

\$2⁰⁰
SUMMER
1999

GET BENT! #5



ELROY
WAS
HERE

11D-
: -ASK WARDEN
FOR NEW PENCIL.
-5

TURN AROUND,
IDiot!



IN THIS ISSUE:
"THE LAST SID SKA
STORY"
PART II!

HOWDY! AND WELCOME TO THE LAST ISSUE OF 'GET BENT!'

— WHAT DID HE SAY!?!? LAST ISSUE???? Yeah. More on that later. First, I want to thank all the folks who sent letters or wrote reviews raving about issue #4, the candy bag issue. That issue has had my best critical response to date, and, feeling encouraged, I've sent it in to be considered for the Ignatz Award for Outstanding Mini-Comic. So if it makes the ballot, I expect all y'all that can make it to This year's SPX to vote me in.

I do want to respond to one review, if I may. In the June issue (#193) of *MAXIMUMROCKNROLL*, Brianna Chesser wrote a brief review in which, along with positive comments, she called the Sid Ska story racist, because I chose to have the Hiroshima Customs agents slur their R's and L's.

SINCE WHEN IS IT RACIST TO TRY AND ACCURATELY DEPICT AN ACCENT? I try hard to compose my word balloons so that the reader can get the best impression of the voice I give my characters. I use bold face and underlines to indicate inflection and cadence, and where necessary I will use slang and/or contractions, etc. to indicate how a character's ethnicity influences his/her speech pattern. In the story in question, I was trying to convey the effect of a person of Asian descent struggling with phonemes for which his tongue never developed a sense memory. I was only depicting an accent I've heard from every person of Asian descent I've ever met, save for those raised in an English-speaking environment, or those who have taking great pains to retrain their speech muscles. I'm sure I would sound like a dang fool American if I tried to speak Japanese. It certainly took great effort to properly enunciate in French class. I am not making light of anybody's accent, and I make no apologies. I find it depressing that a magazine like *MAXIMUMROCKNROLL*, which is supposedly such a bastion of punk sensibilities, can fall into such an attitude of politically correctness.

WHAT ABOUT MY OTHER CHARACTERS? Why has no-one complained about Dex? He's from New Jersey, yet he affects a Jamaican accent. Is that Racism? I guess not, or people would complain about that character on *FUTURAMA*, or the horrible speech patterns of Jar-Jar Binks! (Okay, a lot of folks are complaining about Jar-Jar, but not because it's a racist depiction.) What about Euro-Chick? I give her a thick Franglais to show that she's a French fashion model, because otherwise, people might think she's an alien with those things sticking out of her head. (They're Hairpins!) If that's racist, I blame the *RICHIE RICH* comics I grew up reading. Chef Pierre always spoke like zat!

Believe me, I did think about the decision to use the Japanese accent. I remember once asking Ben Edlund about his use of a similar accent for the character R'ir Nip in one of the early *TICK* comics. He gave a good explanation that I accepted, and understand all too well now that I am on the creative end.

We all have our own ethnic backgrounds that add nuance to our speech and mannerisms. Many Yorkers call the towns to our South 'Ret Line' (Red Lion) and 'Balmer' (Baltimore). I always find it amusing that they drop a syllable from Baltimore, yet **add** a syllable to the surname of Cal Ripken, Jr. (They call him 'Rippiken'.) It would be a shame to ignore the richness and diversity of such dialect. I would much rather revel in that diversity than produce bland characters that all talk the same way. I'm not a racist. Maybe I'm an **Equal Opportunity Offender**.

IT'S A COMIC-BOOK, AFTER ALL, NOT A U.N. DRAFT RESOLUTION. I cannot feel sorry if anyone deems my work important enough to be considered offensive. Really, I'd only be flattered by the attention, because... **...I'M NOBODY FAMOUS, DAMMIT!**

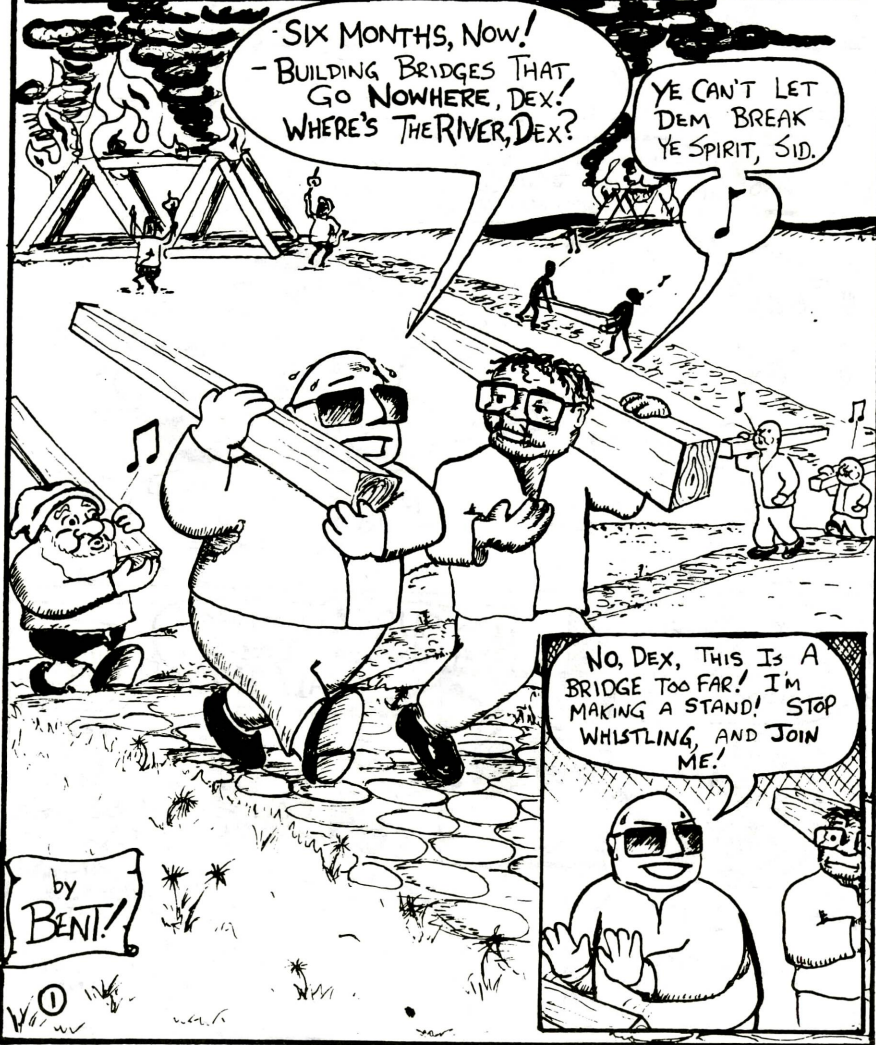
(BenT's rant continues on page 19)

Get Bent! #5/ Unshaven Chi #0 is copyright 1999 by Ben T. Steckler. This issue was entirely written and drawn by Ben T. Steckler. All rights to characters created by Ben T. Steckler are reserved. Reprints of individual pages are allowed for purpose of review or plug only. Likenesses of artists in the SPX fantasy sequence are the property of the respective individuals and no rights are assumed to those likenesses by Ben T. Steckler. Isn't fun reading all this legal stuff? Wouldn't it be **really cool** if lawyers referred to this stuff as **legal stuff**? Please address all correspondence to: Ben T. Steckler, 957 Richwill Dr., York, PA 17404. Remember this address, because I'm getting a P.O. box before I put out my next book, and you, my adoring fans, won't be able to mob me at my home otherwise!

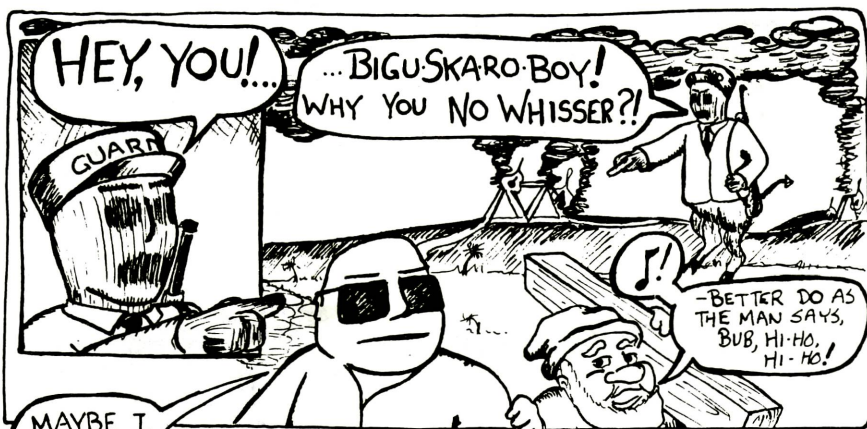
A BRIDGE? - TOO FAR!

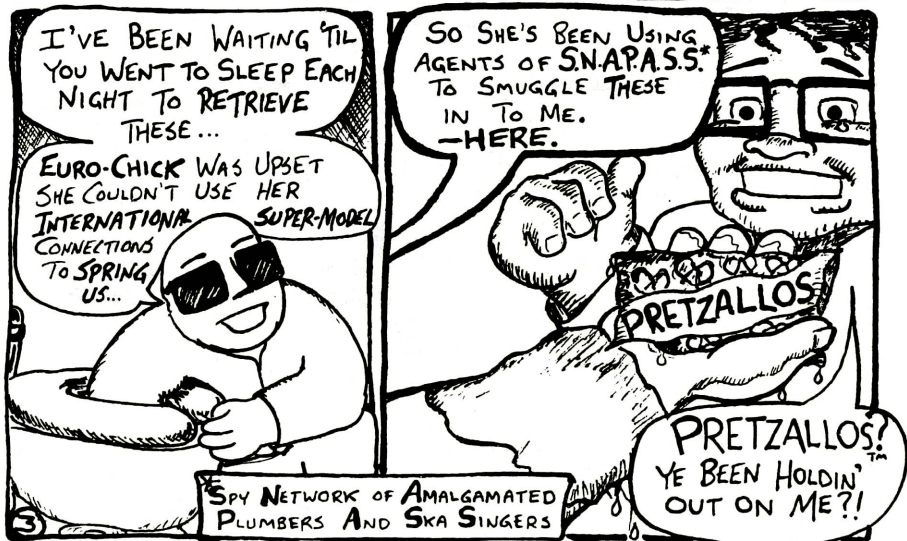
(THE LAST SID SKA STORY, PART II)

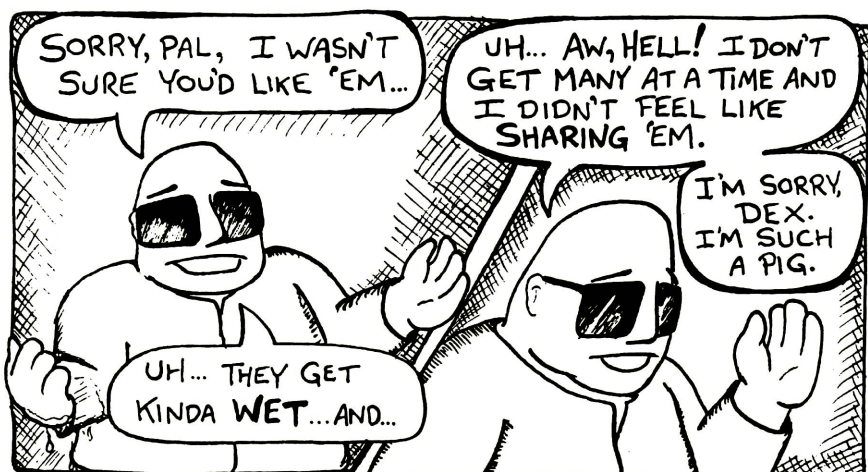
WHEN WE LAST SAW OUR HEROES, THEY HAD BEEN SENTENCED TO LIFE IN PRISON FOR SMUGGLING "ATOMIC FIREBALLS" CANDY INTO HIROSHIMA, JAPAN... WE JOIN SID + DEX AT WORK IN THE KWAI PRISON COLONY.



by
BENT!







THREE YEARS EARLIER... THE ANDES.*

JDDY HQ
AIRLINES

*SEE SKA-TOONS MINI-COMK #4

DEX! SKA-BETTE!
ANYBODY! ARE
YOU ALIVE?!

I'N I BE
ALRIGHT, SID..
-I JES' A LI'L
BRUISED 'SALL!

AND ME AND THE GREEN
M-MEANIE ARE CCCOLD

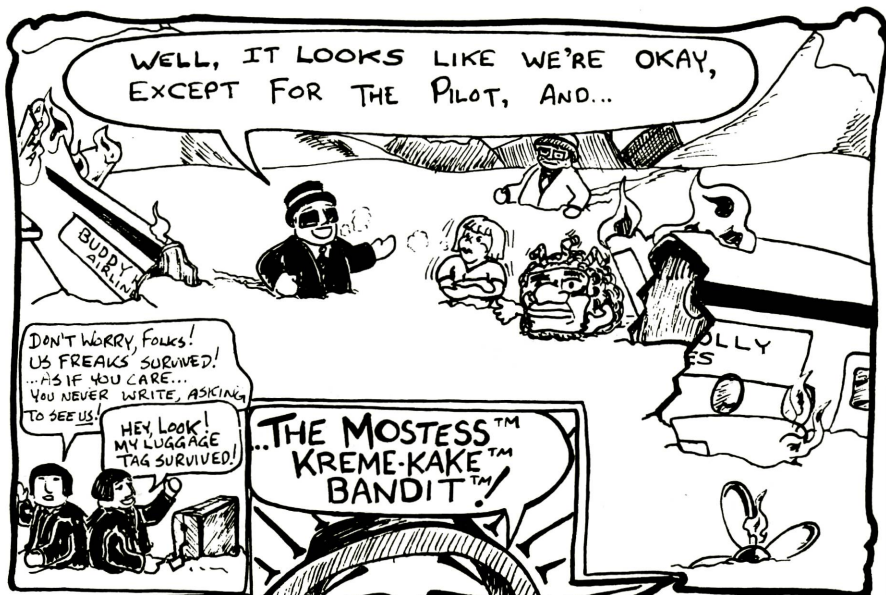
D-D-DAMN STRAIGHT!

I GUESS WE SHOULD
B-BUILD A FIRE WHILE
THE PLANE'S STILL
B-BURNING.

CCCAN I T-TAKE A M-MOMENT
T-TO TELL ABOUT THE G-GROOVY
T-TRIP I'VE BEEN ON
SINCE LAST SEEN IN
SKA-TOONS #8?

NO! SSH!

THIS ISN'T THAT KIND OF FLASHBACK!



BOOM! CRASH!!



BOOM

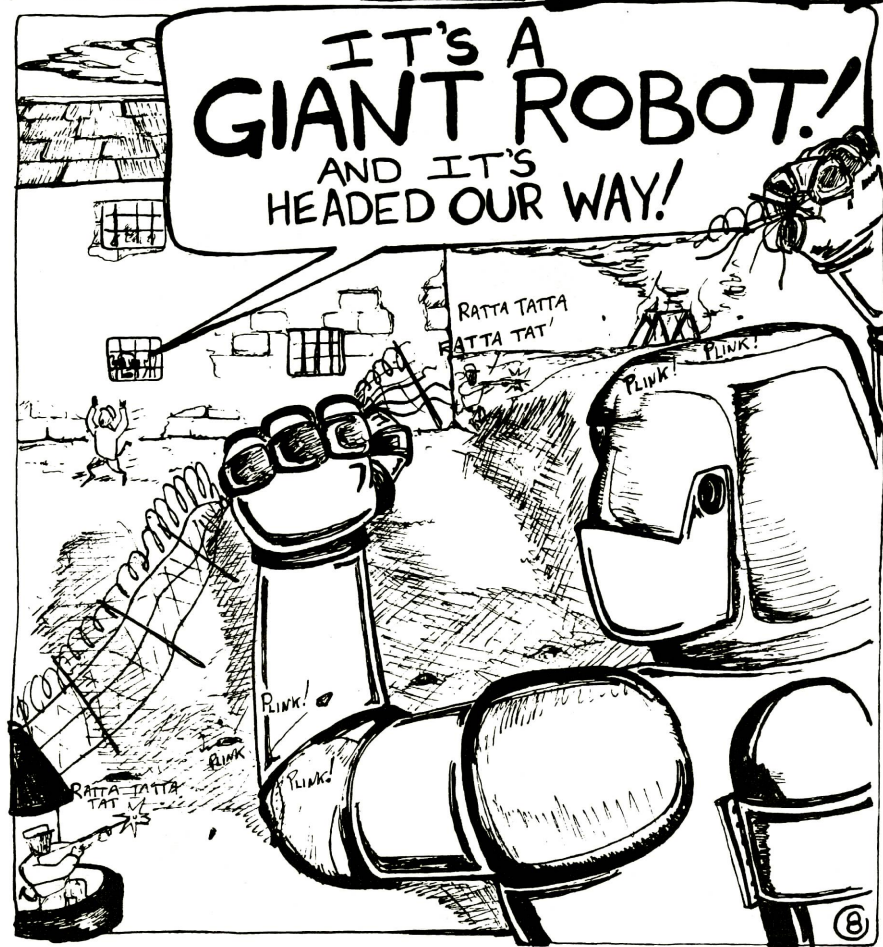
OH NO,
SID,
MON,

ME NO
LIKE
DE WAY
DE
WATER
BE
SHAKIN'!

AW, DEX! THAT'S
JUST THE GUARDS
BLOWING UP BRIDGES.

I DON' KNOW,
MON,
-'TIS GETTIN'
CLOSER!

BOOM

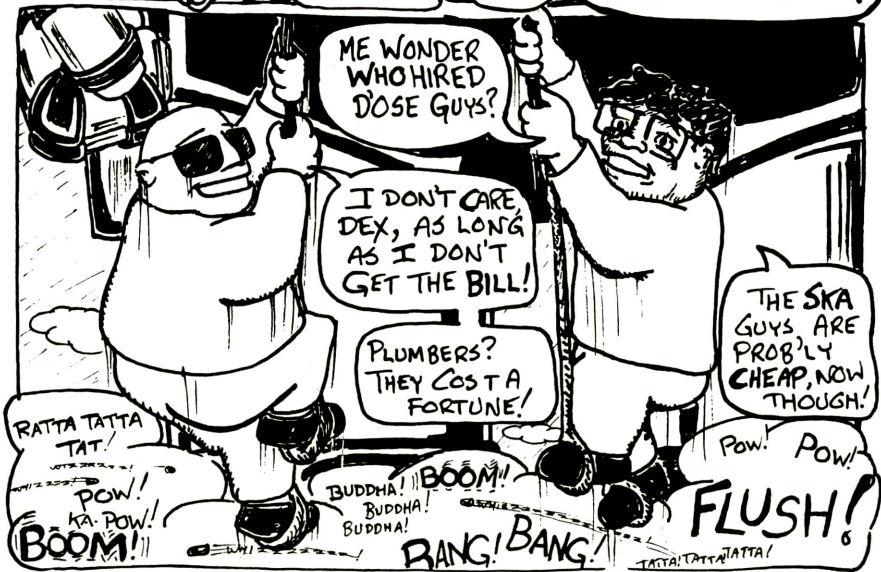
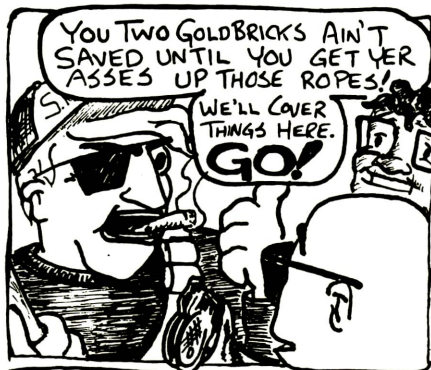


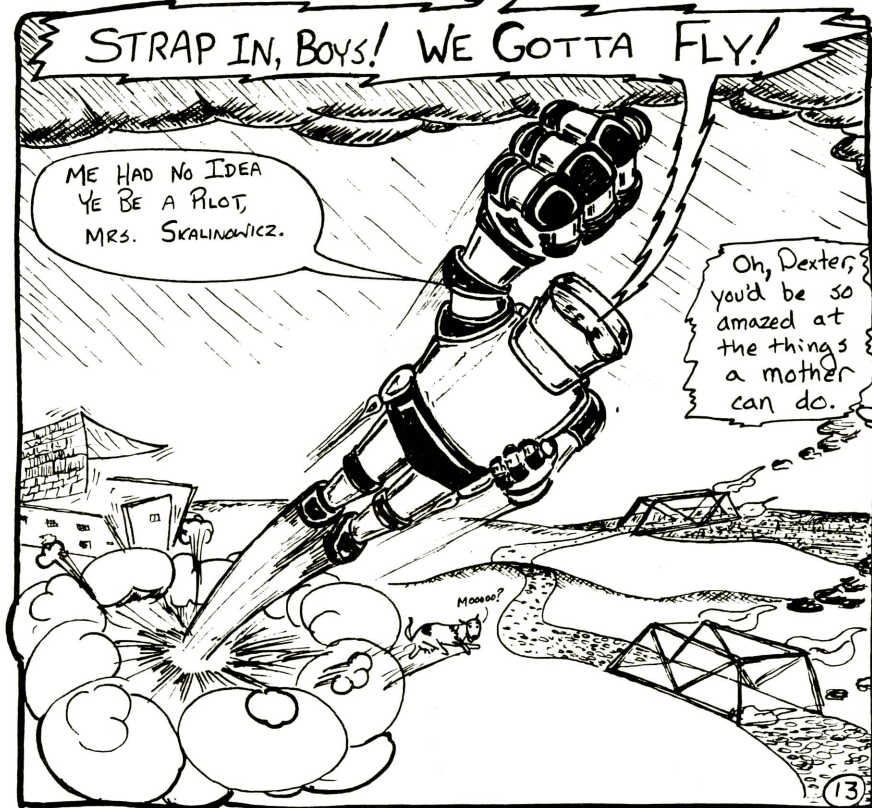
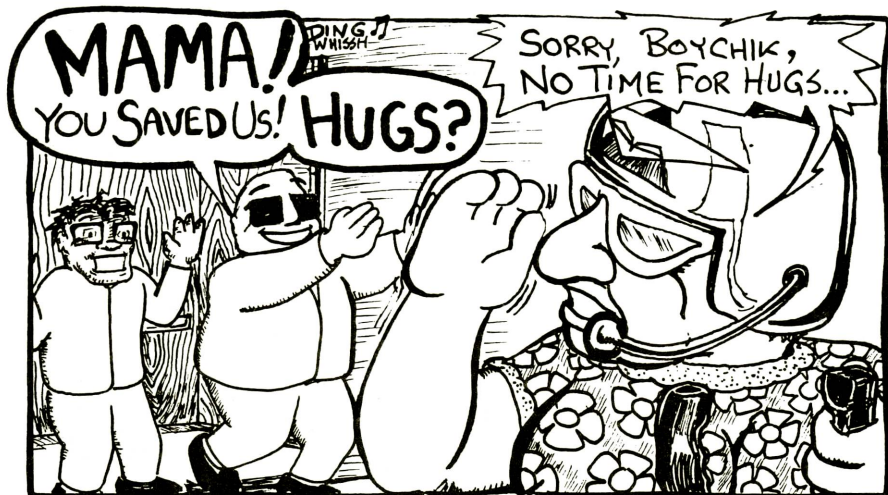




LET'S MOVE, MEN!
PICK IT UP! PICK IT UP! PICK IT UP!
DJANGO! KOWALSKI! -COVER THE GUARDS!
DAMMERS! SUGGS! SECURE OUR ESCAPE!
SCHWARTZ! JIGGLE THAT HANDLE!







SOON...

So, SIDNEY DARLING, I HOPE YOU'RE FINISHED WITH ALL THIS MUSIC SILLINESS.

Aw, MAMA, DON'T START NOW!

IT'S BROUGHT YOU NOTHING BUT TROUBLE, SIDNEY.

MAMA! IT'S MY LIFE!

WOW...
...IT BE SO TINY AND BLUE...

YOU'LL COME BACK HOME AND START A DECENT BUSINESS.

MAMA!

FROM UP D'IS HIGH, YE CAN'T TELL DE COUNTRIES APART!

I NEED TO
A STAR,
I NEED FA
AND ADVENTURE

NO COUNTRIES, NO BOUNDARIES,
JES' LANDAN' OCEAN AN' ICE AN' CLOUDS...
... 'TIS JES' A PEACEFUL BLUE
MARBLE WHEN YE BE SO...
... FAR?... AWAY?

FAME?!!
ADVENTURE?!!

WHY CAN'T YOU
BE CONTENT WITH
A TRADE ...
..LIKE PLUMBING?
LOOK AT THAT NICE
NICK ROOTER!

OH? STAGING PRISON RAIDS
ISN'T ADVENTUROUS?

DON'T YOU TALK BACK, SON!
I'LL TURN THIS ROBOT AROUND!

UH, SID, SPEAKING OF...

EVEN SAYING I DID COME HOME
AND START A BUSINESS, AS SOON
AS IT WAS THRIVING, SOME DEVIL
WOULD DESTROY IT ALL. I KNOW
HOW BENT WRITES!

...SPEAKING OF TURNING...

DEX! SSH! I'M
TRYING TO TALK
TO MY MAMA!

SO YOU'RE
SAYING YOU SHOULD
BECOME A BUM?
- OR A SATANIST?
OH SIDNEY, YOU
NEED A NEW
WRITER!

SIDNEY! DONT TALK LIKE
THAT TO YOUR FRIEND!
- HE'S PUT UP WITH MORE OF
YOUR MESHUGGA SCHEMES
THAN I COULD!

Now, Dexter, what do you have to say?

UH, MRS S., WHEN YE SAY YE'LL TURN US
AROUND?... D'YE MEAN BACK TO EARTH?
... 'COS I+I NO CAN SEET ENNIMO'...

OH, NO!
YOU CAN'T MEAN...

YEP! WE BE

LOST!
IN SPACE!

on, mama, please
tell me you have
an amazing hidden
ability to chart the
stars...

IS THIS
THE END
OF SIDSKA?

WHAT WILL BECOME
OF OUR HEROES?

CAN BENT RESIST
THE URGE TO WRITE
"DANGER, SIDSKA!
DANGER!"?

READ "UNSHAVEN CHI." #1 (apparently not...)

TO FIND OUT IF THE STORY CONTINUES -THIS SEPTEMBER!

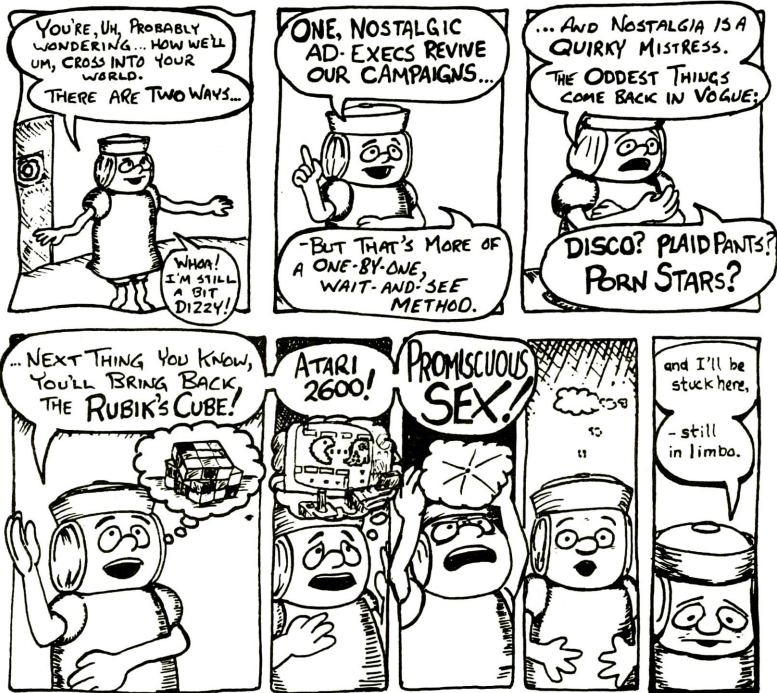
(continued from inside front cover)

SO, ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THIS BOOK!

If you look at the flip section of this issue, you'll find the zero issue of my new title, *UNSHAVEN CHI*. I have several reasons for changing my title;

1. I want to do a series of gag panel cartoons using the title *GET BENT?*, and I don't want folks to confuse these with my comic book. (Even though it should be obvious they're different titles! I mean, I'm using a question mark instead of an exclamation point and everything!)
2. I want to do more short auto-bio pieces that give the reader a peek into my own twisted nebbish-world. I was inspired with the new title when I had to shave my beard for my new job.
3. I can start over with a new #1 and take advantage of rabid speculator frenzy to boost my sales! Then I won't have to wait to win the lottery to buy my house, yacht, toy company and autographed baseballs!

Don't worry, you'll still see stories featuring many of the characters from *GET BENT?*, but they won't necessarily be the main focus of the book. I want to use humorous lessons from my pathetic life to establish a framing sequence for each new issue. I will do the occasional theme issue, such as #1, which will wax nostalgic for the old breakfast cereal spokestoons. (This is where the story I pitched to the Xeric Grant folks will see print. It's called, 'The Island of Lost Bowls'. It didn't get the grant, but I still want to use it. So There!) Here's a sample of the story from *UNSHAVEN CHI* #1;



WHITHER SID SKA?

Oh, don't worry, faithful reader, you haven't seen the last of this guy. Come on, he's been my main character for almost five years of mini-comics now. (Since *Ska-Toons* #1) I may take a break from his serial adventure to tell my cereal adventure, though. When Sid returns, he will have realized that the Third Wave has washed away, and he will change back to his original surname. Watch out in issue #2 of *UNSHAVEN CHI* for the first installment of 'Sidney Skalinowicz's Adventures in Space!' (A transition like that with my main character is also a good reason to rename the book.) (If I were you, I'd buy stock in a company that makes Black Ink, what with all the space scenes coming.)

SO, ARE YOU GONNA REVIEW ANYTHING THIS ISSUE, OR WHAT?

To put it simply, NO. I'm not going to review any CDs this issue. I really haven't heard anything lately that really scrolls my nurd, except for maybe *I Wanna See You Bellydance!*, by The Red Elvises, and I had to buy that. I didn't get a free copy in the mail. (WHINE!) Anyway, I think it's really conceeded of me to think any of you give a shit what I think about music. I'm 36 now, and I'm no longer in that target demographic group. My lifelong buying habits are firmly in place now, if you believe all that Madison Ave. Bullshit. (Okay, I wear black low-top Chuck Taylors and drink Rolling Rock religiously. And I hate just about any music that makes it to the radio before I discover it. Other than that, I'm easy.) (And NO, by drinking Rolling Rock religiously, I don't mean I use it for Communion.) (Well... ...it DOES help me COMMUNE with others on a social level... ...hmmm.)

Nobody has ever written me saying, "Whoa, Man, I bought that disc because of your review, dude! You are one awesome font of musical wisdom!"

In the last couple years, over 200 CDs have passed through my review pile, and, to be honest, only about three of them got listened to again after I'd finished the review. Wading through some of the piles of free crap CDs I get is seriously cutting into my time for listening to the records I have to pay for! So I won't be doing anymore music reviews, unless I'm really moved by something. I thank all the companies that have sent me stuff in the past. Feel free to keep me on your lists or remove my freeloading butt. I just might like something you send in the future, but I make no promises.

In the Interest of filling space, I offer the following:

- **LAST COOL MOVIE I SAW IN THEATER:** *ELECTION.*
- **LAST COOL MOVIE I RENTED:** *PI*
- **LAST MOVIE I WISH I'D SKIPPED:** *STAR WARS EPISODE 1: THE PHANTOM MENACE*
- **COOL TV SHOW THAT LEAST DESERVED TO BE CANCELLED:** *EVERYTHING'S RELATIVE*
- **LAST COOL CD I BOUGHT:** *ALERT TODAY ALIVE TOMORROW*, by THE MUFFS
- **A COOL CD SOMEONE SENT ME:** *PREGNANT PAUSE*, by LAURA LINDEEN
- **CURRENT FAVE COMIC (BOOK):** *BARRY WEEN; BOY GENIUS.*
- **FAVE COMIC I HAVEN'T SEEN AN ISSUE OF LATELY:** *SLACKER.*
- **CURRENT FAVE COMIC (STRIP):** *MUTTS.*
- **FAVE STRIP I WISH WOULD GET OFF ITS CURRENT RELIGIOUS BENT:** *B.C.*
- **MOST RACIST SIGN SEEN ON THE DOOR OF A PIZZA PLACE:** THE NOTICE THAT THE STORE'S SAFE IS EQUIPPED WITH A TIME DELAY LOCK, PRINTED IN BOTH ENGLISH AND SPANISH! (WHY NOT EBONICS, TOO?)
- **BUMPER STICKER I'D LIKE TO SEE:** IF GOD'S NOT A BATMAN FAN, THEN WHY IS THE SKY BLACK AND GRAY?
- **BEST WASTE OF COMIC BOOK TEXT PAGE SPACE:** LISTS LIKE THIS.

THESE CHANGED
**PSYCHOLOGY
FLASH
CARDS!**

AW, MAN!
SOMEBODY PUT THE
CARDS IN THE BOX
IN THE
WRONG ORDER!

SOMEBODY PUT THE
CARDS IN THE BOX
IN THE
WRONG ORDER

AW CRAP!

HEY!
SOMEBODY
GOT
INK
ALL OVER
THIS ONE!

IT'S ENOUGH
TO DRIVE
A MAN
INSANE!

WELL, I FELT BETTER
WHEN MY BUDDIES
CAME BY...

...OKAY, I'LL SEE YOUR DELUSION,
AND RAISE YOU A PARANOIA!

BENT

HEY! LOOKIT WHAT I FOUND!



cool, soft:
rubber screw-on head

nifty red + black screen print body
(note the "floating-head" drunk effect)

JAEGERMEISTER or Peach Schnapps
(not included)

IT'S A "HIPNIP"
FLASK!

CIRCA THE MID 1950'S
-OR SOME OTHER ERA
WHEN THE COMICAL
DRUNK WASN'T
CONSIDERED A MENACE
TO SOCIETY-

I DO THE UNDERGROUND
STYLE "DRUNK". THE
FLASK IS © GARVIN-MILBIT
ANY CLUES AS TO WHO
DREW IT?

KIRBY EFFECT
arm
(my arm doesn't
really distort
like this.)

"Mutant" brand
3-fingered hand
(too much booze)

THE BACK HAS "SUGGESTED"
CONTENTS ... INCLUDING
"URINE ANALYSIS" ... I
HOPE NOBODY USED MINE
FOR THAT.

NOW I HAVE
AN EXCUSE TO
CARRY BOOZE
WHEN I TRAVEL!



pants by
Linus Van Pelt

pastey legs
look bad
in black



SO, IF
I'M A BIT TIPSY,
WON'T YOU JOIN
ME IN A DRINK?

ONE SEPTEMBER SUNDAY AT
A BETHESDA PICNIC GROUND...

I ASKED YOU...
"WERE MY CLIENTS EVER
ADVISED OF THEIR
CREATOR'S RIGHTS?"

SHEESH! IT'S LIKE I'M
TALKING TO A BRICK WALL!

PSST! MATT!
THAT IS A BRICK WALL.
THE LAWYERS ARE
OVER THERE.

@*\$\$!!
RADAR SENSE!
-ONLY WORKS
IN THE
COMIX.

YOU ALL FOUGHT VALIANTLY
AGAINST THE ORIO- UH- THE
"DIAMOND" SOFTBALL TEAM...

I BET WE COULDN'T
BEAT 'EM IF WE'D
HAD A COUPLE BUBBY
CUBAN ARTISTS

OUR COMPANIES
ARE IMPRESSED...
...AND WE ARE
PREPARED TO
OFFER YOU
LUCRATIVE
CONTRACTS.

I WONDER
IF
THAT'S
JULIE
DOUGET
OVER
THERE?

ALL YOU MUST
DO IS...

A FANTASY OF
THE SPX
by
BENT

1



I APOLOGIZE TO THE ARTISTS DEPICTED IN THE LAST TWO PAGES FOR MY PATHETIC ATTEMPT TO DRAW THEM IN THEIR OWN STYLES. (CONTEST!!!! I'LL SEND A FREE T-SHIRT TO THE FIRST LETTER-WRITER TO CORRECTLY IDENTIFY AT LEAST FIVE OF THE 'NOBODY FAMOUS' GUYS! MY ADDRESS IS IN THE INDICIA, FOLKS!) SHAME ON YOU IF THE NOD TO SPARTACUS WENT OVER YOUR HEAD. I'LL REVEAL THEIR IDENTITIES AND PLUG THEIR BOOKS IN MY NEXT BOOK, SO I DON'T SPOIL MY CONTEST, BUT, IF YOU WANT TO MEET THESE GUYS, COME TO THE SPX! ALL THESE GUYS WERE AT LAST YEAR'S SPX IN BETHESDA, MD, AND WE HAD A BLAST! THEY'RE DOING IT AGAIN THIS YEAR AND CALLING IT *THE EXPO* AND I'LL BE THERE FOR MY FOURTH YEAR! HERES THE AD FOR THE EXPO:

MAKE YOUR PLANS *NOW* FOR

the
EXPO
SPX99

September 17-19, 1999

The Holiday Inn Select ☆ Bethesda, Maryland

Over 160 Exhibits
Hundreds of Artists
Loads of Laughs!

For information on attending
or exhibiting, write

The Expo, Big Planet Comics
426 Maple Ave. East, Vienna, VA 22180

or visit

www.indyworld.com/spx

**An Unholy Union of
Art and Commerce**

THIS BOOK WAS PRINTED BY THE FINE FOLK DOWN IN FLORIDA AT THE SMALL PUBLISHERS CO-OP! HOW DO YOU LIKE THEIR NEW HALF-SIZE FORMAT? HERE'S THEIR AD, FOR ALL YOU POTENTIAL ZINERS OUT THERE! MENTION MY NAME SO THEY'LL GIVE ME A DISCOUNT!

small
spcoop@fineit.com

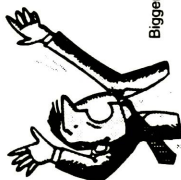
your comics
printed cheap

1000 16 page zines for just \$275

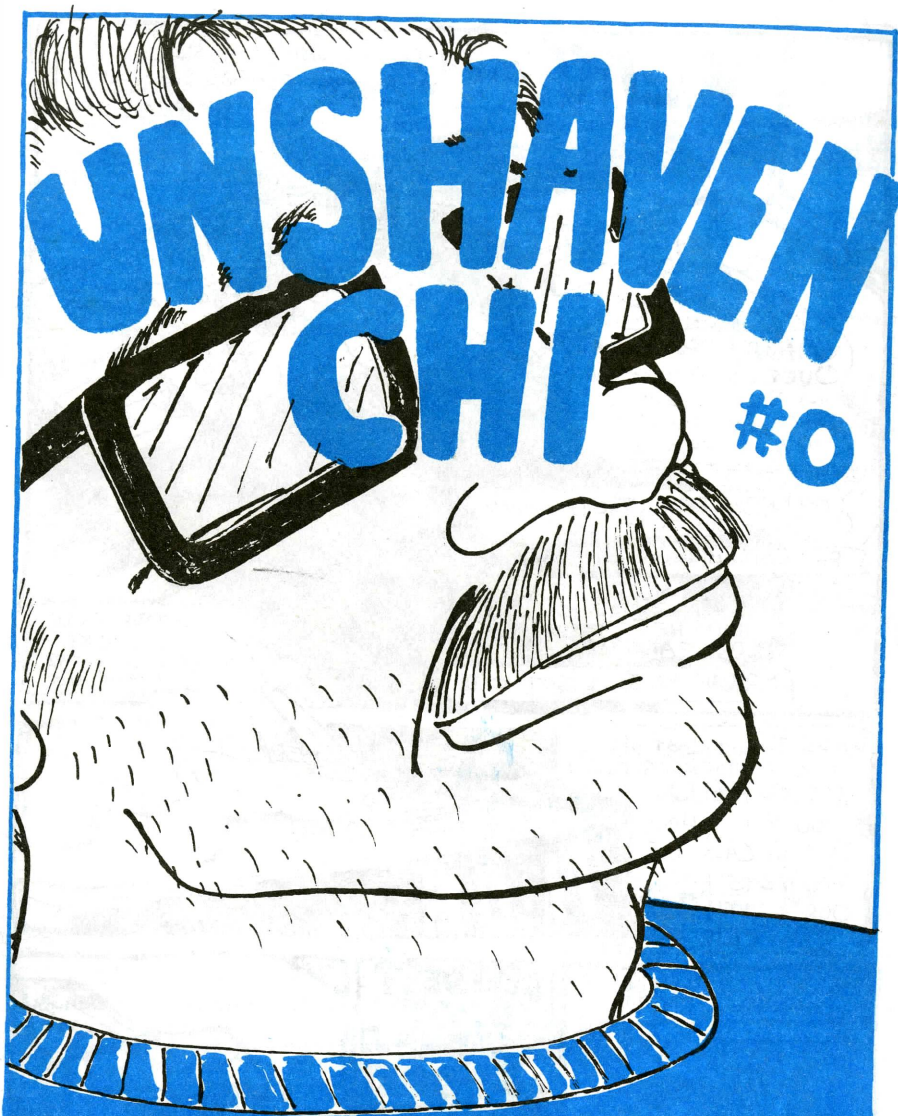
32 page 1/2 size zines for \$290 (newsprint)

Bigger ones too. Colors, white bond paper and glossy covers also available
Call Scott for quotes, samples, and info

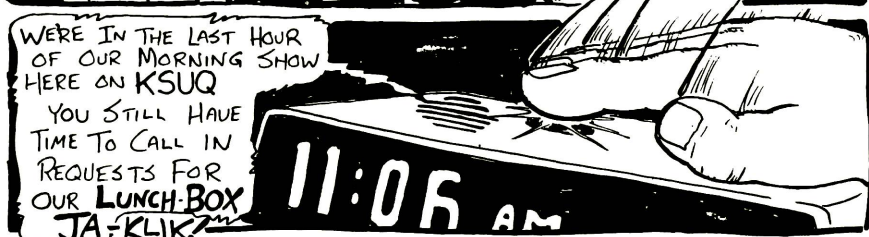
Small Publishers Co-Op (941) 922-0844 (over 500 member publishers)



UNSHAVEN CHI #0



BEN-Zines



TODAY'S THE DAY. IT'S BEEN SIX YEARS SINCE I SAW YOU.

A black and white comic panel showing a man with glasses and a beard looking at his reflection in a mirror. He is standing in front of a sink. The text above the panel reads: "TODAY'S THE DAY. IT'S BEEN SIX YEARS SINCE I SAW YOU."[illegible]

-YOU AND SOCIETY'S RULES.
I SHUT YOU AWAY. I HID YOU.
I WAS DETERMINED TO BE A REBEL,
AND YOU ONLY REFLECTED MY SQUARE
SIDE.

FWRRRRRT!

YOU WERE SOFT, BABYISH. YOU MADE ME SEEM OLDER. I CALLED YOU WEAK, THOUGHT DENYING YOU WOULD DEFINE ME.



BUT I WAS THE WEAK ONE,
UNABLE TO ACCEPT YOU AS A
PART OF ME.

-A PART OF MY SPIRIT.

YOU'RE MY CHI -

A black and white comic panel showing a close-up of a man with glasses and a mustache. He is looking down at a small object held in his hands. A speech bubble above him says "YOU ARE MY CHIN."

YOU ARE MY CHIN.







SO, THIS NEW JOB...
-IT'S A STEP BACK
FROM METEOROLOGY.

-BUT I
CAN'T FIND
A METEOROLOGY
JOB INSIDE
OF A
2-HOUR
COMMUTE.

... MAKES ME
WONDER
IF I
WASTED
MY TIME
IN
COLLEGE!



BUT THIS JOB'LL PAY
MORE THAN I MADE
SELLING TV'S AND VCR'S
AT "THE CITY",

AND I
DON'T
HAVE TO
SELL A
FREAKIN'
"SERVICE
POLICY"...

AND IT LEAVES MOST
OF THE DAY FREE TO
DRAW AND TAKE CARE OF MOM.



KNOCK! KNOCK!
BEN T. STECKLER!!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING
IN THERE?!!
WHO ARE YOU TALKING
TO?!!

right on cue.

SHEESH! SHE ALWAYS ACTS
LIKE I'M DOING SOMETHING
WEIRD IN HERE!

...AT LEAST THAT'S THE STORY
I LET MY BROTHER BELIEVE.

WAIT.
DON'T PITY
ME YET.

THERE ARE DAYS
THAT I HAVE
TO HELP MOM
GET DRESSED...

I'M IN
THE
SHOWER,
MOM!
-AND I'M
TALKING
TO MY
READERS.
OKAY?



...Sorry about that.

Y'SEE, I DON'T
LIVE AT HOME JUST
FOR THE CHEAP RENT.

YEAH, THAT'S
ABOUT 70% OF
THE REASON,
BUT I ALSO HELP TAKE
CARE OF MY MOM.
SHE HAS PARKINSON'S
PRETTY BAD...

...BY MY
CALCULATIONS...

I'VE NOW
REMOVED MOM'S
BRA MORE
TIMES THAN
ALL THE DATES
IN MY LIFE
COMBINED,
now you can pity me.

