

\$3.00

Get Ben!

issue #9

Spring, 2002



Beginning in This Issue:

"A Fay Zone Leah...."

Hello and Welcome to Another Fabulous issue of Get Bent!

It's #9, for those of you who are counting. I apologize for taking a whole year since issue #8, but I felt that the last story I was working on for my auto-bio title, **Unshaven CHI**, needed to be a stand alone story, and not just a flip section of this comic. I suggest that those of you who haven't checked out **Unshaven CHI** #4 yet, go to the back-issue info page and order one today!

This issue's story is a bit of a departure for me. It's more serious in tone than my usual stuff. Sorry, but I thought that, now that people are nominating me for 'Promising New Talent' awards and stuff, maybe I should show some promise, or something.

Always a Bridesmaid, Never a Bride...

Unfortunately, I'll never know whether I have the stuff to win that Ignatz Award, as you all should know by now, the 2001 awards were cancelled, along with their convention, EXPO (SPX), due to the tragedies of 9-11-01. Those same tragedies made it hard to be funny for some time, so all the better an opportunity to do a more serious story this issue.

I did make an attempt to lighten up the second story this issue, by making my supporting characters homages to classic comic strip characters. ...And please don't write telling me my characterization of 'Black Peter' is racist. Whenever I think of the character as he was described to me as a kid, I picture *The Jungle Imp* from Windsor McKay's **Little Nemo** strip. Hence that character's appearance. You'll see a resemblance in other characters to *Dolly* and *Thel* from Bil Keane's **Family Circus**; *Les*, from Tom Batiuk's **Funky Winkerbean**; Lee Holly's **Ponytail**; *Grelber*, from Russell Myers' **Broom Hilda**; and the recently passed Hank Ketcham's **Dennis The Menace**.

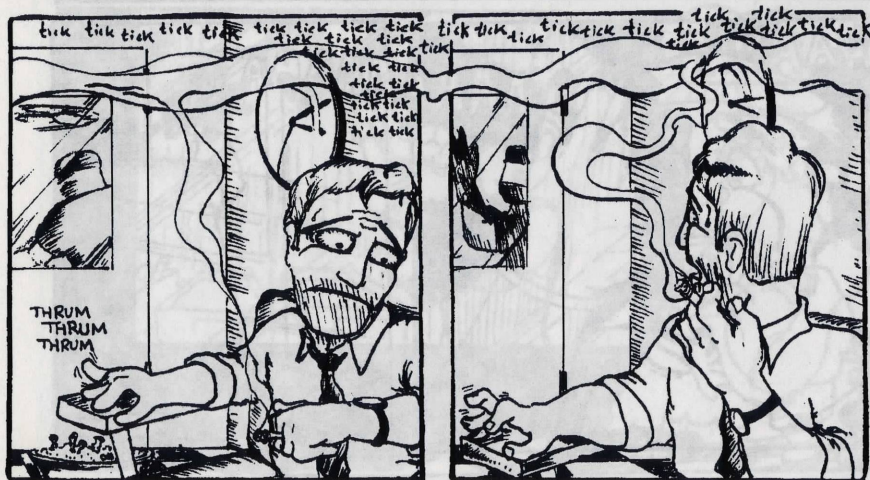
All characters are copyrighted by their respective owners. I use these in tribute, and claim no rights to the characters.

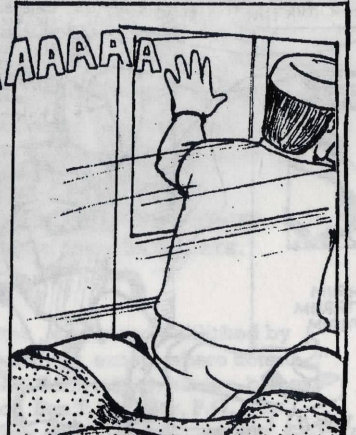
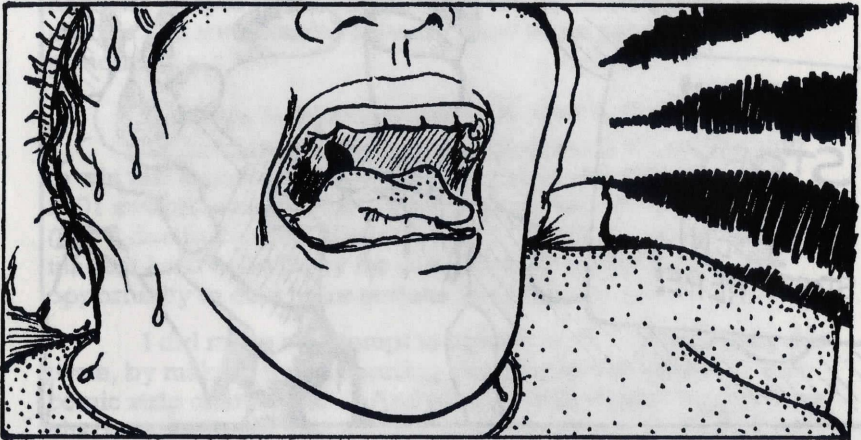
(more text on page 14)

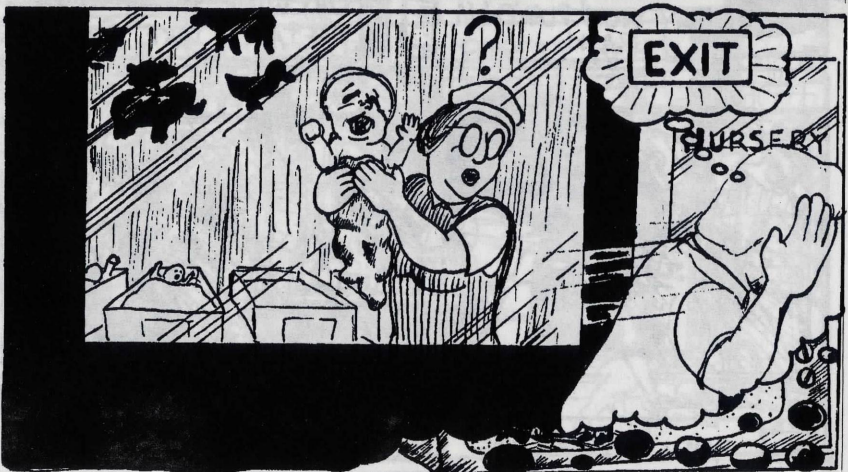
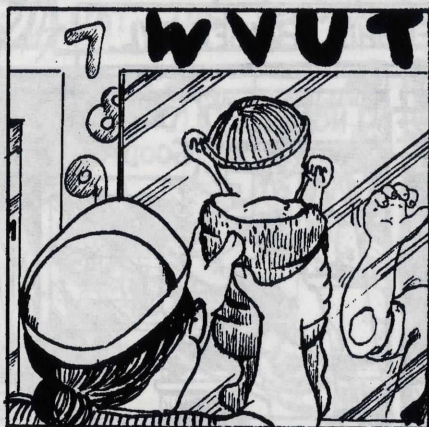
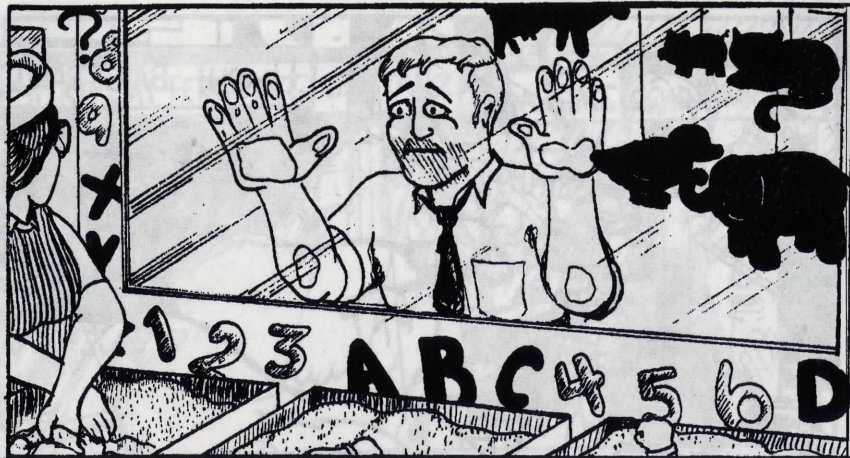
Get Bent! #9, Spring 2002, was created, written, drawn and published by **Ben T. Steckler**. All original material and characters, except where noted otherwise, are copyright 2002 by Ben T. Steckler. Send letters, money, bribes, job offers, fartjokes, and tasteful nude photos to: Ben T. Steckler, P.O. Box 7273, York, PA 17404. e-mail: bsteckler@netrax.net

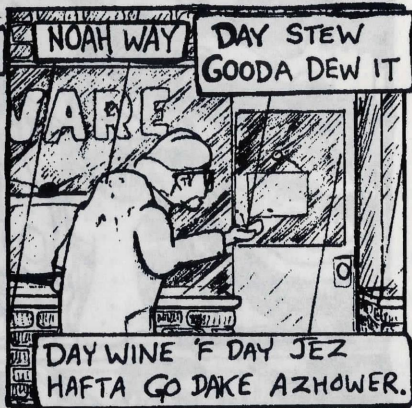
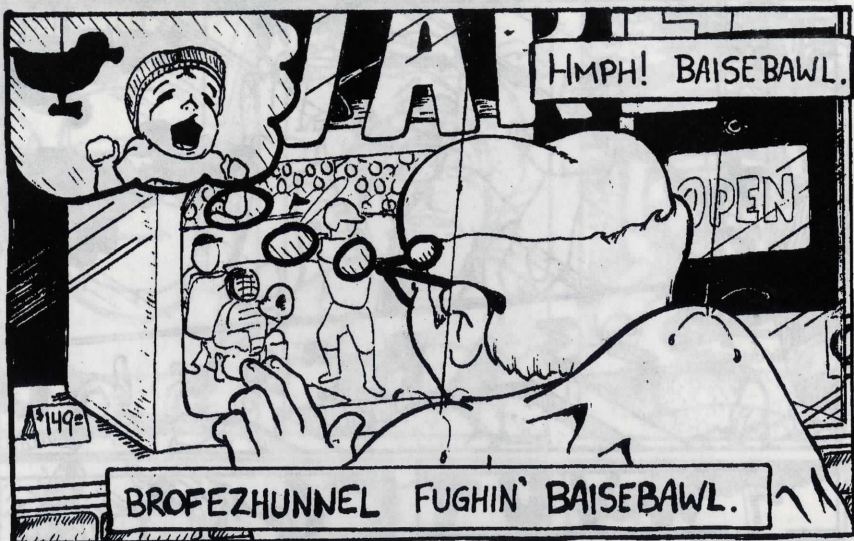
A FAY ZONE LEAH...

A NEW!
STORY
LINE
FROM BENT
STARTS HERE!







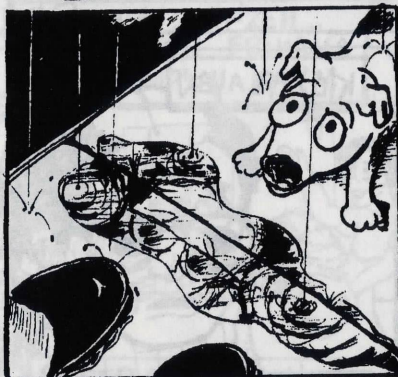


'SLIKE DAY FERGITTA GINE STANZ

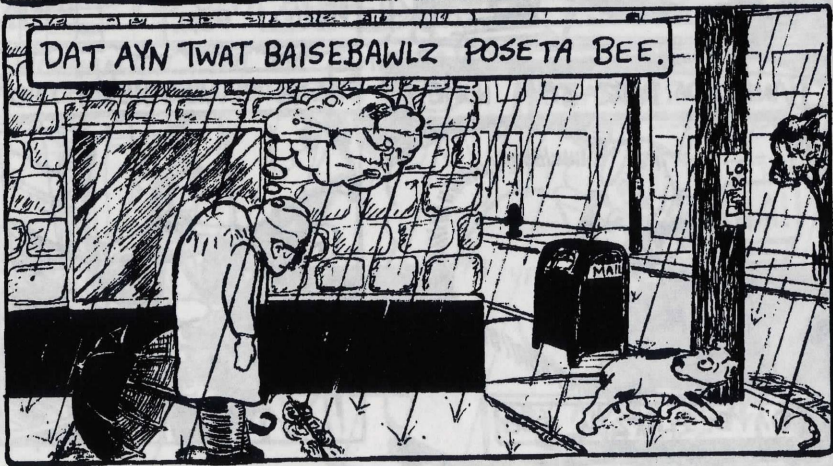
DA GIME ACHIN' 'MRITCH

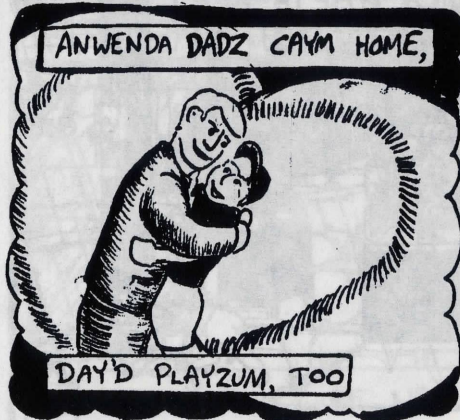


DAT GUISE PEN' HAFWEAK ZUAGEZ T'ZEE GAYM.



DAT AYN TWAT BAISEBAWLZ POSETA BEE.





HE LEFWEN EYEZBORN.

LEF MEAN MOMMA LOAN



MOMMA FOUN' WERK,

ANWENNA ZEH-ZEH...
ZETUHLMEN FRUMMA
DRUGOMP'NY CAYM,



SHEEP AID OFFA HOWZ.

MOMMA DOOK AIR FME



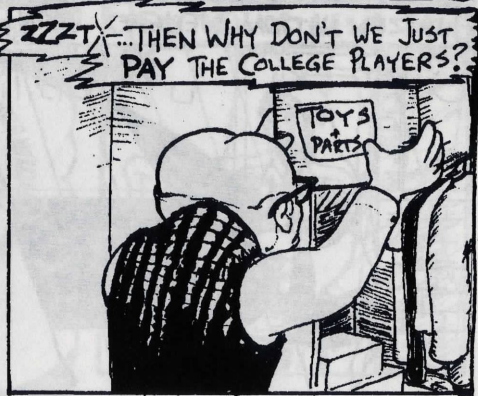
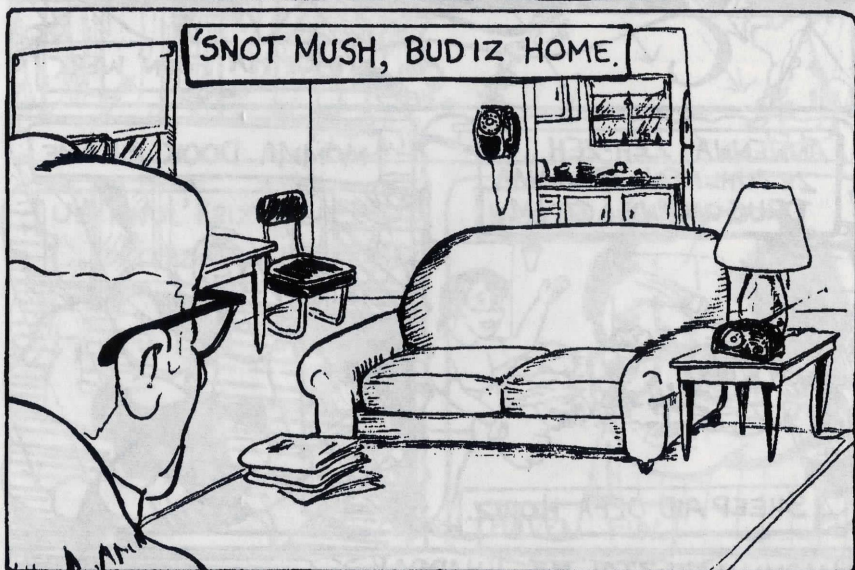
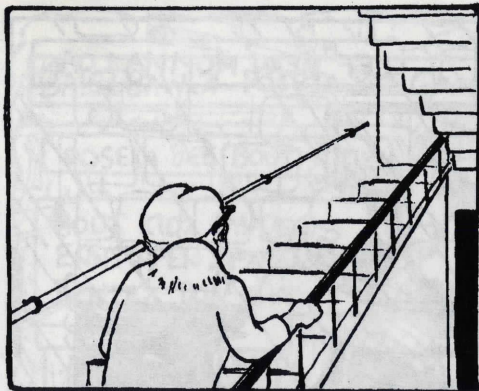
MOMMAWUN ZTOL' ME JIHADDA
LUZEN NATION WENEYEZ BORN



EYEZ GON BE A
BAWL PLAIR

HA!

DAY MUSSA BEN
GOOD RUGS.



WOULD IT SOLVE THE WHOLE PROBLEM?
...OR JUST MAKE MORE?

BRADY IN GREENSBORO,
YOU'RE ON...



WAIL, DON'T THEY-ALL
PUTTY MUCH GIT PAID
ALREADY?

...YOU MEAN LIKE
AT SMU?



Nooo, AH MEAN, LAHK, THEY ALL
GIT THE NAHCEST DORMS, A FREE
RAH, TOOISHUN-WAHZ, YEW KNOW...



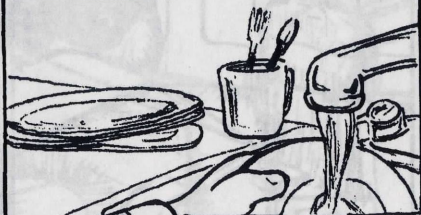
...THEN THEY FERGITS THEY DEGREE
AN' GO PRO FER BIG MONEY!
THEY NEEDS TO MAKE THEM PAY
BACK THOSE SCHOLARSHIPS, AH SAY.

... SO IT'S ALL ABOUT MONEY...



...TOM IN HOBOKEN, WHAT DO
YOU SAY?

OH, IT'S SOITANLY NOT
ABOUT DE JOY OF DE GAME
THERE, DAN. SOITANLY NOT.



SO. WHY DO WE STILL WATCH?
ARE WE ALL JADED, TOO?
WHITHER THE JOY OF SPORT?

WHAT ABOUT, SAY,
THE SPECIAL OLYMPICS?

YOU MEAN THE
RE-TARDS?

...INNA WHEELCHAIRS?

JOHN IN FRAMINGHAM,
WOULD YOU WATCH THAT?

TRASH!

... C'MON, JOHN. THEY'RE NOT
ALL RETARDED. LET'S SAY
"DIFFERENTLY ABLED".

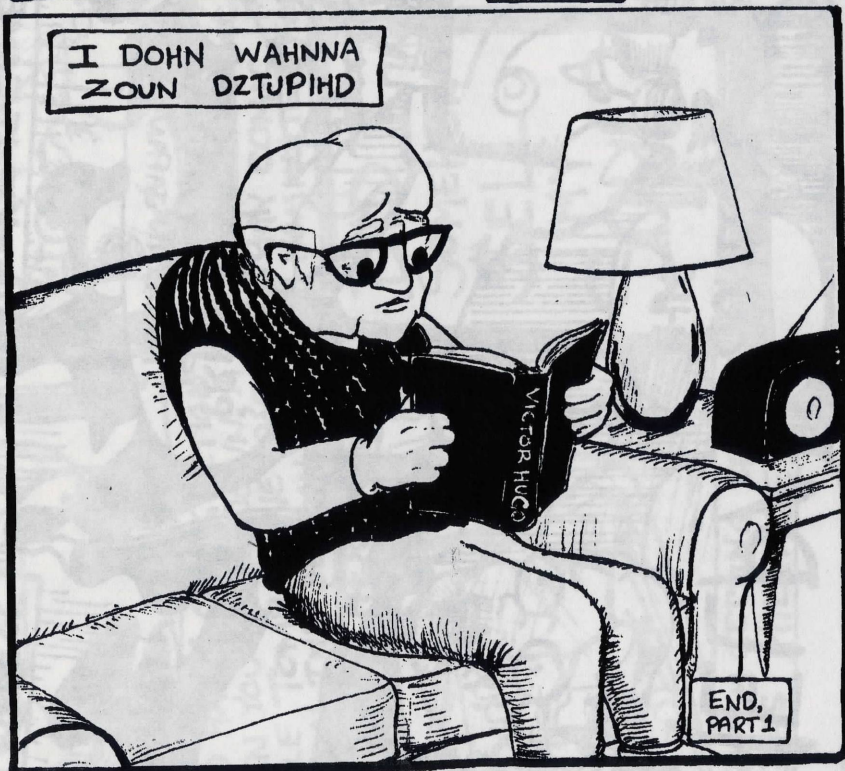
UH, I DUNNO IF I
COULD WAHTCH THAT...

... DEPENDS WHAT
ELSE IS ON.

SO, THE LINE IS OPEN FOR
YOU FOLKS OUT THERE...
...WOULD YOU WATCH THE
SPECIAL OLYMPICS ON TV?
...WOULD YOU PAY TO SEE IT?
WE'LL TAKE MORE CALLS AFTER
THIS BREAK.



I DOHN WAHNNA
ZOUN DZTUPIHD



HELP!

I FOUND THIS...

...DEVIL TOTEM

AT THE LOCAL FLEA MARKET...

...AND I THINK IT WANTS MY SOUL!

©1964
PRIDE CREATIONS, INC
156 FIFTH AVE, NYC
MADE IN JAPAN

IT'S MADE OF WOOD...

HAND-PAINTED

SINCE IT CAME INTO MY POSSESSION,

...I'VE LOST MORE WEIGHT...

...AND HAS A SPRING-ACTION. WHEN YOU PRESS DOWN, A LITTLE TOMBSTONE POPS FROM THE SLOT ON TOP.

HEXX-ON

MY COMIC HAS BEEN NOMINATED FOR AN AWARD...

DID I SOMEHOW \$ELL MY SOUL?

WELL, ...I AM A BIT PALER, AND I HAVEN'T BEEN A GOOD DANCER LATELY...

...IT COULD BE!

...AND I'M GETTING BETTER GAS MILEAGE!

BEN

END

A Little Story Background on 'A Fay Zone Leah'

First off, let me say that I do not intend to make light of any persons with disabilities with this story. I have struggled in my life, at various times, with obesity, acute shyness, myopia, a lack of physical prowess, and bad teeth. I know well enough what it's like to be the outsider. I have not always been the suave, debonair, graceful and handsome stud that you bought this comic from at the convention. I have also been insensitive in my youth, and have poked fun at those worse off than myself. I'm an adult now. I hope that this tale can be something of an atonement. I will endeavor, from now on, to only pick on those MORE fortunate than myself.

'A Fay Zone Leah' is a story that I've been mulling over for some time. I actually drew the first three pages of the first story over a year ago, before I drew issue #8's story. I then spent several months, trying to come up with a way to best use that opening sequence.

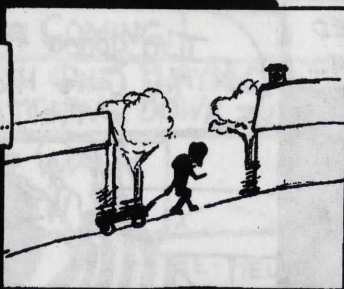
The central character, as yet un-named, but referred to as 'The Water-Head Man' in the following story, is based on a real person who used to come around my neighborhood when I was a child. This man, whose name I don't recall, (although I do know people who could probably remember his name) **did** collect broken toys and household goods and refurbish them for charities. He **did** have Hydrocephalus. He **did** have severe Myopia, and wore thick, horn-rim glasses. This much of the story is grounded in reality. I took some license, and gave my character the additional disabilities of a cleft palate, and a hunched back. I don't know if the real 'Water-Head Man' despised modern professional sports. This is just a little bit of my own opinion coming thru in the attempt to show the character's bitter, frustrated side.

The first story was narrated in the central character's voice. I chose to use slurred, phonetic spellings, to give the reader a feeling of this man's pain. Just trying to communicate verbally with the outside world is an ongoing struggle for him. If you didn't quite 'get' that first chapter, try going back and reading it aloud. In public is best. The stares you receive should make you feel a little like my character.

I have more ideas for this character. I've even dug out some of my short stories from college that can be adapted to fit him, so I hope my readers will appreciate this new direction.

I DON'T REMEMBER
EXACTLY WHEN HE FIRST
CAME TO OUR NEIGHBORHOOD...

I ONLY REMEMBER
BEING SCARED.



I COULDN'T HAVE
BEEN MORE THAN,
OH, FIVE OR SIX...



HE'D COME EVEN ON
THE HOTTEST SUMMER
DAY.



IT WAS
IN THE
60s

BEFORE
CABLE

BEFORE
ATARI

WHEN KIDS
STILL
PLAYED
OUTSIDE

HE PULLED
A WAGON...

♪ I'm gonna find you! ♪
♪ You Can't Hide from
Me!



...IT WAS
A HAMILTON
"GREY HOUND
SUBURBAN"

... WITH THE WOODEN BED, DETACHABLE RAILS,
AND LARGE RUBBER TIRES...

♪ You think you can beat me, ♪
but I'll find you both!



... BIG ENOUGH
TO CARRY
THREE
KIDS.

WE HAD A WAGON JUST LIKE HIS WHEN I WAS
LITTLER... MY BROTHER USED IT TO COLLECT BOTTLES

BUT
HIS
WAGON
WAS
DIFFERENT

Hey! It's HOT! Let me find you, Guys,
and I'll get us some KOOL-AID!



Okay?

HIS WAGON DIDN'T SNEAK LIKE OURS DID.

YOU DIDN'T HEAR HIM COMING.

IF YOU WERE OUT PLAYING,
...AND NOT WATCHING DOWN THE STREET,

...HE'D BE ON YOUR WALK
BEFORE YOU KNEW IT...

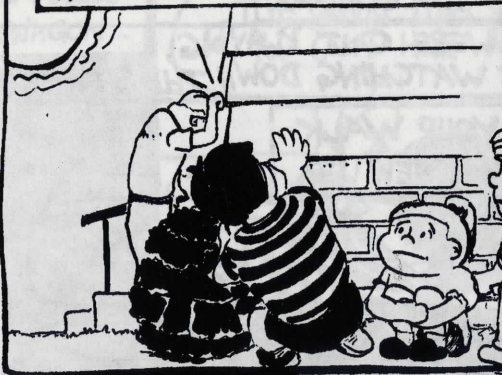
...THE WATER HEAD MAN!

HE - HELL - OH
ZUN...



IHZ NOAR
MUH-DER
HOAM?

HE SCARED US KIDS. TO US, HE LOOKED LIKE AN ALIEN



WHEN WE SAW HIM COMING, WE'D HIDE AT THE SIDE OF THE HOUSE,

AND WATCH.

HE'D KNOCK AT THE DOOR, AND MOM WOULD ANSWER, AND BRING HIM STUFF.

A BROKEN TOASTER, SOME OLD TOWELS, MAYBE SOME OLD CLOTHING.

SOMETIMES SHE'D BRING HIM -SHUDDER!- MY OLD TOYS!

AND HE'D GO ON... HAPPILY, ON HIS WAY.



!@#*&?!



LATER, SHE'D TELL ME I'D OUT-GROWN IT, OR... IT DIDN'T WORK,

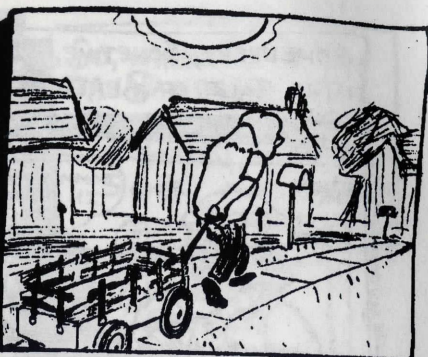
OR I DIDN'T PLAY WITH IT ANYMORE.

"FAMILY CIRCUS" CHARACTERS © BILL KEANE

SOMETIMES, MOM HAD
NOTHING FOR HIM,
EXCEPT A COLD DRINK...



...WE WERE THE
NEIGHBORHOOD'S
"KOOL-AID HOUSE",
AFTER ALL,



HE'D THANK HER, AND GO ON,
PULLING THAT WAGON.

THE ONE LARGE ENOUGH TO
HOLD THREE KIDS.

AND I WOULD MAKE SURE
ALL OF MY TOYS WERE
PROPERLY PLAYED WITH
IN THE NEXT COUPLE WEEKS.

VRRRRM, VARRRUM,
E-R-R-RT!

HEY! WHAT TH-?!

HOKAY, PALLY!
JUST GIT OUT OF DA
TRUCK, AN' GIVE
JOEY KRYPTONITE HERE
DA KEYS, AN' MAYBE
WE LET YOUSE GO HOME
TO YER BOYFRIEND!



SOMEWHERE, SOMETIME, I'D HEARD
THE TALE OF BLACK PETER AS A KID

IN SOME EUROPEAN COUNTRY,
HE'S THIS "SIDEKICK" TO
SANTA CLAUS.

SANTA HAD THE SACK
FULL OF TOYS FOR
ALL THE GOOD KIDS..

...AND BLACK PETER
CARRIED AN EMPTY
SACK!

THE GOOD KIDS GOT STUFF..

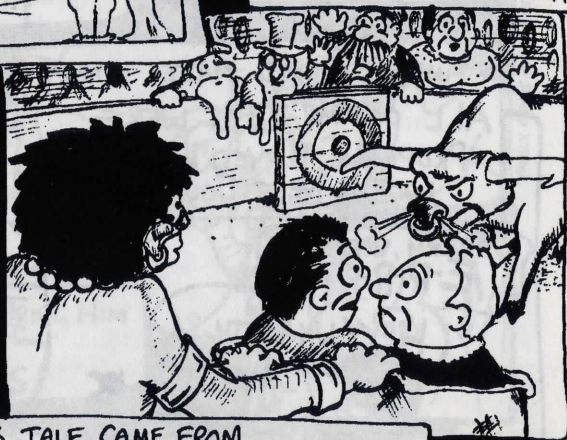
...THE BAD KIDS
GOT STUFFED..
...INTO PETER'S
SACK,
AND HAULED
AWAY TO
SPAIN!

WHEREVER THIS TALE CAME FROM,
...THEY MUST NOT THINK MUCH OF SPAIN!

SO, I BEGAN TO
BELIEVE THAT,
IF HE COULD TAKE AWAY
THE TOYS SANTA HAD BROUGHT,
THEN THE WATER-HEAD MAN
COULD JUST AS EASILY
HAUL AWAY A KID.

OR TWO.

OR EVEN THREE



HEY! WHO ARE THE PEOPLE
IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD,
ANYWAY, KID?



SO, WHENEVER I SAW
THE WATER-HEAD MAN
COME UP MY STREET,
I STAYED OUT OF
SIGHT, AND WATCHED
HIM CAREFULLY.

I GREW UP
SAFELY,
AND RELATIVELY
SANE

I LEARNED THINGS
ABOUT MYOPIA.
ABOUT HYDROCEPHALUS

I ASKED MOM
ABOUT THAT
POOR OLD MAN



I LEARNED THAT
HIS WAGON DIDN'T
SQUEAK BECAUSE
HE WAS GOOD AT
FIXING THINGS.

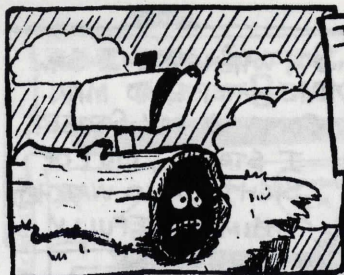
AND I LEARNED SHAME...
...FOR HAVING FEARED THIS
POOR, MIS-SHAPEN MAN.



I LEARNED HOW HE'D TAKE
HOME THE WORN, BROKEN
THINGS HE'D COLLECTED, FIND
WAYS TO MEND THEM, AND GO
BACK OUT, HAULING HIS
WAGON TO THE POORER NEIGHBORHOODS,
GIVING THE TOASTERS, TOYS,
CLOTHING, AND OTHER GOODS
TO FAMILIES THAT NEEDED THEM.



© JIM HENSON PRODS.
© LES © TOM BATTUK
© PONYTAIL © LEE KOLLY



I FELT LIKE AN
OGRE.
A TROLL.
A REAL HEEL.

I'D NEVER
LEARNED HIS
NAME, OR
WHERE HE
CAME FROM.

I DON'T REMEMBER WHEN HE
STOPPED COMING AROUND.

I GUESS HE EVENTUALLY WENT
THE WAY ALL OLD FOLKS DO.

I HOPE HE HAD A FAMILY.
-SOMEBODY TO TAKE CARE
OF HIM BEFORE HE WENT

I HOPE HE DIDN'T
DIE LONELY,
AND BITTER.

I HOPE I DON'T GO
THAT WAY TOO.

BEAT
3

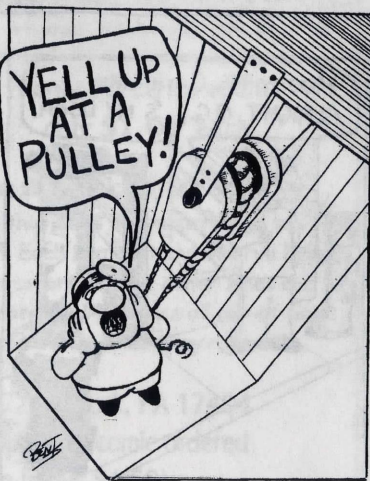
More Fun with Palindromes

Back in Issue # 7, I gave you all a peak at a new set of panel gags I'd been working on featuring **Dr. Palindrome**, who you may remember from way back in the **SKA-Toons** minis, and from his occasional cameos in this series.

Well, here are a few more of these gags. I wish these could work their way into the hands of an agent, or someone like wordplay enthusiast Richard Lederer. Believe me, I have a folder full of these things.

I guess I owe my interest in palindromes to my 'Uncle' B.G. He was also the principal artistic influence in my life. I think it was around my Eighth birthday when Uncle B.G. and Aunt Mary gave me this Activity Calendar full of wordplay games. I've been hooked on palindromes ever since. When I get into the mode, I can barely stand to look at a roadsign; Every word I see, I try to read in reverse.

While these are all my own original Palindrome creations, I welcome the chance to illustrate any you, Dear Reader, might come up with. Please e-mail your ideas to me



More Fun with Palindromes (cont.)



Catch Up with BenT!

Check out the Back Issues!

Get BenT!

fictional humor and pop-culture commentary, featuring the adventures of Sidney Skalinowicz, a washed up Ska Artist lost in space. See him face off against the minions of "The-Devil-You-Say"!

issues 5,6,7,8 are available for \$2.00 each
(Unshaven CHI appears as a flip book on issues 5,6,and 7)

UNSHAVEN CHI #1

BenT explores childhood memories and cereal nostalgia

Features the 18-page story, "Island of Lost Bowls".

#4

BenT tells the tale of his four grandmas

\$2.00 each

SKA-Toons

the mini-comic series that started it all, featuring the adventures of Sid while he still had a music career. He fights Gothic Monsters, The Devil, The Evil Dr. Palindrome, and hides from his Mama!

issues 5, 6, 7, and 8 are \$1.00 each

issues 9 and 10 are \$1.25 each

f-ARTjoke

a little mini-zine in which BenT, and guest artists, take famous paintings and illustrations and parody them with the theme of flatulence! Buy a copy and cram it into the shorts of your favorite ArtSnob!

issue 0 only 75 cents each!

issue 1 only \$1.00 each

BenT's Big Ol' Bargain Bag! \$5.00 each

A bag full of BenT's atrocious early comics that he is so embarrassed by, now that he's nominated for awards and stuff! Each bag contains Martini Bros.

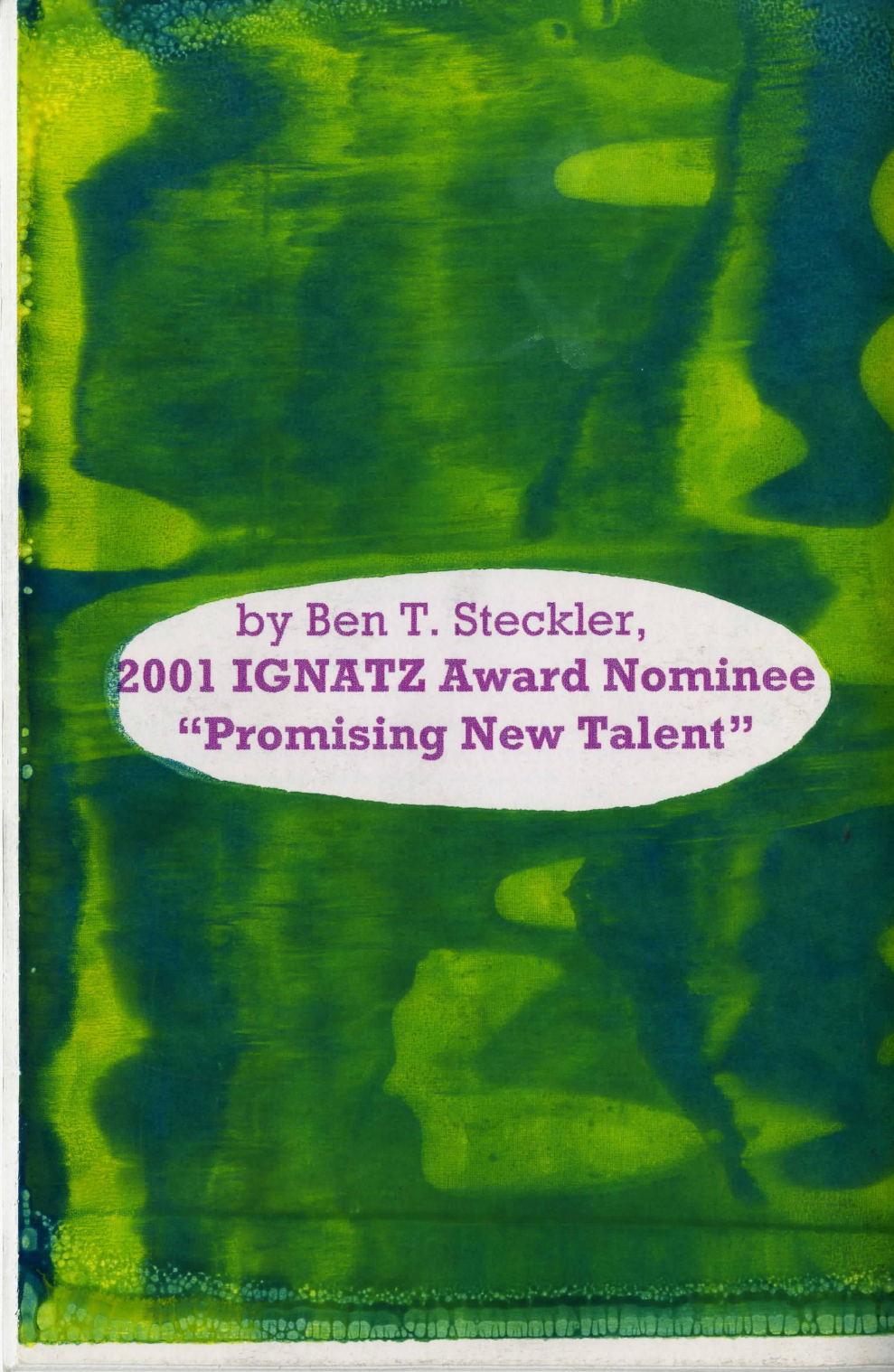
Advs #1, Get BenT #1 and #2, and an assortment of other zines and mini-comics, and goodies from early in his career. These are all out-of-print, and BenT is gonna pretend they never existed when they're gone!

send to: Ben T. Steckler, POB 7273, York, PA 17404

please add 25 cents postage for each comic ordered

(postage for the bargain bag is \$1.50)

(Non-U.S. readers, email : bsteckler@netrax.net for correct postage)

The background is an abstract, textured composition of various shades of green and blue, resembling a watercolor or ink wash. The colors are blended and layered, creating a sense of depth and movement. A white, horizontally-oriented oval is centered in the middle of the image, containing text in a purple serif font. The text is arranged in three lines, with the first line being smaller than the second and third lines.

by Ben T. Steckler,
2001 IGNATZ Award Nominee
"Promising New Talent"