

STATE OF
THE ART

ORIGINAL BY
Jerry Collins
ADAPTED BY MJ

"Jerry Collins we hardly knew ge" issue for Rowrbrazzle

Don't fuck with me, I'm a prophet you know. Some of you know Susan Wood, and know that she died a couple of years ago, but few know that I predicted it with an ill-omened remark about her rising from the grave for a certain fanzine. It was only a metaphor. But sure enough, before my next issue she was dead.

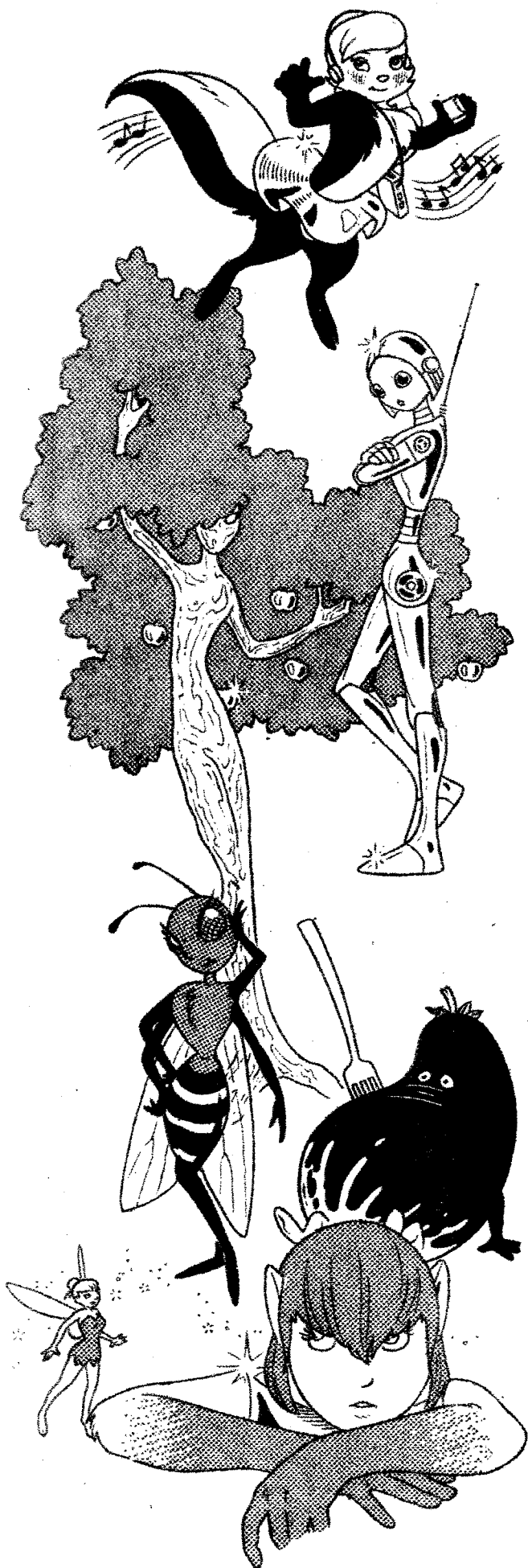
More relevant to Brazzlers, in State of the Art 3 I acknowledged Jerry Collins as one of the reasons I wanted to remain in this apa, come hell or high water. If he quit, I would thoroughly miss his good-natured and often alluring characters. Sure enough, in the last mailing Jerry announced his resignation. Don't fuck with me, boy!

So this is a sort of fare-well-to-Jerry issue. There isn't much to say about Jerry's leaving us, it was so sudden. There were tantalizing rumours, but Jerry left without an explanation. Not long ago he called me up, though, and said many things best left unsaid about his distaste for certain events in the last few mailings. So the mystery is clarified sufficiently enough.

About Jerry, however, there is much to say. The following is a rough draft, excerpted from a much longer essay on fanzine art. In the final draft I'll have shortened these remarks on Jerry's art considerably, so the full length as printed here is for Brazzlers alone. Of course, what I really want to say about Jerry is that I hope to be publishing a "welcome back" issue real soon, but for the moment this will have to do.

"Jerry Collins caught my attention around 1980, when he was appearing unnoticed in zines down south. Ned Brooks was probably the first to catch on and publish Jerry's illos for a wider audience. Jerry owes most of his original inspiration to Vaughn Bode, and the remainder to a variety of sources including Japanese animation, Disney, and various SF mythos. So much is due to Bode, in fact, that he could be criticized for it if not for the energy and bizarre mixture of impulses. It's vital to realize that Jerry is eclectic, and while he owed Bode for his interest in uniforms, weapons, warcraft, Lizards (Ganarfs), line, and format, Bode put all these things to different uses. Instead of idealized (and depersonalized) women who are exploited by debased male Lizards, in Jerry's world woman-kind is in ascendance. In his earlier work, males are sex objects, or at least play a sexually (and socially) passive role. Later this inversion grew milder, and the male role in Jerry's society enlarged. Where Bode made males animal, stripping them naked as it were, Jerry made his aliens animal-like so that they were more appealing -- closer to their natures, but softening the contours. In the matriarchy of the Haku-Hasin, the people are deer-folk, but Jerry's also invented Cat-Bears, Ganarfs, and other species anima.

"Collins never approaches war as a serious subject -- his interests seem mostly in the model that Bode provided for world-making. Japanese animation is notoriously militant too, adding yet another impulse along those lines. Whatever the cause, Jerry's Bambi-like Haku-Hasin dress like Nazis and carry Schmeisser sub-machine guns around the periphery of fandom. Bambioids are unnatural militarists, though, and only seem comfortable with parades and Wagnerian display. I cannot imagine a Bambioid shooting anyone dead. That just doesn't seem to be why the uniforms and spaceships exist in Jerry's mind, whatever they imply. My belief is that the militarism is just a framework, a colourful and romantic one, to build a world around. His other creations lack this element mostly. But they also lack dimension. War-like paraphernalia in the Haku-Hasin world creates a terrific tension in his work. How do you react? With distrust of the swastikas or with arousal to the come-hither looks in his warriors' big doe eyes? Fascist humanism anyone?



This isn't any place to analyse Jerry as a person. But it's quite evident that there is a great deal of self-expression in his art, and this is the stuff from which good art is made. It is not made of draughtsmanship or wholesome clichés. As someone who admires the energy and honesty of Jerry's work, I can only hope that what I've said will make fans look again at what they are privileged to see."

-- From "The Illustrated Fan", unpublished 3rd draft.

The front cover of State of the Art 4 has something of a history to it. Jerry and I exchanged drawings from time to time. He'd do this odd portrait of Saara Mar that I'd find intriguing because it would be someone else's perspective. Then I'd try to match his generosity as best as I could. Later on I discovered that Jerry was trading art with a large number of correspondants. Many are members of Brazzle. When I learned this, trading art with Jerry took on a new complexion that I must admit feeling a bit uncomfortable with. The circulation of "characters" through the mail seemed like a form of fantasizing that was at once too public and too intimate for the likes of me. In the fifteen years I've been involved in science fiction fandom, having a fantasy world at all was viewed with the greatest suspicion by fellow SF fans. It didn't matter how I drew, whether I wrote well, or generally showed a superfluity of IQ points, at any moment I might come out of the closet as a raving Trekkie, comics fan, or worse. To this day, people who know me well and have respect for me are apt to gloss over my suspect interest in silver people with blue and white fur.

In those fifteen years I suppose I became rather guarded. Except in my art, the person of Saara Mar and her world is a private manifestation of my ideals. It can't be collectivized without partaking of ideals other than my own, so losing its ability to express my innermost feelings about myself and my world. Preserving such a monument to my ego intact from contamination of lesser egos must make me appear somewhat stand-offish.

Jerry would put it like this: "You ought'a loosen up. You're too intellectual with reasons, explanations, an' big words. It's just for fun!" To which there is only one stand-offish, loosened up reply, "Fuck off, Jer." But if he has criticisms with me, I have criticisms of him, and Jerry is easily as prickly as I am about such things. I can only wonder why I've fared as well as I have (up to now?) after enjoining him to tighten up his drawing style, or to edit Kzintie and Cthulhu out of the Bambioid universe. Other people have been not been so lucky with Jerry.

Jerry's art came closer to breaching my defenses than almost any other artist had ever done. I think he did it by delving into areas of the psyche that I had long ago withdrawn from, and abandoned while largely unexplored. I speak of the fascination I have with engines of war. As a kid I never thought of myself as an artist. Instead, I had an overwhelming curiosity to know which was the best dogfighter, the Zero or the Spitfire? Would the Bismark have sunk the Missouri if they'd ever met? (As a learned and well read adult I can say definitely, "depends".) The margins of my school notebooks were filled with designs for tanks, destroyers, and bombers. When I was restless to draw, I could rarely think of anything except battle-scenes. But I wasn't a bloodthirsty kid, I don't think.

There was something more challenging about toy soldiers that was more challenging to play with than toy dumptrucks. You could plan strategy, deploy your resources, take advantage of the lay of the land, and play out the drama in a realistic time-frame. What could you do with a dumptruck? Go vroom-vroom in the dirt. And yet I remember a nasty argument with a friend of mine, who thought it was cowardly of me to wipe out his army and then retreat rather than be wiped out by his booby-traps. Glory had no appeal to me. And authority had even less, as it turned out.

Later in life I discovered comics, Mad Magazine, Hot Rod Cartoons, and astronomy. These gave me a wider range of subjects to choose from when drawing. Then

gradually my interest in space dominated, until at last I discovered science fiction and that was the end of drawing tanks and jet planes. Years later I saw Jerry's art for the first time, and it was a little like seeing what I might have been.

Which is to say that I forgave Jerry for shoe-horning Saara into a leather outfit that was totally alien to her character. My first thought was to write back, remarking that Saara had complained to me about the drawing. "I don't like leather," she said. "It plasters down my fur, and makes my feet smell." After that, Jerry never forgot her preference for light, airy garments, bare arms and legs. Still, there was a playfulness in the drawing that I liked, that even Saara could like as a lark. The original was on oversized paper, done in colour, and was quite unreproducible. It could be shot-down, though, and touched up for black and white reproduction. So that is what I've done.

The keystone of this issue was to have been a full page pastiche of Jerry's bambioids. Jerry was a little afraid that I'd have blown all out of proportion the modest sexual proclivities of his "critturs". In fact, I blew all out of proportion the military proclivities of the Haku-Hasin (or Wacku-Wacka as I called them). This didn't reassure Jerry at all, so for the sake of detente between the vast Haku-Hasin and Dalmirin empires "Tales from the Randioids" will never be seen. Perhaps it's as well anyway, my sense of humour tends to leave barbs in sensitive hides, and venison is out of season.

By now the members of Brazzle are hoping that I've nothing more to say about Jerry. They are undoubtedly sick to death of hearing about me. And they are wondering if I'll say anything about them. Of course...



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Jim Groat

While your illustration of Goodnight Saigon went down well, the inside front cover of this mailing of Brazzle gives me a different, uncomfortable feeling. I think military honours and national emblems are less likely to commerate the dead than they are to add to their company.

Mark Wallace

"Filth! Ugly, unfunny, inappropriate! I urge all Brazzlers to avoid such excesses!" Speaking of excess, this is very definitely an excessive reaction. Granted that you didn't like "White Cane & Harry" but I think you've painted yourself into a corner by threatening to quit if you don't have your way. Why not let us do what we want, and learn to skip over what doesn't interest you?

If we are arguing taste here, rather than inalienable rights it'd be well to cultivate a more polite form of expressing your opinions. I don't like any of the Japanimation I've

seen, or like superheroes at all, and feel free to say so. But I don't see any reason to impugn anyone's morals or intelligence unless provoked by fuggheaded behavior. To be the first to hurl insults is a fuggheaded thing to do. Then scarcely ten lines later you remark that a drawing was so racy that you almost creamed your pants; which in effect pulls the carpet out from under your stand. Your own cartoons are so full of blatant sexuality that you undermine your position even further. But at last, the erection joke about the Scotsman's kilt is in such dubious taste that someone less errant than myself might be led to the conclusion that Here Be Hypocrisy as well. I've said some pretty harsh things to you just now, but I've not called you names or flown at you in an emotional tizzy. I don't want you banned from Brazzle, as some people would have done to enforce their views on others. If you think a person is wrong, then there ought to be plenty of weaknesses in his argument that you can use against it. If you resort to shouting and finger-pointing, you admit the strength of the other view and the weakness of your own as surely as if you'd argued and lost. So let us have reason in the future, and no more excesses like "Ugly, unfunny, inappropriate."

Getting off the topic, I've seen some of your stuff before, in copies of the SCA newsletter that were lying around Steve Muhlberger's place. (You may know him better as Finnvarr de Taahé. Or maybe not. The New Middle Ages is a big place.) I rather liked the piece in the fourth mailing about "recycling" the scotch before it's poured on the grave, but usually I'm lost among the characters you've invented and their personae. I gather that sometimes they're in SCA roles, and sometimes in their mundane roles. The SCA world seems real, though, and not an enactment. Also, characters from other people's worlds appear that belong to neither the real world nor any SCA scenario. Are those Bambioids, for instance? I find this confusing, but I've had my science-fictional insistence on logic or internal consistency criticized before, by people who thought logic an unnecessary hindrance to their imagination. I defer to whatever explanation you have to give.

Charles Garofalo Abandon Saara Mar because Greg Bear and John Cawley don't like her? When Jerry Collins gives up Bambioids, when John gives up foxes, and when Jim Groat gives up his war decorations, then maybe... but probably not. Fate is perverse though. For the next little while, I do have some straight-forward funny animal type material for Brazzle. Saara and I have stuck it through for nearly twenty years. In spite of the persuasive arguments of Greg and John, I expect she'll be a familiar face in Brazzle for years to come.

Al Siros There's nothing I love so much as watching a good war movie on TV, unless it's reading someone tear into the mailing comments of someone else I disagree with. Certainly your "Small Print Department" rates better than "Porkchop Hill" or "From the Halls of Montezuma", but it lacks the glorious technicolour effects of "Apocalypse Now", or the subtlety of "Casablanca". Which is to say that while it was a lot of fun to read, I'd feel that I'd done less than my best to communicate if I'd written it. I doubt you've changed anyone's mind, and there's at least one person who wasn't in your line of fire who took offense at the tone of the attack.

Not that the targets didn't deserve a rude response. Your outburst may seem bad-tempered, but how else should a person feel when he finds out that there are demands to have him shut-up or thrown-out? This is not a friendly thing to do. And calling someone's artwork smut and shit is not only as discourteous as telling someone to fuck off, in this case it invited it.

Unfortunately, you don't win any Mr. Nice Guy awards for being in the right. In the long run, the only way to deal with people minding your business when you don't want them to, is to do what you said you'll do, and print what you damn well want to print. The rest of Small Print Department, satisfying though it is to blow off steam, was

only self-indulgence. I recognize it because I've written so much of it myself.

One of the things that bugs me most about the Great Brazzle Smut Wars is that it's been blown up into an ISSUE! But when you count the number of people who were making all the fuss you find only three, at most four, people behind the facade of "public opinion". Most of those who commented on the issue said they did or didn't happen to like the controversial art, but that it wasn't their business to tell the artist what he could or couldn't do. A couple of the more disapproving members suggested "moderation". Is this the ISSUE that's tearing Brazzle apart? And now we have one of the three or four forcing the ISSUE by threatening to quit. At bottom it's been the insistence of a few people that's brought all the hard feelings to Brazzle. If they split the apa by leaving, it'll be no-one's fault but their own. If they split the apa by forcing other people to leave, it'll be no-one's fault but their own. It's largely their fault that Jerry quit. It's their fault that Unca Schirm is growing grey as OE. It's their fault that you blew your stack. And it's their fault that I'm getting unforgivably preachy. As the moral crusade goes on there can only be more casualties and more outbursts, until Brazzle is a clean, decent, God-fearing but depopulated apa. Unless the crusade stops now!

The chances of that seem low, unfortunately. The vocal members of Brazzle seem like a largely intractable and prickly bunch of egotists, you and me included. (And Jerry too.) My guess is that the ISSUE won't be settled until after more bloodletting. The only uncertainty is "how much" and "how many innocent bystanders"?

Robert Carspecken I don't know whether you'll take this as a compliment or not, but it is meant as one. A friend of mine who's not a fan was looking through Brazzle and discussed some of the contributions. He's not an artist either, but he's never short of opinions. We came to some agreements about Fox Odyssey that might be of interest. Essentially we both felt that you were working to the limit of your ability, making a little go a long way. Your expressions and poses are sometimes quite good, especially the more human they are. The more "animal" they were, however, the more you seemed to have problems with anatomy, or at least the more they obtruded.

I wouldn't join Greenpeace to write about the joys of clubbing baby seals, of course, (even if I am Canadian), but Greenpeace isn't merely an organization to drive up the price of fur coats. Similarly, Brazzle is for more than funny-animals. It's also for "funny-machines, bugs, plants, aliens, and squash," according to Schirm, who ought to know. Anyway, I'm always funniest when feeling paranoid.

Jim Groat As non-sequiturs go, "Try explaining Hitler to a kid" is pretty good, but oddly enough I've tried. What was odder still was the time I tried to explain Hitler to a Jew who didn't know exactly what he'd done that people were so mad about. (She was 32 at the time, I think.)

James Fuju Funny, but what will you do for an encore? Age of Mammai jokes?

Bret Koth There's nothing as boring as telling somebody something's good. Permit me to bore you, but forgive me that there doesn't seem to be anything else to say.

Bob Scott I'm beginning to think that "The Bearly Brothers" is a rerun, that you're doing them for a paper somewhere and showing them to us later. They're funny. I like them. But I wonder if you'd do something for us soon. Ditto your's and Bate's "Butch".

Cathy Hill Now here's something I'm pretty sure is drawn for Brazzle, and is still as funny as "Butch" and "The Bearly Bro-

ners". So my next impossible demand from you busy professionals is to talk to us sometime.

Dave Bennett Well, it's funny, and its for Brazzle, and you also talk to us, but I'll think of something else to ask for, just you wait... Since the last time I watched Saturday morning cartoons with any regularity was 1969, I must be out of touch with the latest developments. I confess that I've never heard of O.G. Readmore. In spite of this I'd like to see more cells in Brazzle. It sure beats paying for them at \$10 or more a shot. (Pun intended.)

Deal Whitley I echo your remarks to Tim about other refuges for artists. I know no other apas remotely like Brazzle as it is, with its present diversity. There's an animation apa, isn't there? But I imagine that that's more like what some people think Brazzle should be than what it is. (So it would be no place for me to go, but another place for Tim.) For a certainty there are half a hundred superhero comic apas, which interest only those who like superheroes. Vootie was, and Rowrbrazzle is, the one and only alternative apa.

Steve Martin I notice that you took my advice about Star Benal's pupils without even reading State of the Art 3. Very clever of you.

Wendell Washer Smooth, classical funny-animals, and you talk to us too! What next from Piffies besides model sheets?

John Cavley I didn't think that you were being too serious about your Fox Awards, at first. Now I don't know. You admitted that the awards reflected your tastes and not necessarily anyone elses. But a little later you avow your intention to remind the members of the best of Rowrbrazzle. Methinks there is a contradiction here. While I won't dispute what you like, one member's tastes shouldn't form the basis for what's "best" in Rowrbrazzle. Next time why not just title the Fox Awards your "favourites"?

Personally, I think "awards" or lists only cause hard feelings anyway, and are best dispensed with.

It doesn't matter how many times you say Brazzle is a funny-animal apa, and that I shouldn't complain if I joined a funny-animal apa and have to do funny-animals. Brazzle is *not* a funny-animal apa. It's an apa for funny-animals, funny machines, bugs, plants, aliens, and squash. It says so, right in the first mailing, on the table of contents, written by Schirm himself. Don't you believe your Unca Schirm? And frankly, I'm perfectly

happy here in Brazzle where I am. The only people who seem unhappy are you and a couple of others. I don't recommend that you take your advice to me, though, and "try another apa." That would be presumptuous.

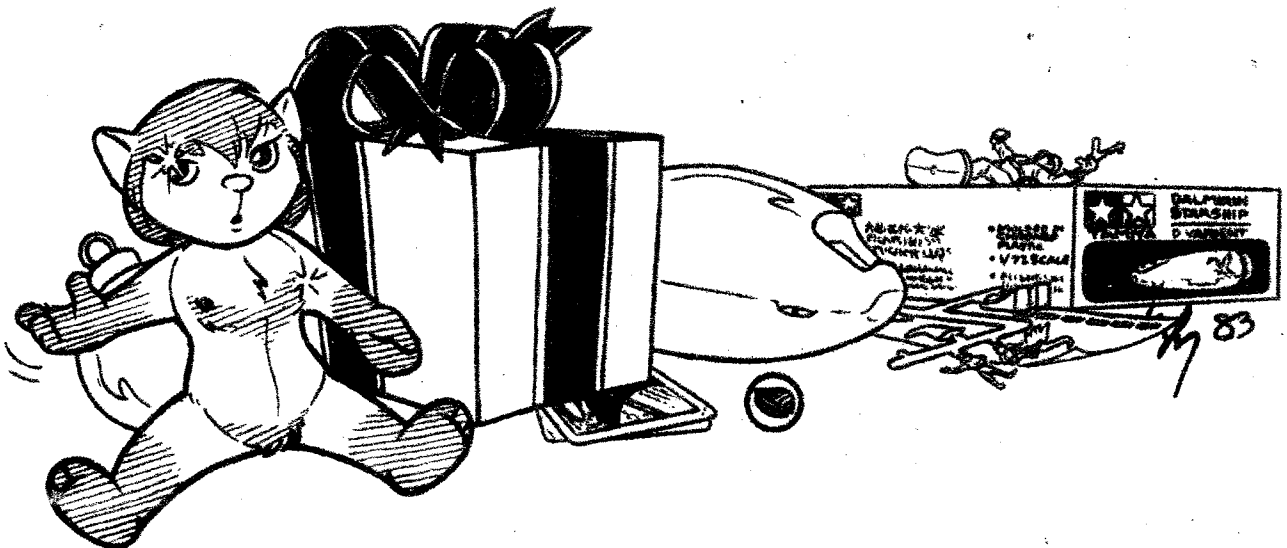
Your remarks about "White Cane" are your opinions, so I can't argue with their propriety. I can wonder why you risk your blood pressure over what other people chose to draw though. Are you one of those vandals who petition city hall to chisel the penises off of public statues too? How do you deal with the bulk of art throughout history? Do you stare at the tiles when you shower?

In spite of this obviously irreparable difference of opinion, I liked Get Animated and thought that it was a good idea. Sorry I didn't subscribe after receiving the trial issue free, but subscribing to anything is rather beyond my means, cheap as \$7.50 for six issues is in the day and age of the dollar comic book.

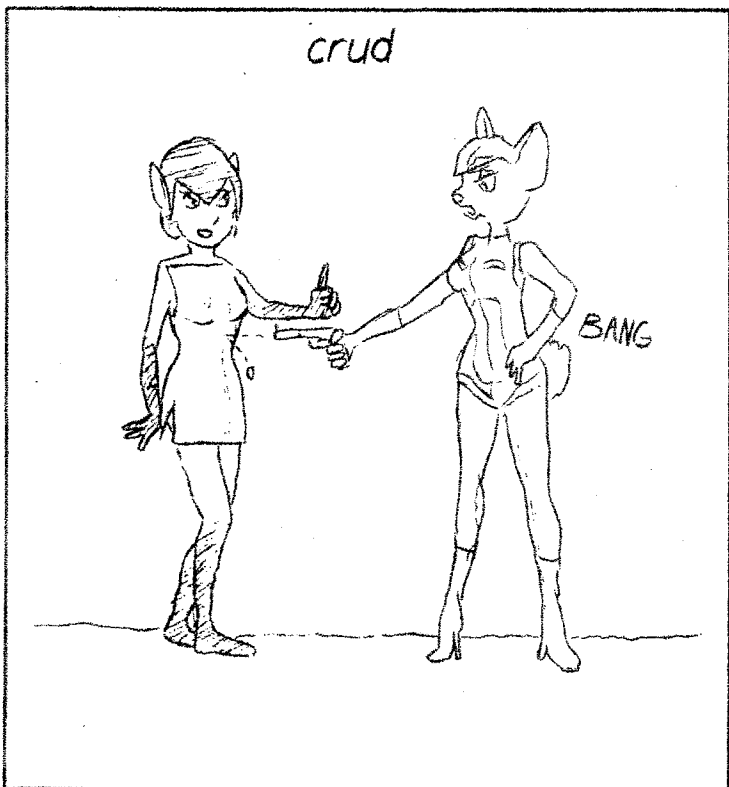
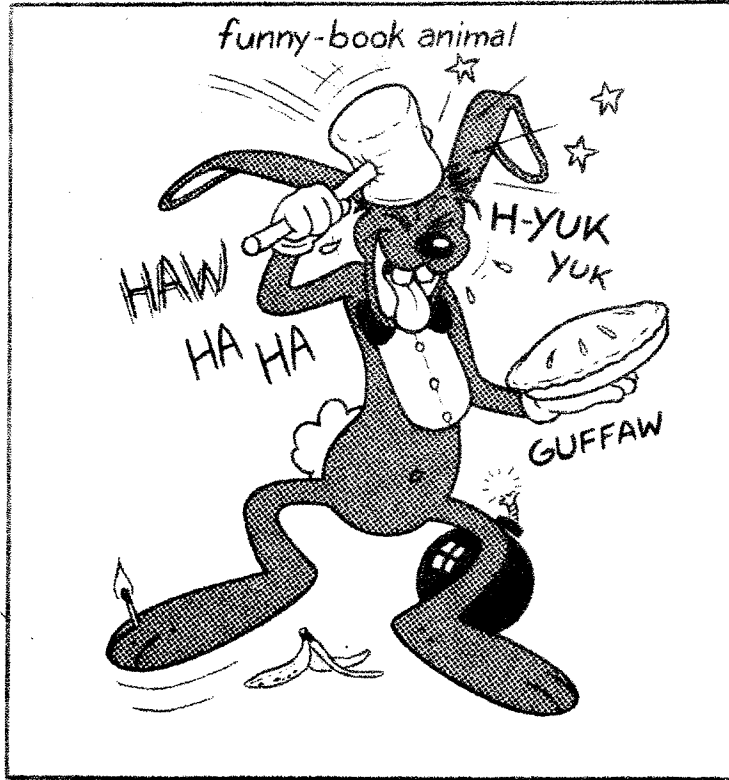
Tim Fay In spite of several shortcomings compared to the book, I liked The Sword in the Stone mostly. It's weakest moments, for me, were the wizards' duel, and like bits of unnecessary comedy. But the rest of the film seemed on average stronger than Disney's more recent features. Some scenes I thought were damnright Good, by the standards even of Pinocchio, my favourite. The Sword in the Stone clearly isn't one of Disney's best films, but why did you think it the worst? I would have thought The Fox and the Hound, which actually resorted to recycling cells from a previous film, would qualify for this dubious honour. Or The Jungle Book, which threw away *everything* of importance about the original in favour of farce. What about Robin Hood and other endless clones of Baloo the Bear?

Fred Patten Original art is in the works. I've been busy with a number of things, including art that I didn't want to run through Brazzle. The reprints served their purpose as a stopgap and introduction. Even if I intended to walk the straight and narrow interpretation of Brazzle's rules about funny-animals, I would have wanted people to see what I really do as an artist. Original work began to appear with State of the Art 3, though, okay?

Ken Sample Aw shucks, it warn't nothin. Thanks for the words about "Funny Stuff" (and thanks to everyone who said they liked it), but it really was a toss-off. "The 4 Seasons of Rowrbrazzle" in this issue took more doing, but th still seemed to be some laughs to squeeze out of an otherwise thoroughly unfunny situation...



the 4 Seasons of ROWR-BRAZZLE*



* IT REALLY IS A SILLY CUSS WORD, AIN'T IT? I PREFER "JEEZUS FUCKING CHRIST", OR "GODDAMN IT TO HELL IN A SOILED JOCK-STRAP". BOTH OF WHICH'D BE EVEN SILLIER TITLES.