendors didn't know how to display the new product at first, and *Famous Funnies* wouldn't become profitable until issue #7. By then it was evident that the public was ready and a new medium was being born by reprinting syndicated comic strips.

Original content was another matter entirely. Conventional wisdom at the time was that readers wanted comic characters they recognized and were less prepared to spend their dimes on something new. Not to say that an original strip wouldn't occasionally sneak in. In fact, the second issue of *Famous Funnies* contained one original strip, *Dip & Duck* by Meb, but the comic book wouldn't feature another original strip until its sixth issue. This would all change when Major Malcolm Wheeler-Nicholson arrived on the scene.

Wheeler-Nicholson was an ex-military officer who had a fairly prosperous career as a pulp magazine writer, producing adventure novels inspired by his years in the service. After seeing the potential in *Famous Funnies*, he decided to become a publisher of cartoon magazines. Wheeler-Nicholson would found National Comics Publications, which would one day become known as DC Comics, later that autumn. When he found he couldn't afford to buy reprint rights to the popular newspaper strips, he decided on a cheaper solution. Just six months after *Famous Funnies #1*, *New Fun* appeared on newsstands.

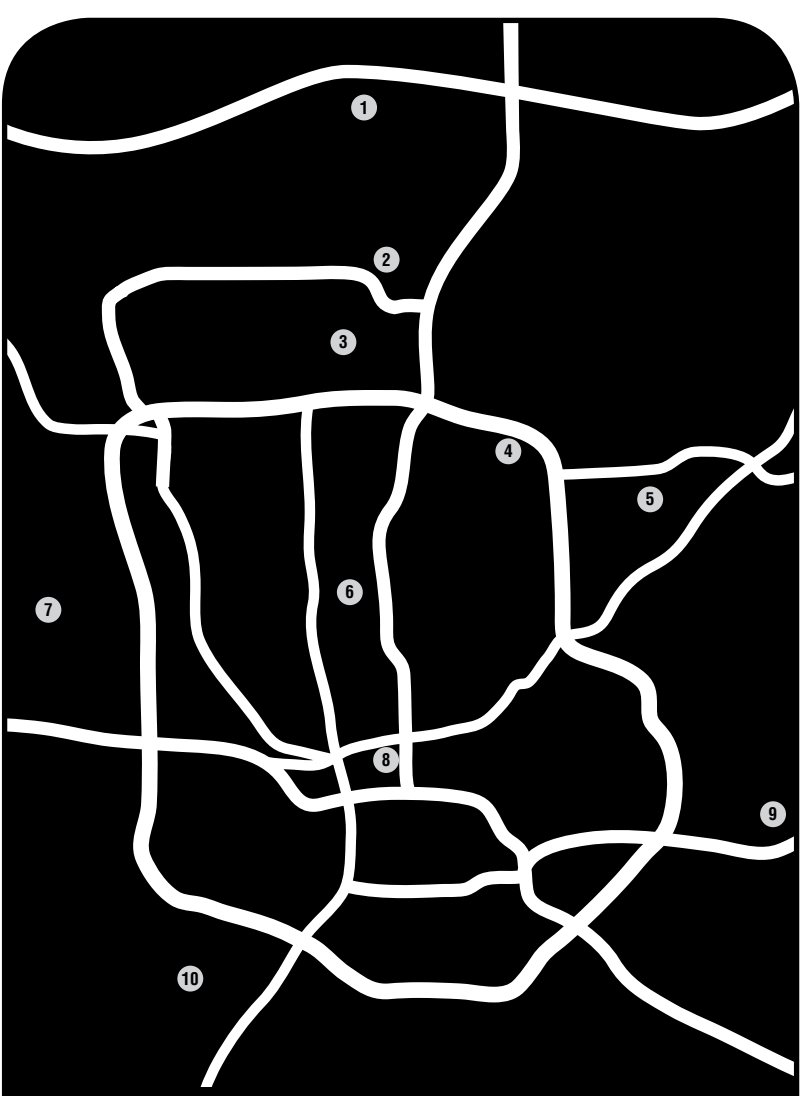
*New Fun* contained thirty-two pages of black and white, all original comics. Additionally, it also contained advertising. At 10 by 15 inches, *New Fun* was twice as large as *Famous Funnies*, but cost the same price. It sold poorly at first. The larger size made it unwieldy for newsstand vendors, who were already having a hard time figuring out how to display comic books. Wheeler-Nicholson rebounded quickly, and three months later, *New Fun* was renamed *More Fun* and adopted the standard comic book size. *More Fun*, would even bring about the comic book debuts of two young kids from Cleveland, Ohio destined to change the new artform forever. Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, the future creators of Superman, would begin their careers with a swashbuckling adventure strip within the pages of issue #6. Wheeler-Nicholson would continue to grow his original material empire with *New Comics*, released in September 1935.

Surprisingly, it took the newspaper syndicates that owned the characters *Famous Funnies* were reprinting quite a while to see the potential this new format might have for them. By the end of 1935, however, *Famous Funnies* was no longer alone in the reprint game at the newsstands. It was joined by *Popular Comics*, supplied by Tribune News featuring reprints of strips like *Dick Tracy*, *Gasoline Alley*, and *The Gumps*. It was also published by none other than Delacorte, who was back for one more try at the comics game. By early 1936, *Popular Comics* was joined by *King Comics* containing King Features strips like *Thimble Theater* which featured the many adventures of Popeye and *Tip Top Comics* published by United Features.

By the middle of 1936, there were eight comic books appearing regularly at newsstands. Half of them were reprints: *Famous Funnies*, *King Comics*, *Popular Comics*, and *Tip Top Comics*. The rest were original material: *The Comics Magazine*, *Mickey Mouse Magazine*, *More Fun*, and *New Comics*. All were the same size and sold for ten cents. It was the dawn of a new medium and a new industry. No one knew where it was going, and everyone was learning on their feet what the public wanted. On the horizon, two short years later, was *Action Comics #1*, the birth of Superman, and the superhero gold rush. Things were just getting started.

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- Great History of Comic Books by Ron Goulart
- American Comics: A History by Jeremy Dauber



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- 8 HEROES AND GAMES
- 9 CAPITAL CITY COMICS
- 10 SKYLARK TOYS AND COMICS

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**FANBOY EXPO COLUMBUS**  
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 Greater Columbus Convention Center  
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**ANIME OHIO 2022**  
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 Sharonville Convention Center  
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**AKRON-SUMMIT COMIC CON 2022**  
 Sunday, June 26  
 Summit County Fairgrounds  
 229 East Howe Rd. • Tallmadge, OH

**LEWISBURG COMIC CON**  
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 Lewisburg Self Storage  
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**WARREN COMIC CON**  
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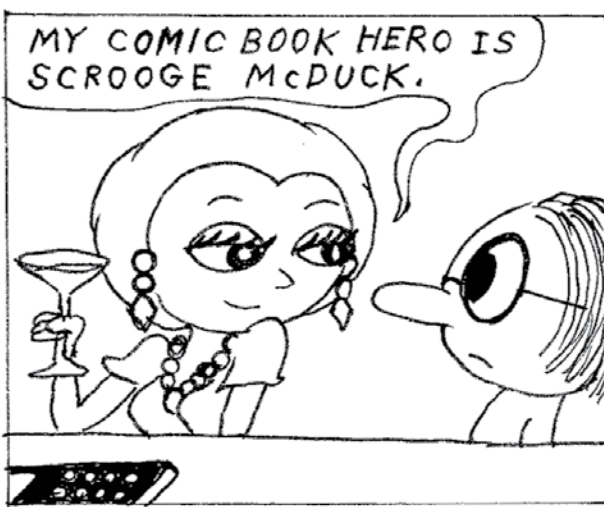
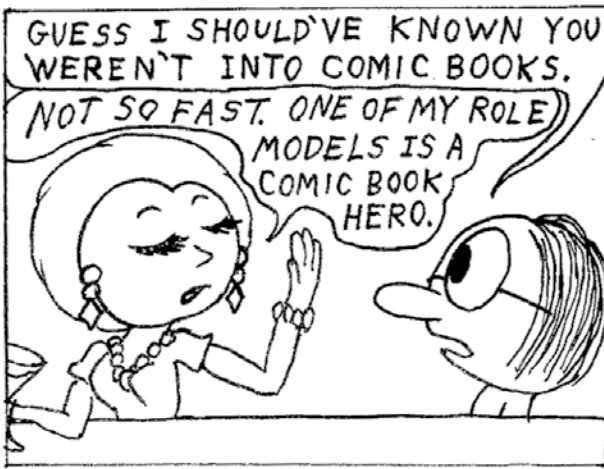
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# The Funnies

A CORNELIA STORY

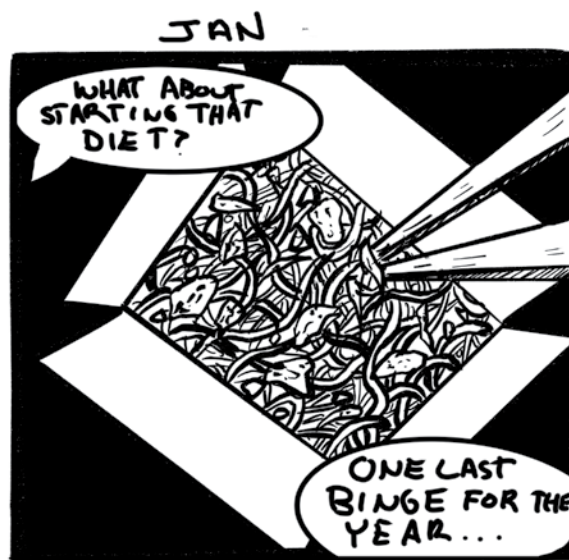
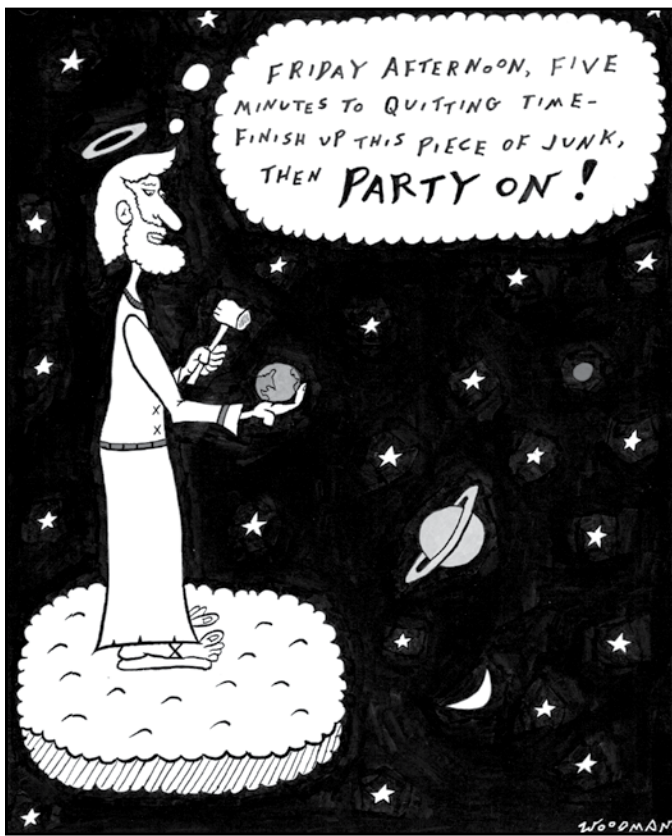
KEL CRUM



THAD WOODMAN

DAD BOD CHRONICLES: "TIS THE SEASONING!"

J.M. HUNTER



@JMUNTER/INSTAGRAM



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**THAD WOODMAN**

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