

AMOEBAS

ADVENTURES

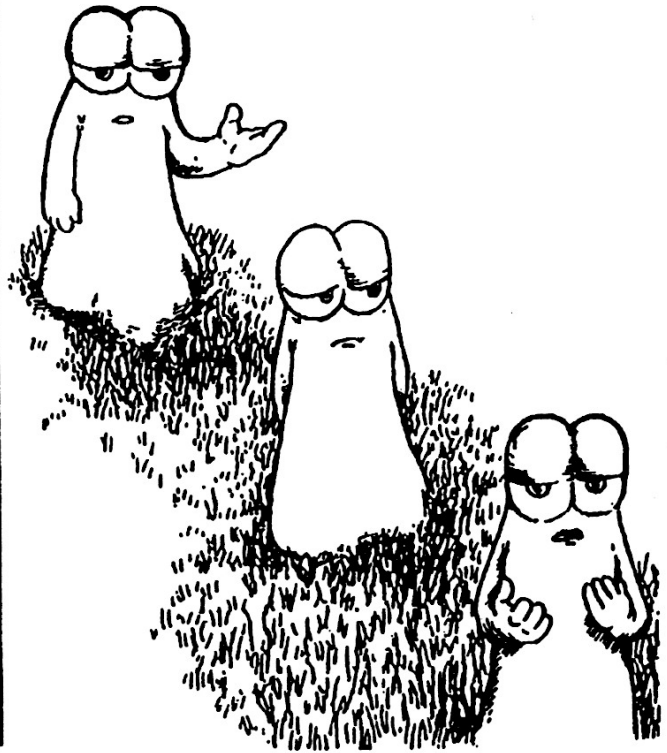
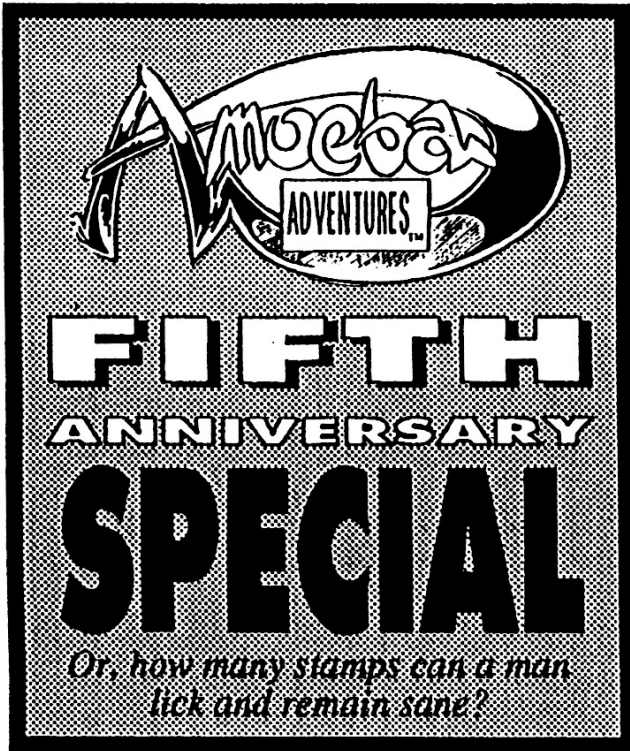
FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

SPECIAL

PLASM PRESS • \$2.00 • NOVEMBER 1995



MAX Oct
29
INK '95



KIDS HAVE crazy dreams. They want to be firemen, they want to pitch for the Dodgers, they want to fly to the moon and back. Most of the time, they don't even come close to fulfilling those dreams of yore and settle in to a life doing something infinitely more practical.

When I was a kid, I wanted to do my own comic book. At six and seven, I would scribble — on cheap butcher's paper with huge, stubby pencils — the adventures of "Super Ant." My parents were pretty much the only audience for these. When I was in junior high, several friends and I invented "The Galaxy Universe," thinly-veiled rip-offs of the Marvel & DC comics we loved then, a bright and luminous world with such rock-steady heroes as The Arachnoid, Robotron, Hurricane, and a hundred more, easily.

And when I was a freshman in high school, I began doodling this protoplasm, a little blue-grey blob. His name was Prometheus. He was a little easier to draw than the bulky, anatomically-incorrect superheroes I'd been struggling over since fifth grade or so. He was truly mine, no simple rehashing of the comics around me. Prometheus, in all his glorious goofiness, became *my* Superman, *my* Spider-Man. A cast of equally-warped characters rapidly filled in around him, in these sketchy "notebook comics" I fiddled with on and off through high

school: Rambunny. Karate Cactus. Doctor Spif. Ninja Ant. The Asbestos Mushroom.

Five years ago this November, I started a new series featuring my amoeba and his friends, similar to the stuff I'd done in high school, if infinitesimally more polished. I made a whopping dozen copies of the first issue and mailed it to various high school friends as a Christmas present. And I mailed one copy to a fellow named Tim Corrigan, who did a column called "Fanzine Guide" for *The Comics Buyer's Guide*.

That comic was, of course, *Amoeba Adventures* #1, and the rest, in its small way, is history. Tim gave me a wonderful review — far better than I deserved, on hindsight — and set my humble ego rolling. I slowly discovered the entire labyrinthian small press network of comics, reviewzines and readers, and *Amoeba Adventures* grew, as I learned more and more about creating comics each issue. Around #5, I began corresponding with a fellow from Ohio named, of all things, Max Ink. He provided me with some valuable artistic advice and I gave him storytelling tips.

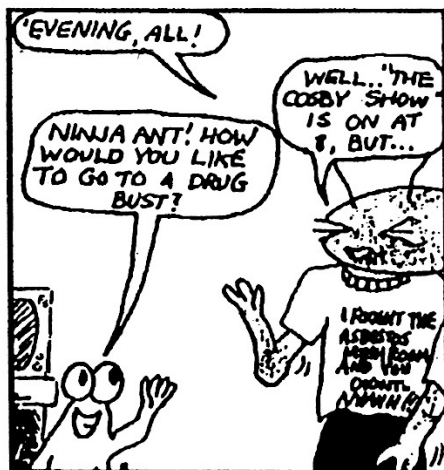
Max became more associated with *Amoeba Adventures* as time wore on. He did the back cover to #6, and the cover to #10, as well as contributing to my special AIDS awareness jam book, *Prometheus: The Silent Storm*. Somewhere along the way, Max became my



Amoeba Adventures Fifth Anniversary Special, November 1995. Published by Protoplasm Press, P.O. Box 2230, University, MS 38677-2230. *Amoeba Adventures* and all characters herein are ©1995 Nik Dirga. All rights reserved. Artwork is ©1995 the individual artists. Subscriptions to *Amoeba Adventures* are available at the meager price of \$8 for 4 issues. Additional copies of this special are available for \$2 postpaid from the above address.



partner in all things amoeba. He penciled #11, and then, with #14, became the regular artist of *Amoeba Adventures*, leaving me free to handle the writing chores. Giving up the art chores is a decision I have never regretted — I drew 12 issues of AA, along with plenty of side projects, and continue drawing various stuff to this day. Ironically, Max Ink's gorgeous, expressive and honest artwork fits the characters I've created far



Prometheus and Ninja Ant, off to fight the good fight, from *Amoeba Adventures* #1.

better than my own did. In my view, *Amoeba Adventures* really became a comic I'd enjoy reading when Max joined me in producing it.

And so it's gone, for a rather amazing five years now. Five years is a long time in comicdom. Twenty issues of *Amoeba Adventures* in five years is an accomplishment I can guardedly feel proud of. I'm publishing a moderately-respectable comic book. What do you know — dreams sometimes *do* come true!

But I sure as hell didn't do it alone.

This special comic, with its collection of reflective essays by myself and AA's biggest fan, Troy Hickman, and a selection of artwork by many of small press's finest creators, is my way of saying "thanks" to everyone who's supported us the past five years — the collaborators, who've kindly jumped in to lend a hand from time to time; the readers, who've been growing as we have, and without whom this

comic simply wouldn't exist; the reviewers, who've for the most part been an honest and amicable bunch, pointing out our flaws and our strengths with an admirable candor; the "big-time" comic creators like the legendary Mr. Will Eisner, Tony Isabella, Dave Sim and many others, who've given us fantastic encouragement; and, strange as it may sound to someone unfamiliar with the small press network and its peculiar machinations, I want to recognize and thank the *friends* I've made the past five years by doing this crazy little comic... friends too

many to list, but each of them adding something quite special to my life through their support.

This special is also a present for *me*: a slightly self-indulgent exercise in narcissism, I'll admit freely. I've become rather fond of these strange, but affecting, characters in the ten or so years I've known them. It's about time I held a little party in their honor. But hopefully, if you dig the humble comics we do, you will find something to enjoy here as well... and if you're new to the peculiar world of *Amoeba Adventures*, welcome aboard.

Let's start finding out what the *next* five years hold.

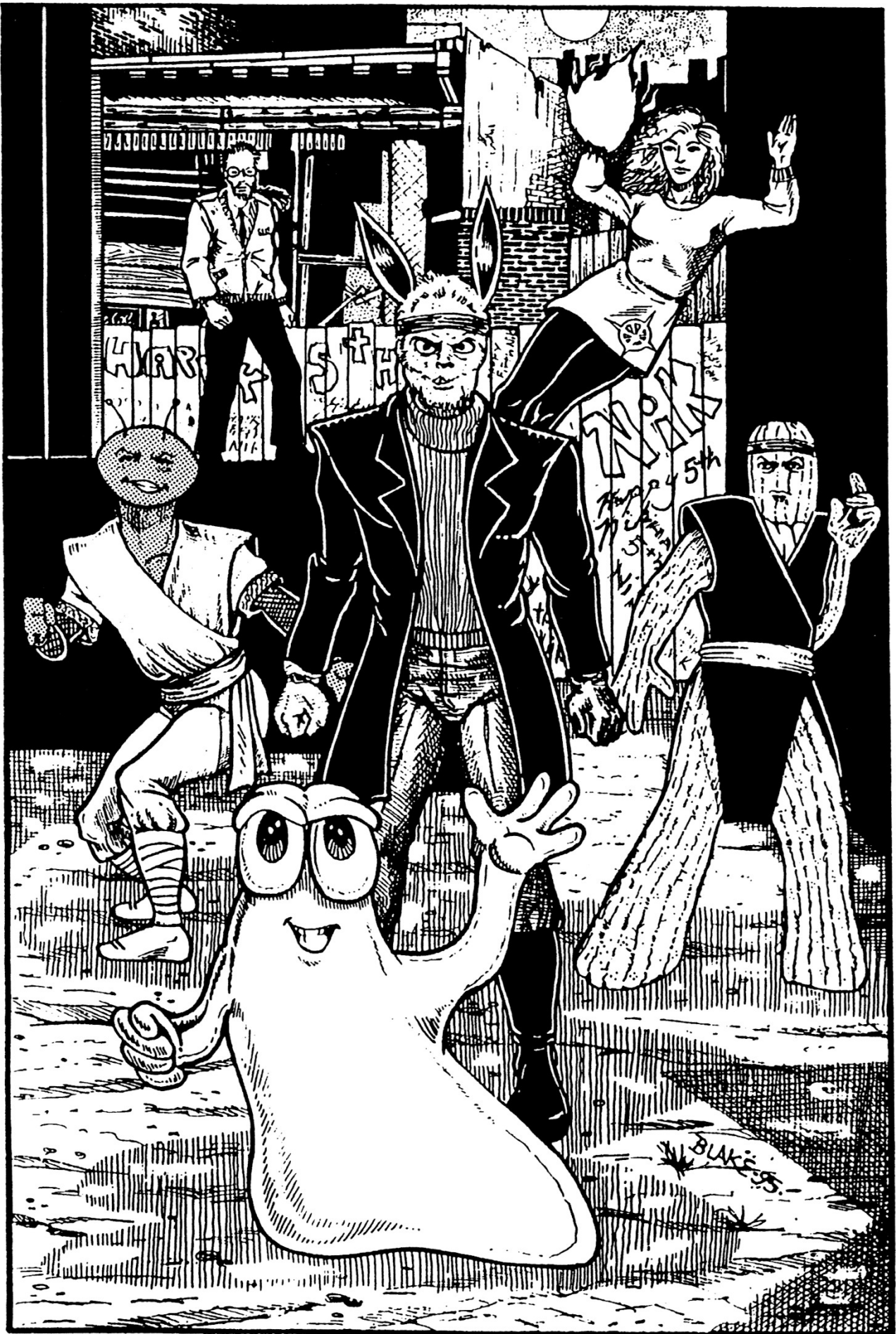
NK DIRGA

—Nik Dirga, October 1995

On the cover: Pretty much everyone who's ever appeared in *Amoeba Adventures* in the last five years — can you find them all? (First appearances in parenthesis)

Agnus Dei (AA 1)	Dr. Jim Tyler (SS)	Manipulator (AA 6)	Rambunny (OM)
Al (AA 5)	E'Melle (AA 14)	Manslaughter (OM)	Raoul (AA 4)
Alex (AA 6)	Francois (AA 14)	Master Macabre (AA 3)	Sloop Kane (AA 18)
Asbestos Mushroom (OM)	Ginzu (AA 5)	Mij Fooster (OM)	Spif (OM)
Azrael (AA 12)	The Gorilla Gang (AA 4)	Mindmaster (AA 15)	Spunky Ant (AA 5)
Brian (AA 17)	Grandpa Ant (AA 5)	Mr. Hooch (AA 18)	Stiles (S)
The Dark One (AA 13)	Herr Heinous (AA 1)	Monte Python (OM)	Jeff Stuart (AA 12)
David Letterman (AA 5)	Iqubala (SS)	Mordecai Orson (SS)	T'Changa (PSTE)
Dawn Star (AA 8)	Insp. Chamberlain (S)	Narth Bok (AA 16)	Tinkertoy (OM)
Dinosaur Men (AA 16)	The Inner Gods (OM)	Ninja Ant (OM)	Velcroman (AA 4)
Dr. Chen (AA 16)	Karate Kactus (OM)	Oscar (AA 6)	Werechuck (AA 6)
Dr. Isak Crane (AA 6)	King Krong (AA 4)	The Period (S)	Zook (AA 12)
Dr. Kkkk'qwf (AA 16)	Kronos (OM)	The Priest (AA 4)	
Dr. Phlegm (DP)	Kyoko (AA 5)	Promethean (OM)	
	Lian (AA 14)	Prometheus (OM)	

Key: AA - *Amoeba Adventures*; SS - *Prometheus: The Silent Storm* #1; PSTE - *Prometheus Saves The Earth?* #1; OM - *Amoeba Adventures: Only A Man*; S - *Spif* #1, DP (Dr. Phlegm #1).



Larry Blake

A BOY AND HIS BLOB

Five Years of
Amoeba Adventures and
Counting...A Look Back

By TROY HICKMAN

FIVE YEARS IS A very long time, especially in the field of comic books. Think about all the mainstream comics, just the recent ones, that have folded in under five years: *Cage*, *Deathlok*, *Black Condor*, *Nova*, *Outsiders*, *Silver Sable*, *Primal Force*, *Sleepwalker*, *Thunderbolt*, and on and on. Some of those were fine comics, well-written and drawn, yet they lacked that intangible quality that can keep a series afloat for the duration (and no, I don't mean large breasts; those only keep a heroine afloat).

And if it is such a feat for a mainstream comic, with all its considerable advertising and bankrolling, to survive for those five long years, imagine the sort of determination it must take to keep a small press title going strong after that much time, and the degree of talent it would take to keep the readers interested. Quite an accomplishment, wouldn't you say?

Five years ago, a young man named Nik Dirga launched just such a comic book. He called it *Amoeba Adventures*, and it featured a group of unlikely superheroes with an even more unlikely name: the All-Spongy Squadron. Now, after all these months, that comic is not only still going strong, but has garnered substantial critical acclaim and won numerous small press awards (as well as being responsible for the rash of newborn babies named "Amoeba").

But it didn't happen overnight. Somehow, over time, the unknown Nik Dirga and his fledgling comic book had to struggle its way up the small press ladder, and given that many readers of *Amoeba Adventures* are relative newcomers to the scene, this might be

a good time to look back at the history of the book (and besides, it'll keep me busy and away from those 976 numbers for a while).

In actuality, even before there was *Amoeba Adventures*, there was *Prometheus*, an even earlier small press comic, but I'll leave that history lesson to Nik. For our purposes now, let's concentrate on AA #1-19 (by themselves enough comics to choke even the most corpulent fanboy).

Amoeba Adventures #1 set the tone for the series by displaying one of the defining characteristics of AA: it was the beginning of an epic storyline. I think we can truly say Nik never met a continuing story he didn't like, and his series started out with a grand one. In this issue, we were introduced to the vigilante Manslaughter, the evil sorcerer Agnus Dei, and the nefarious (but silly) Herr Heinous. The All-Spongy Squadron (and I promised myself I wouldn't refer to them by their initials in this article) made a trip to the mythical country of Drudgeland. The name of the place was typical of the early issues, as Nik tended to play a bit more toward comedy. Prometheus, in fact, served more as comic relief in this issue than as the sometimes angst-ridden character we've come to love. Also interesting to note in this issue was the fact that Dr. Spif became Mr. Spif, the first in a number of transformations for him. All in all, it was an auspicious beginning, and it was apparent even this early that we were in for something far and beyond the norm.



Herr Heinous vs. Manslaughter: From #2

In issue #2, we saw Prometheus doing a little more of the soul-searching to which we've become accustomed, as he pondered the greater purpose assigned to him by the Inner Gods. We also learned that Manslaughter was the son of Agnus Dei, an example of the sort of inter-relatedness that would continue throughout the series. This

issue is also notable for the cover, a parody of Jack Kirby's classic cover to *Fantastic Four* #5. Parodies would become a frequent ingredient in the AA mix, and one could make the argument that the series as a whole has lampooned the conventions of mainstream comics (of course, one could also make the argument that evil goblins have taken over the Department of Motor Vehicles, but I digress).

Then came AA #3, which concluded the Agnus Dei storyline (or "The Visitor," as it was known). There were great changes for our heroes this issue. Spif began getting a handle on himself (a process detailed later in the *Spif* solo book). In a tragic and poignant ending, Manslaughter died, an event which would affect the Squadron's outlook on their lives for some time to come. Most interesting was Master Macabre's last page debut, setting into motion yet another (and even larger) epic storyline. Nik wasn't about to let his readers catch a breath before diving into the fray again! (A strategy he also applies to his girlfriends, by the way)

In the next issue (AA #4), the various members of the Squadron, after having spent so much time as a group, took some time for themselves. Ninja Ant and Karate Kactus journeyed to Japan. Prometheus examined what his existence had become. Even Rambunny, not generally considered the most introspective of the bunch, did some soul-searching. This issue didn't just reflect on what had previously occurred, however; it also continued the, shall we say, protean nature of AA by introducing the effervescent Raoul, the supremely silly Velcro Man, and the infamous Gorilla Gang (and no, they don't attack by throwing their own feces; quit confusing Nik with his characters).

Next came an exceptionally fun issue, #5, in which the Squadron made an appearance



Raoul goes into action: From #5

on the David Letterman show! Some of you may recall an old issue of *Avengers* where that team did the same thing, but don't waste your time with it; the AA story is the real thing. Unfortunately for the gang, the Asbestos Mushroom, one of Prometheus' earliest foes (from the pre-AA days), crashed the proceedings. Also this issue, the Master Macabre storyline continued to develop. This story marked the first appearance of Spif's power armor, an idea straight out of left field

that I think even Nik will admit should have stayed there. Also included in this issue was a story by Nik and John Hurley featuring Ninja Ant and Karate Kactus in Japan, that introduced Ninja Ant's girlfriend Kyoko (the first AA story not drawn by Nik, by the way). *Amoeba Adventures* #6 began the "Details of Design" epic in earnest, and added a decidedly more serious edge to the tone of the comic. In fact, the despicable Master Macabre supplied most of the humor! In some ways, this issue could be considered a prototype for the current AA, as far as the ratio of comedy to drama. This time out, we learned that Pro was being held by the insidious Dr. Crane as part of an experiment, and we were introduced to Hank Jensen, soon to become an important part of the AA mythos. Most importantly, this issue ended with a hip musical quote, which would eventually be a trademark of Nik's comics (in fact, I



Spif meets Alex: From #7

thought about shaving my head, referring to myself in the third person, and recording an album of whale songs, just to get him to quote me!). It's interesting to note that the back cover of this issue featured a pin-up of Macabre by one Max Ink (and only one Max Ink!).

In AA #7, the Squadron was forced, by Macabre, to face many of their own inner demons. During the fray, Spif lost his armor (darn!), but affirmed his new sense of self-confidence.

Ninja Ant and Karate Kactus returned from Japan, just in time to see the resultant carnage. As the issue ended, Prometheus was about to be dissected, and in a way, we might see this as a metaphor for the comic itself. Nik was leading up to events that would tear apart the old AA, leaving room for something quite different (a pornographic comic entitled *Prometheus' Naughty Nurses*, which, thankfully, never saw print!).

Issue #8 was a short one, but Nik sure packed in the story. We were first introduced to Dawn Strauss, who would eventually become a very pivotal character in the series, and when Crane attempted the dissection of Pro, she and Hank were blasted by the resultant release of energy and apparently killed. This issue also featured a hilarious parody of all those wonderful Mort Weisinger *Superman* covers of the Sixties (no doubt influenced by Nik's favorite Silver Age story, "The Super Groin Pull of Jimmy Olsen").

The following issue, #9 (insert Beatles joke here), was an issue of revelations. We learned not only that Hank and Dawn had survived, but that they'd gained vast superpowers. Prometheus escaped, replicating himself hundreds of times, confirming that long-standing idea that he is far more than he appears to be. With the addition of Manipulator (Hank) and Dawn Star (Dawn) to the cast, it looked as though perhaps the anthropomorphic nature of AA might be a thing of the past (well, OK, that's how it looked to me; of course, I originally thought *Ishtar* would be the blockbuster hit of 1987). This issue's inks, by the way, were by Anthony Gray, and initiated a trend toward other artists working on AA.

Amoeba Adventures #10 came out a whopping eight months after the previous issue (it was rumored that Nik had used that time to get his black belt in Drunken Monkey-style kung fu), but it returned with a vengeance. The entire All-Spongy Squadron (plus Dawn, Hank, and Kyoko) was reunited. During a prolonged and wonderfully choreographed battle, Alex, a henchman of Master Macabre, defected (and eventually became a mainstay

of the team). As the issue closed, however, Spif was mauled by the malicious Werechuck, sending him into critical condition. This issue, which featured a wrap-around cover by Max Ink, was inked by Tony Lorenz and Jason Wright (and banned by the Catholic church!).

Then, in issue #11, things began to change in a big way. Needing to sort things out, Rambunny left the team, thereby



The madness of Dr. Isak Crane: From #9

putting Karate Kactus in charge. Hank, realizing the godlike extent of his powers, also left. In the wake of this, Pro and Dawn began forming a friendship. This issue, drawn by Max Ink (with Nik and Larry Towsley), is in many ways the birthplace of the "new" *Amoeba Adventures*, in form and spirit. The comic was about to go into warp speed (Make it so, Mr. Dirga!).

Then came a blockbuster, the eighty page *Amoeba Adventures* #12. In this one, Nik threw in everything but Denis Kitchen's sink. Among other terrific contributions, this issue contained stories in which Ninja Ant fought a demon, Spif (in armor!) had his

brain stolen by an alien, Rambunny helped out the homeless, Herr Heinous became a game show host, and Prometheus and Dawn had a special day together (and Dawn gave the little guy a



Pro gets deep: From #11

peck on the cheek). This massive issue also featured reprints of more obscure stories, pin-ups galore, a 50 year retrospective of Prometheus (by some guy whose picture you've probably seen on post office walls), and just about everything else allowed under the Geneva Convention. It was one heck of a comic, and the fact that so many creators would get together for it says a lot about the

respect we all have for Nik and his work (and the free booze and broads he supplied didn't hurt).

Issue #13 was a treat for us old-time AA fans, as it was reminiscent of the "carefree" days of the title, back when humor was even more prevalent. This time out, Ninja Ant, Kyoko, Spif, and Dawn spent a night on the town. Unfortunately, they stum-



Herr Heinous on top of Splf: From #13

bled into an encounter with a lounge singer who turned out to be none other than Herr Heinous, and hilarity followed (which is to be expected; it's tough to do a serious story with a villain whose name, if pronounced correctly, sounds remarkably like "hairy anus"). It was a fitting epitaph for the "Golden Age" period of AA, and appropriately was both written and drawn by Nik. Even amidst the light-heartedness, though, the drama came through, as Prometheus was noticeably bothered by his infatuation with Dawn, and later, after the festivities, Herr Heinous was approached by the mysterious Dark One, signaling the arrival of yet another epic plot line.

Amoeba Adventures #14 was the most drastic departure the comic has taken to date. For this issue, Max Ink assumed the role of both writer and artist, and crafted a powerful, heartfelt tale of violence between a husband and wife. Small press, with its penchant for autobiographical stories and slice-of-life tales, has earned a reputation for brutal honesty, and Max certainly contributed his share of it with this piece. It should also be pointed out that in this issue, Prometheus demonstrated a more aggres-

sive, almost vengeful side, a facet of his personality that recurred several times during this period of the book.

Next came #15, in which Pro's dreams began to reveal his anxiety about Dawn and their relationship. Later in the issue, the Squadron battled the powerful mentalist Mindmaster, and during

the fight, Prometheus once again displayed his "nasty" side. As the story ended, Mindmaster was contacted by the Dark One. This issue was drawn by Nik, Max, and Joe Meyer (and baked by little elves in a hollow tree. Well, until Nik introduced them to the world of grunge and they were crushed in a tiny mosh pit).

It was the next issue, #16, that really set the tone for the modern age of *Amoeba Adventures*. In a tour de force tale which combined elements of action, science fiction, comedy, drama, fantasy, humanity, superheroics, romance, and everything else imaginable, Nik and Max, now fully a team and working off each others' riffs brilliantly, brought to life a story of the Squadron becoming stranded in prehistoric times. Max's artwork cooked with gas, Nik's scripting was at its zenith, and an envious Troy Hickman had never wanted more to give the both of them a Columbian necktie. This ish is especially memorable as it's the one in which Pro and Dawn first became romantically involved (causing the perverse sexual imaginations of small pressers everywhere to switch into high gear).

Issue #17 was a Christmas issue, but hardly the usual comic celebration of the holiday (I think if I ever read another superhero version of *A Christmas Carol* or *It's a Wonderful Life*, I'll stuff myself in a chimney until my body reverts to a state of figgy pudding). Rambunny came home for the holidays. At a bar, the Squadron mixed it up with Gorilla Gang (another of Nik's trademarks; if you wait long enough, all characters reappear!). The most disturbing scene this issue came when Ninja Ant walked in on Kyoko and her new romantic interest (a great scene, by the way; Nik made us feel the



Dawn and Prometheus at a turning point: From #16

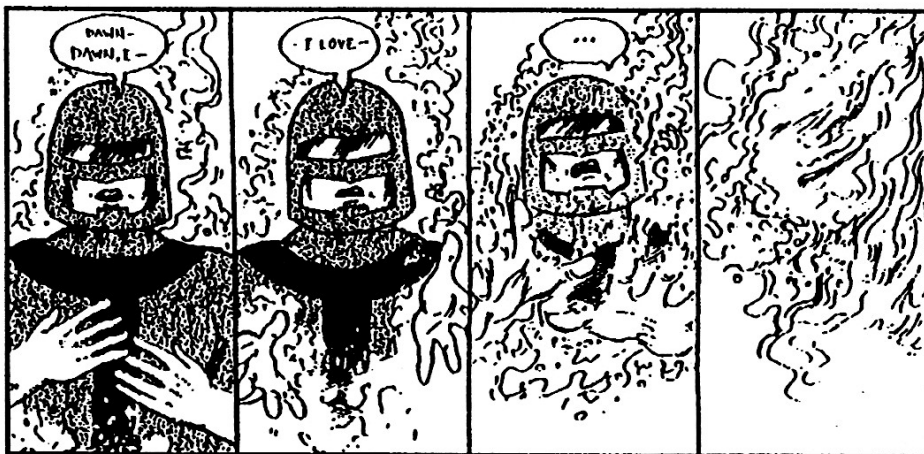
pain and desolation so much that I had to hide all the sharp implements in the house for my own protection).

After that came AA #18 (coming right after #17; what are the odds?). The vigilante hero The Period (from *Spif* #1) reappeared, and battled the Asbestos Mushroom (See what I mean? Let's just pray Hitler

never appears in AA, or he'll be back!). This issue also contained a lovely, memorable flashback of Karate Kactus's meeting with Theodore Roosevelt, and a mall tragedy involving Pro and Dawn. True to form, the Dark One showed up to make a deal with the Mushroom, who saw to it that the Squadron was framed for drug charges and taken to jail (where Ninja Ant was traded for a pack of smokes. Er, no, sorry; that's a daydream I keep having).

In the most recent issue to date, *Amoeba Adventures* #19, there was a strong implication that Pro and Dawn had consummated their relationship (for those vocabulary-impaired among us, that means they were playing "Hide the Pseudopod"). Also, with the help of The Period, the Squadron broke out of jail and tracked down the Asbestos Mushroom to clear their names. The plot continued to thicken, as we saw a bearded, bedraggled, and strangely familiar figure muttering to himself in a padded room (uh, no, it wasn't me). As the issue closed, we were shocked to see Pro suddenly transform again into The Promethean, then disappear, setting us up for what may turn out to be Nik's magnum opus.

And there you have it. Over the last five



The beginning of the end: Prometheus turns into the Promethean: From #19.

years, Nik and his collaborators have run us all through an ever-changing gamut of emotions in *Amoeba Adventures*. We've laughed until our bladders have almost given way (or *have* given way, in my case), we've cried like babies at the tragedies and triumphs of the very real characters, anthropomorphic characters as real as the guy who delivers your mail (and probably much less dangerous), and we've thrilled to the exploits of the constantly evolving All-Spongy Squadron. What more can be said than that?

Well, there's one more little thing that can be said, I guess. Thank you, Nik. Thank you for giving us so much enjoyment and enlightenment over the last five years. Thank you personally for letting me be a tiny part of it when I could. And maybe most importantly, thank you for setting a standard that shows those both inside and outside of the small press community the incredible level of work that can be done in this medium.

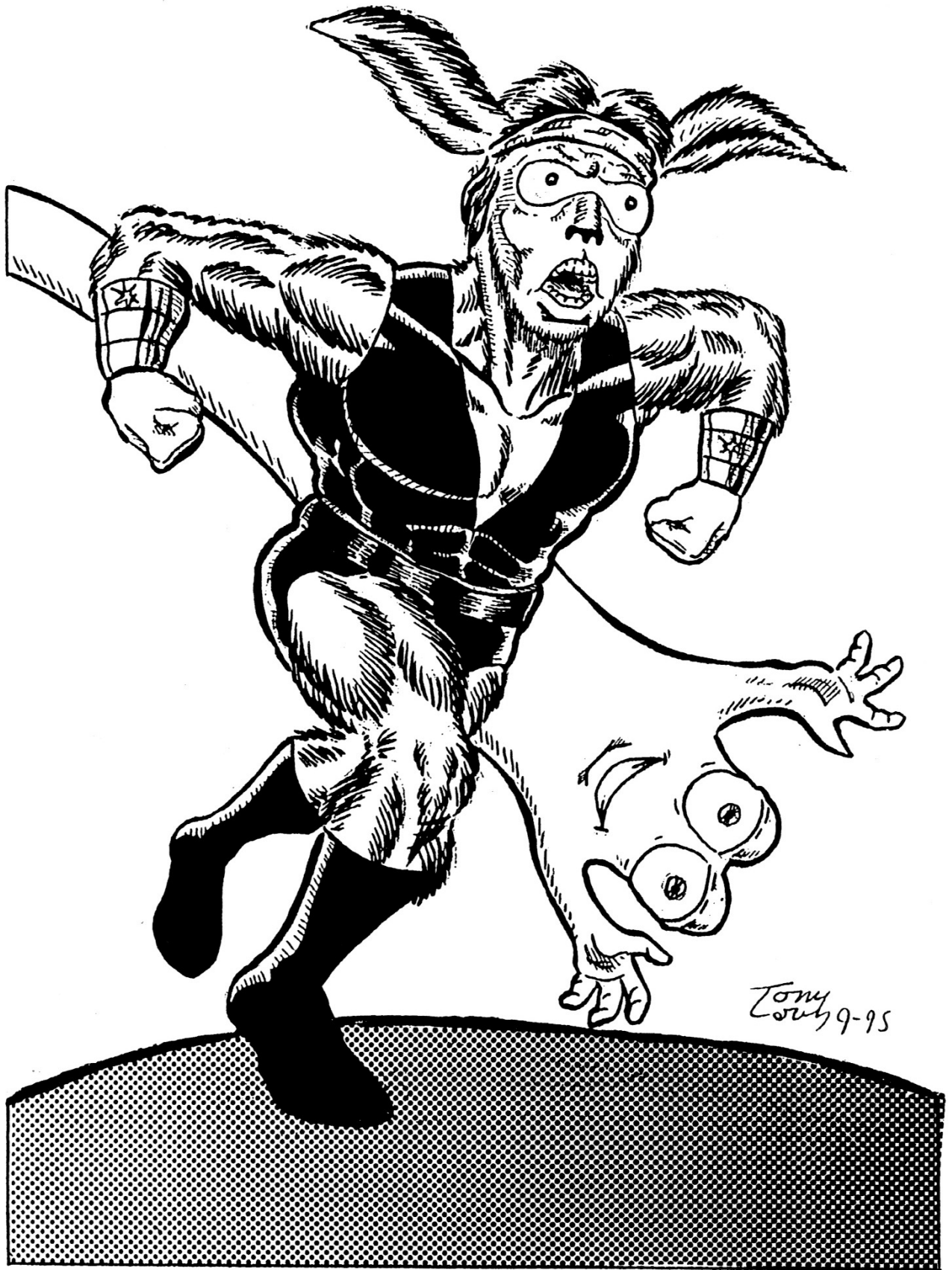
Years ago, Nik, all the way back in *Amoeba Adventures* #2, you said this: "Yeah, I'm just one of a legion of other small press guys who get their work Xeroxed instead of printed, who use typing paper instead of Bristol art board half the time, but we're not trying to revolutionize the medium. Yet, anyway."

Well, buddy, I guess that time has come.

Troy Hickman is no small-press slouch in his own right, the creator of such cool books at *Twilight Guardian* and *Yo-Yo*. Check out the contributor's page for more info on Troy's prodigious output, legal in most states!



Rambunny lost in thought: From #20.





WHAT IF... AMOEBAS FOLLOWED EVERY ASININE TREND THAT CAME ALONG?

IT'S RADICAL!!!

IT'S WACK!!!

P
PRESS

#000!
\$4.95!
\$49.95 in
Canada

DOUBLE-BAGGED
FOR YOUR
PROTECTION
... and hers!

IT'S LIKE...

TOTALLY
IN YOUR
FACE!!

AREN'T WE ALL GLAD IT DOESN'T, KIDS?

Pfeifer '95

CHARACTER IS THE KEY

BY NIK DIRGA

WRITING AMOEBIA ADVENTURES often feels a lot like being the conductor of a high-speed train that's out of control, barreling down the tracks at a hundred miles an hour. To put it simply, the characters control the book. I'm just here to point them in the right directions.

I've never really been one for writing event-oriented stories; I prefer to let the characters be the driving force, and all else that happens secondary. Maybe that's part of the reason *Amoeba Adventures* has always had such a gigantic cast of characters. There's "the big six," but there are also several dozen other supporting characters, villains, friends and acquaintances of the gang who play a big part in helping AA live and breathe.

The inspirations for these characters came from wide and varied sources. Many of them started out just as parodies of what was "hot" at the time, and gradually, over the years, gained a depth and realism of their very own. Parody has a fairly short lifespan — sooner or later you run out of things to make fun of, and have to stand up on your own.

Prometheus has always been the heart and soul of *Amoeba Adventures*. My basic

tenet with Prometheus was to present him as an ordinary fellow caught up in a most extraordinary life. He began as a bit more of a comic foil in his earliest appearances, but gradually, I began developing a central conflict within him: is he a hero or not? Being a hero isn't always being nice, and in battle with villains like Macabre or Agnus Dei, Pro has gradually seen the noble profession of superhero-dom become more complicated than just "good versus evil" for him.

Prometheus has grown constantly over the past five years as a character — most notably, in his relationship with Dawn, which has become one of the most unique elements of the series.

Dawn Star was originally created back in the early 1980s by my

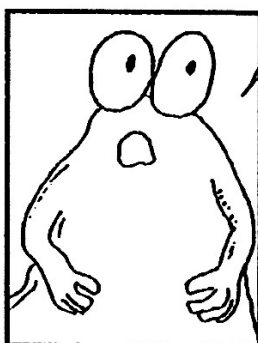


Dawn Strauss, from #8

good friend Chris Matthews — she was one of many homages to Marvel-type heroes we created back then. She was resurrected almost a decade later by me to join the cast of *Amoeba Adventures* in #8, for a fairly prurient reason on my part: since its inception, AA had been pretty much a male-only comic. It wasn't sexism, but honestly, I was nervous about handling a female character: drawing her, writing her — I most decidedly did not want any women characters in *Amoeba Adventures* to be the typical bikini-clad damsel in distress.

Dawn was introduced into AA with great fanfare in the midst of the "Details of Design" storyline. At first, she wasn't exactly popular. Readers commented that she and fellow new character Hank "Manipulator" Jensen were rather, well, *dull* in comparison to the rest of the gang. The first issue I really felt I got a handle on Dawn was #11,

where she appeared for a rather low-key coda at the story's end with Prometheus, reading *Jane Eyre* to him in the Spongopolis City Park on a summer afternoon. After that, Dawn stepped into focus for me, as a determined, forthright, realistic woman who comes from the real world, not from the pages of *Male Fantasy Illustrated*.



Evolution of an amoeba: a sketch from 1986; from AA #1; from AA #19

The physical relationship between Dawn and Prometheus that burst forth in all its glory in *Amoeba Adventures* #16 surprised even me. See what I meant about the characters taking over? In fact, when I first introduced Dawn, I kind of had the notion that Spif would become romantically involved with her. But Pro, the little devil, elbowed any and all suitors right out of the way in his quest for Dawn's hand. Dealing with their relationship has been



Pro fantasizes, from #14.

great fun for me as a writer the last year or two: attempting to present a couple that's realistic, yet interesting, two people who are believably in love. Totally normal except for the part about the amoeba, right?

Rambunny was, when I first began *Amoeba Adventures*, the most popular character. So naturally, I wrote him out of the series. Rambunny began, back in 1987 or so, as a straight-forward parody of *Rambo* and the Reagan mentality. Gradually, he involved into, dare I say, the "Wolverine" of *Amoeba Adventures* — an ill-tempered loner with a mysterious past. Often, I find him refreshing to write, compared to the rest of the gang. He is challenging — less intellectual than the others, he is nevertheless a genius in his way, with his straightforward, Darwinian view of the world.

Over the first ten issues, I showed Rambunny becoming more uncomfortable with his role as leader of the All-Spongy Squadron, weary of the responsibilities placed upon him. After the debacle with Master Macabre, he resigned in #11. I didn't want him to take over the comic much like the aforementioned Wolverine and his ilk did in *X-Men* some time ago. Rambunny reappeared as a guest star in *Amoeba Adventures* #17, and beginning in #20, will return to a more active role regularly. Also, a *Rambunny* solo comic that I wrote in 1994, originally to be drawn by Dave Berns and Eric Hampton, but derailed



Rambunny gets philosophical, from #17

by the latter's tragic death this past February, is now being finished up by Canadian Ron Gravelle and ought to be out early in 1996.

Everyone has stories in them that never seem to get written. Rambunny's origin tale is one of those — at one point to be told in #2, #16, #17, or a solo book, but somehow never quite written. One of these days, I keep telling myself, I'll get it down on paper...

Ninja Ant is, obviously, another character who began as simply parody. He remains, I think, the least-defined major character in the book. He has had his moments, most notably in #17, when his longtime girlfriend Kyoko dumped him for another man on Christmas Eve. There, we saw beyond the jocular, merry persona he usually tends to adopt.

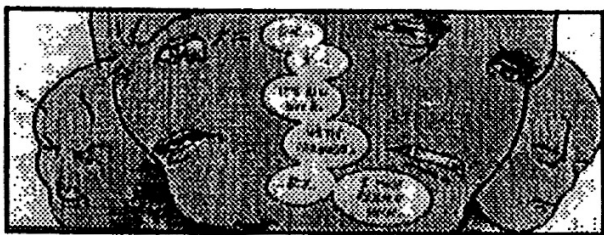
Yet, I remain determined not to give *too* much depth to Mitsu. There are many people I've known over the years like him — the life of the party kinda guy who's always got a good line or two, unable to take life seriously for a moment. And in these people, I've often found that that just *is* the way they are: there's no deep psychological reason for their free spiritedness, no horrible traumas they're hiding from. They just like life. Part of good characterization, I think, is knowing just where to *stop* writing sometimes. The Ninja Ants of the world have their purpose just like anyone else.

Spif, on the other hand, is the opposite of Ninja

Ant: the depths of his character have only *begun* to be plumbed in the past five years. His convoluted personal history was a reflection of my own attempts to find a spot for a regular, non-super human within the



Rambunny and Prometheus, from #4



The moods of Ninja Ant, from #17

outlandish confines of the All-Spongy Squadron.

I created him back in 1985 or so as “Dr. Spif,” envisioned as a suave, swashbuckling hipster with cool gadgets; sort of a splice of the 1950s Batman and James Bond — but when I finally began dealing with him in the old *Prometheus* series, he emerged as a sort of precursor to Ninja Ant, the never-serious jokester of the team. This portrayal just didn’t seem to “fit” Spif, so after just a few issues of “Dr. Spif,” I gave the good doctor an off-panel overhaul and reintroduced him in *Amoeba Adventures* #1 as the grim, gritty “Mister Spif,” a Shadow/Punisher retread. This version lasted even less time than Dr. Spif: in #3 of *Amoeba*, I had Mr. Spif face the demonic Agnus Dei alone, and undergo a crisis of confidence — confronted with the hollowness of his own character and methods, Spif was reborn, for the third and thankfully final time, as just plain ol’ Spif. *This* Spif is the one that remains to this day, as what I’d consider to be the backbone of the book — firm, reliable, and resourceful — the kind of superhero you or I might grow up to be in a different world.

In 1992, I asked that Troy Hickman fella to collaborate with me on a *Spif* solo comic, one that would tell of the transformation from Dr. Spif to Mr. Spif, as well as reveal Spif’s childhood and motivations for the first time. Troy wove an admirable tale from my rough plot, and the resulting comic *finally*, no thanks to the delays by yours



From AA #10: The entire, rather overstaffed team goes to take on Macabre

truly, appeared in 1994.

Karate Kactus, like Dawn, wasn’t created by me originally. Back in high school, I usually did my primitive “notebook comics” during dull history or French classes. One of my friends in class, a fellow named Eric Moul, saw my doodles of Ninja Ant, Rambunny and the rest and decided to join in. He created a superhero he called “Karate Cactus,” and asked me if I’d use him in a story. I saw that “Karate Cactus” would be perfect to add to the origin story of Ninja Ant I was then working on, and agreed. I redesigned Eric’s original design somewhat — *his* “KC” was actually an Oriental man, wearing a cactus-like suit armored with prickles! The newly re-christened “Karate Kactus,” improperly spelled but more allit-



The Mindmaster strikes the team from within, from #15

erative, debuted in my “notebook comic” *Prometheus* #3 in the “father figure” role he plays to this day. I’ve long since lost track of Eric, and often wonder what he’d think of what I’ve done to his tossed-off creation since high school.

Karate Kactus, always pictured in my mind as a supporting character, became more and more prominent when I began *Amoeba Adventures*. His quiet strength and courageous demeanor appealed to many readers, as did his rather peculiar appearance. When Rambunny quit the team in #11, he was the natural choice for team leader. I’ve never seen Karate Kactus as a “marquee” member of the team, someone huge story arcs are fashioned around. Instead, he

plays a decisive background role in most stories, giving out fatherly advice and handling the “superheroey” end of things. Karate Kactus has a very “Silver Age” view of heroism, something kinda refreshing in the days of gun-toting mercenaries and spandex-clad harlots, I think.

Those six make up what I consider the “core” of the

Amoeba Adventures cast. But they're hardly the whole gang; simply the most resonant for me. There've been at least three other members of the All-Spongy Squadron in the past five years — all of them, for various reasons, didn't pan out.

Raoul the Boy Cockroach was introduced in *Amoeba* #4 as a straightforward parody of Robin and the 'kid sidekick' genre. He got off some good gags, but was never intended as much more than a temporary amusement. Around #10, the All-Spongy Squadron seemed to suddenly double in size, as all the characters I'd had bouncing around in separate directions for several issues came back together. With Kyoko and Manipulator, there were no less than *nine* team members running around — far too many to tell a good story with. Raoul (and *his* sidekick, Ninja Ant's kid brother Spunky Ant, introduced back in #5) was written out of the series back in #13.

Manipulator — Hank Jensen — departed the book in #11, after being introduced in #6. Like Dawn, he gained his elemental powers after their attempt to free Prometheus in #8 failed. Unlike Dawn, his powers were out of control. In a chilling scene in #11 I still admire, Hank confronts Dawn with what he thinks he's become, and she rejects him. Hank, with his godlike powers, was last seen flying off into outer space, never to return...?

Kyoko first appeared in *Amoeba Adventures* #5 as Ninja Ant's childhood girlfriend. She returned to America with him and Isuzu in #7, and joined the team as a "reserve member" of sorts in #10. I never felt Kyoko really 'clicked' with the other characters. I attempted to make her the polar opposite of the flighty Mitsu, but she merely came off as cold and aloof. Finding her expendable, I ended up writing her out in #17.



Dawn and Hank at a pivotal moment, from #11

Of course, there have always been many more supporting characters... I always felt it was important to show that my heroes had *friends*, outside of the superhero biz. Folks like the late Monte Python, a television star who died of AIDS in my AIDS awareness jam, *Prometheus: The Silent Storm*; Iqubala, Monte's good friend, who's since reappeared in #16; Narth Bok; Iqubala's boyfriend and a noted scientist who accidentally ended up trapped in prehistoric times with the gang in #16; Mij Fooster, the Squadron's lawyer; Alex, the former 'Inverted Man' who's become the gang's unofficial handyman; E'Melle, an old college friend of Spif's who was featured in Max's powerful story in *Amoeba Adventures* #14; Mordecai Orson, a prominent physician; Inspector Chamberlain, Spongopolis's tough, but fair, top cop — and the heroes who've assisted the gang like *The Period*, *Manslaughter* and *T'Changa*.

Together, all these crazy characters have helped make *Amoeba Adventures* what I've always wanted it to be... a nice little story about a bunch of very ordinary, likeable folks — who just happen to be superheroes.



The guys with Mordecai Orson: Artwork by Quinton Hoover from *Prometheus: The Silent Storm*



AM
5/95

*Looking
to the Future...*

AMOEBA ADVENTURES GALA

WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?
DO THEY HAVE INVITATIONS?

THANK YOU,
THANK YOU ALL!

HE'S GREAT,
ISN'T HE?
JUST GREAT!

HE'S BEEN IN COMICS
FOR A HAND *
OF YEARS!

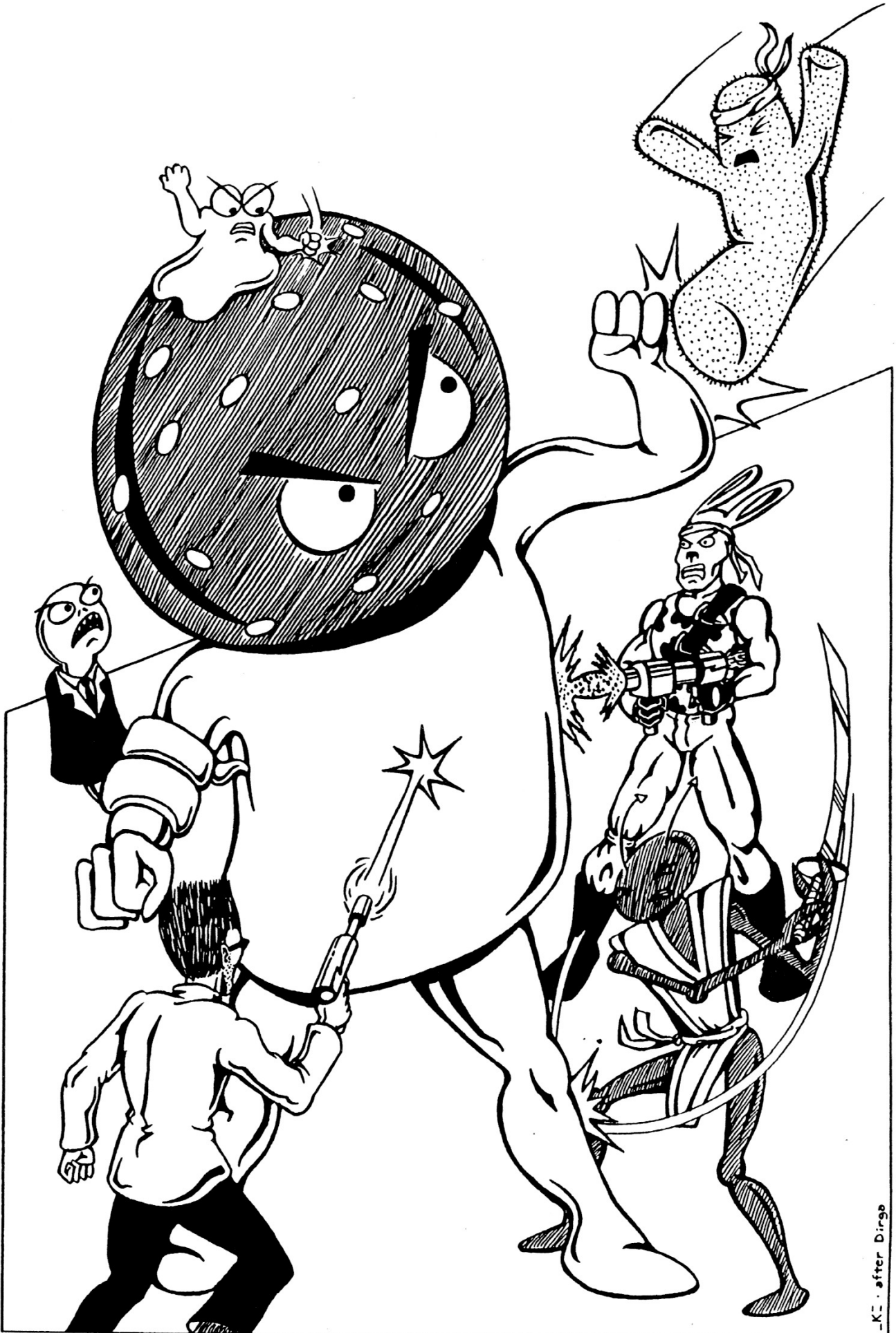
CLAP CLAP APPLAUD
TWILIGHT GUARDIAN
created by...
TROY HICKMAN!

YEAH.

SHAPE-
LESS,
BUT
GREAT.

THANKS TO NIK + MAX + EVERYONE!

* FIVE
PAM Bliss



-K- after Dirgo

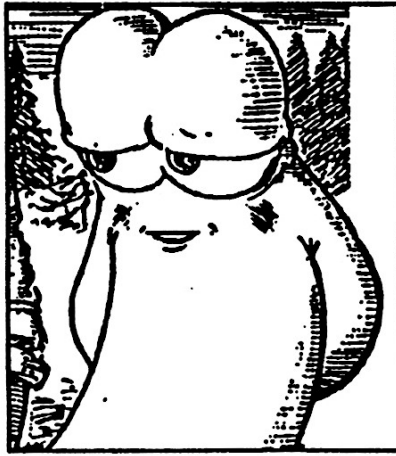




PROMETHEUS

Full Name: Prometheus
Age: ? **Color:** Translucent blue
Height: 3' 2" (normal)
First Appearance: *Prometheus* #1

History: The true history of Prometheus is a subject open to great debate. Prometheus appeared on earth just over six years ago from outer space. He knew nothing of his origins until shortly after the forming of the All-Spongy Squadron, when, following a battle with the Asbestos Mushroom, he spontaneously transformed into a humanoid figure dubbed "The Promethean." Soon after this, he was confronted by several giant beings calling themselves The Inner Gods. They claimed to have created Prometheus, as a pawn for use in some future cataclysm. Without answering his many questions, they restored Prometheus to his amoeboid form and left him.



Since then, Prometheus has been constantly plagued by doubts and confusion over what and who he really is.

Personality Traits:

Prometheus is a creature of moods, varying between melancholy and elation at the drop of a hat. His deep uncertainty about his own identity often throws him into spells of serious depression. However,

when confronted directly with danger, Prometheus has been observed to be very selfless and courageous. His relationship with Dawn Star has helped his self-esteem and outlook considerably.

Skills: Prometheus is formed of an extremely pliable and flexible substance that he can shape at will. He is invulnerable to many forms of attack, and has the ability to split himself into duplicates.

Quote: "I can't do anything about my own destiny, whatever it is." (#2)



SPIF

Full Name: Cyrone Julian Spifinov
Age: 32 **Hair:** Black
Height: 5' 11"

First Appearance: *Prometheus* #2

History: Cyrone Spifinov was the son of immigrants growing up in New York City, fascinated by heroic literature. He entered medical school as a teenager and became a successful doctor, while still nursing the desire to be a hero. When

Prometheus came to Earth, this was the spark Cyrone needed — he became the swashbuckling Dr. Spif, using his intellect and extraordinary inventions to fight crime. He was a founding member of the All-Spongy Squadron. Dr. Spif was later framed by the archvillain Stiles and disbarred from medicine; in reac-



tion, for a time he became the grimmer Mister Spif. But in recent times, he has "settled down" as just plain Spif, working with the Squadron and experimenting with his many inventions on his own spare time.

Personality Traits: Gifted with an extraordinary intellect and thirst for knowledge, Spif is incredibly curious, and indeed often gets so lost in intellectual musings that he

forgets more pressing matters. Yet his bookish demeanor is tempered with a heroic, extroverted side that often comes into play during battle. Spif has an extraordinarily dry wit.

Skills: Spif possesses no superhuman powers, but is very physically fit. He is extremely proficient with electronics, and is the Squadron's resident inventor, creator of the Amoebaplane and other innovations.

Quote: "I've made a career out of doing what I'm not supposed to." (#7)

RAMBUNNY

Full Name: Peter (last name unknown)

Age: 56

Hair:

White

Height: 6' 6" (not including ears)

First Appearance:

Prometheus #2

History: Little is known of the history of Rambunny. He served in the Vietnam war at one point, where it is presumed he gained his superhuman powers. He has been in the public eye as a crimefighter since the late 1970s, and in the early 1990s became a founding member of the All-Spongy Squadron, and its leader through acclimation. But subsequent events eroded his normally unshakable confidence, and after the team's demoralizing encounter with Master Macabre and his Huntsmen, Rambunny shocked his teammates by resigning from the Squadron. He has



since wandered the country, having a variety of adventures.

Personality Traits: Books could be written about Rambunny's psyche — he walks a thin line between violent psychopath and conscientious do-gooder. He is in constant conflict with his violent nature and his brutal past.

Skills: Rambunny is superhumanly strong, able to press about 20 tons. He is invulnerable to most conventional weaponry, and possesses high endurance.

Quote: "I feel like if I'm not right down there with my hands bloody, I ain't doin' good enough." (#17)



KARATE KACTUS

Full Name: Shiro Isuzu

Age: Approximately 90

Height: 4' 7"

Color: Light green

First Appearance: *Prometheus #3*

History: Little has been revealed of Isuzu's past; he is not actually related to his "cousin" Ninja Ant, but they have a strong relationship. He was an orphan living in America in the early half of this century; at some later point he returned to Japan to live. He was a prominent crimefighter in the Far East for several decades.

He is a founding member of the All-Spongy Squadron, and since Rambunny's resignation, has served ably as its leader. His many years of experience and his calm, assured temperament

have made him a winning leader.

Personality Traits: Isuzu is a true ideal-



ist when it comes to superheroing. He is firm in the conviction that those who *can* try to make the world a better place, *should*. He has evolved into a highly effective leader, seldom losing his cool in combat and maintaining good relationships with all the team members.

Occasionally, he can be a bit naive about current social conventions and mores.

Skills: Karate Kactus is a master at several forms of marital arts and weaponry. He also uses his prickly form for him in combat — his stickers, while not poisonous, are fairly sharp and can be retracted by him at will.

Quote: "Don't worry so much about what people think. It only gets you in trouble." (#18)

DAWN STAR

Full Name:
Dawn Louise Strauss
Age: 26 **Hair:** Blonde
Height: 5' 8"
First Appearance: *Amoeba Adventures* #8

History: Dawn Strauss has always been an over-achiever. She breezed through school and became a successful chemical scientist. While living in Denver, she was approached by Dr. Isak



Crane, who was assembling a team of top-notch scientists on a secret project. She, along with longtime friend Hank Jensen, later learned that the aim of the project was nothing less than genetic manipula-

tion of the human race, using the captive Prometheus as a power source. Dawn and Hank decided to turn upon Crane and free Prometheus, but were trapped by Crane, who used them as guinea pigs on an experiment to give humans abnormal powers. Both Dawn and Hank gained fantastic powers, and joined forces with Prometheus to defeat Crane. Dawn later joined the All-Spongy Squadron, and has recently developed, strange as it may seem, a romantic relationship with Prometheus.

Personality Traits: Highly intelligent and independent, Dawn is what is often called "a good listener." She is often called upon to solve friend's problems. She can be impetuous in her own actions, however, and sometimes gets in over her head as a result.

Skills: Dawn Star can control and manipulate fire. She can create fire and emit blasts of it at will, and has the ability to fly. She is invulnerable to flames, and has slightly above average strength and endurance.

Quote: "You can only take responsibility for your *own* actions." (#14)

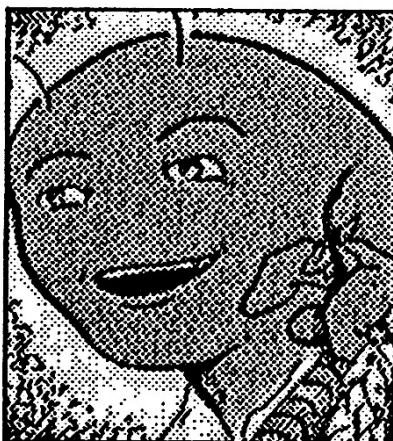


NINJA ANT

Full Name: Toyota Mitsubishi
Age: 25 **Color:** Grey
Height: 6'
First Appearance: *Prometheus* #3

History: Little is precisely known of Mitsu's past. He is the youngest of a line of distinguished ninja and samurai masters, although his skills are still maturing. Just after completing his ninja training, he was kidnapped by the villainous Asbestos Mushroom from Japan and used in an elaborate plot against Prometheus.

When the Mushroom's plot failed, as they usually do, Mitsu and his "cousin" Isuzu opted to stay in America and form the All-Spongy Squadron with their new friends. Mitsu has



adjusted well to life in America, and continues to hone his skills. He is the resident jokester of the Squadron, often to the others' irritation. He recently broke up with his longtime girlfriend Kyoko.

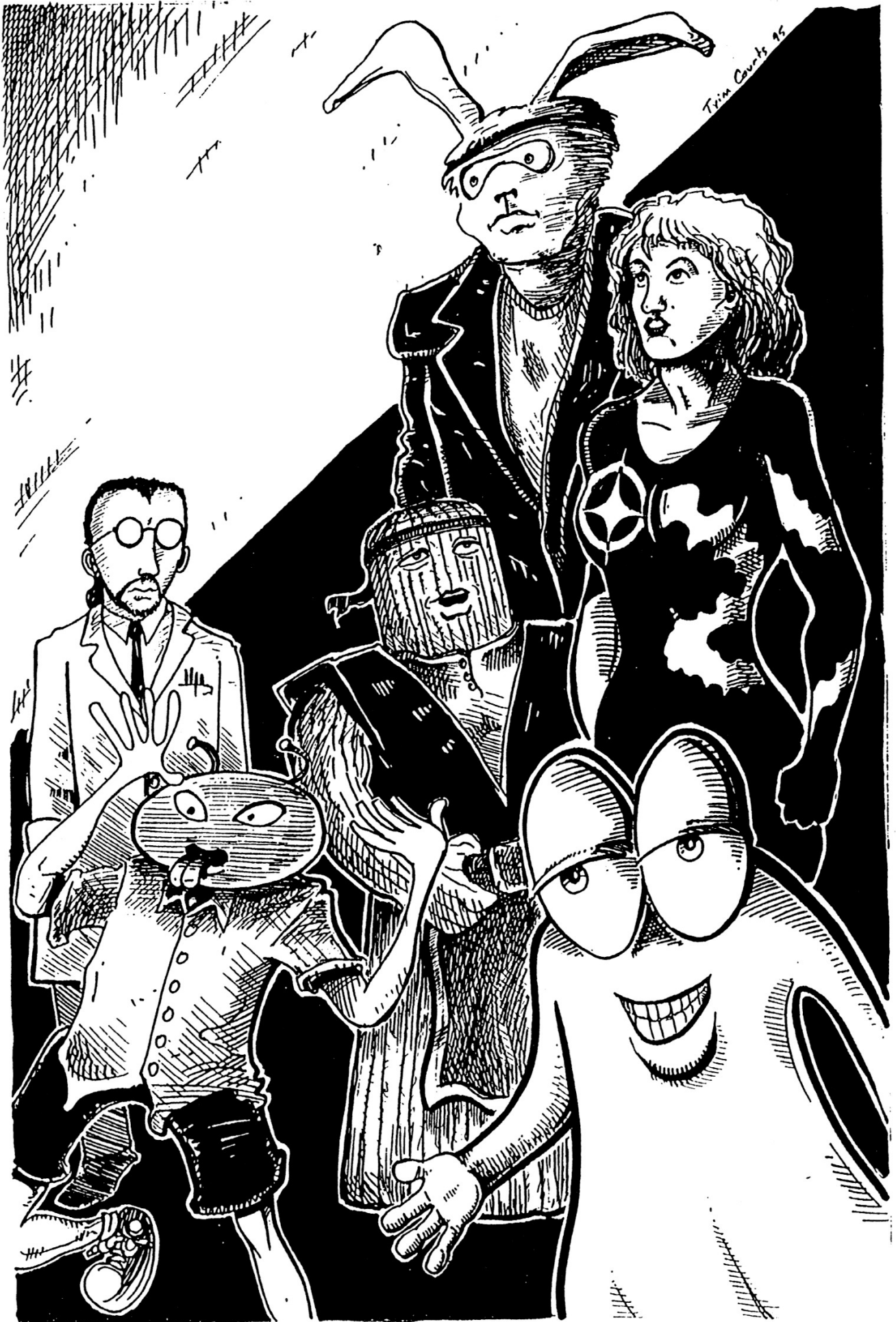
Personality Traits: It is sometimes said of Mitsu that he is incapable of being serious. This is almost true — Mitsu will be the first to admit he

looks for the best joke in any given situation, no matter how dark it is. Yet, he does have a sensitive side, and is still recovering from his breakup with Kyoko, whom he was very close to.

Skills: Ninja Ant is an accomplished ninja warrior, though still learning. He is extremely acrobatic and very handy with a sword.
Quote: "Hey, don't worry, us superheroes are just regular folks! Except some of us wear our underwear on the outside, that's all." (#12)

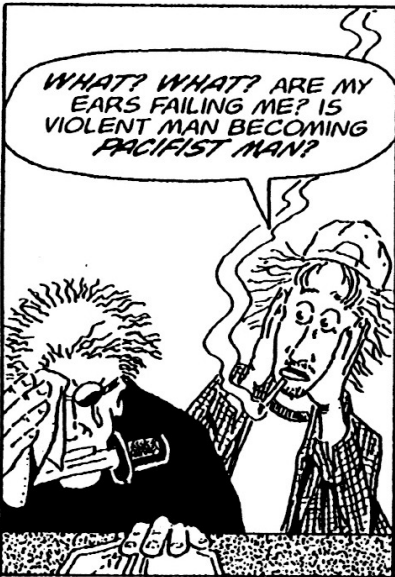
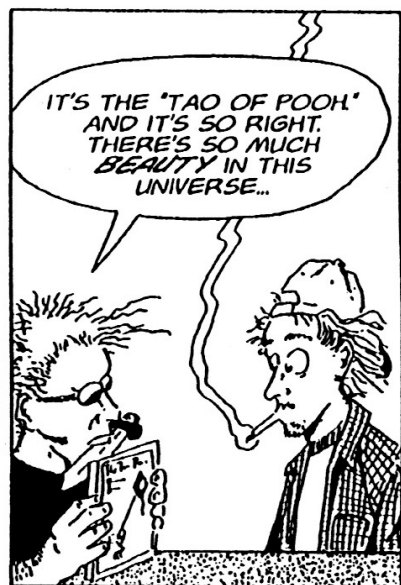
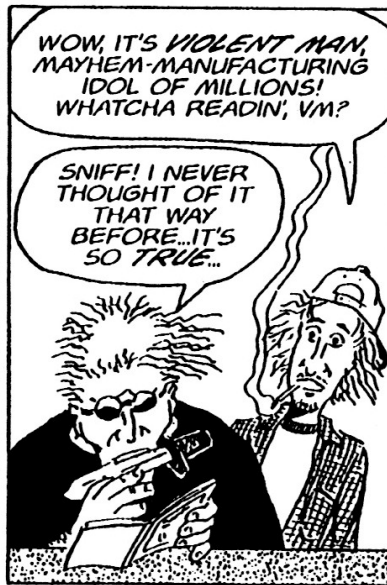


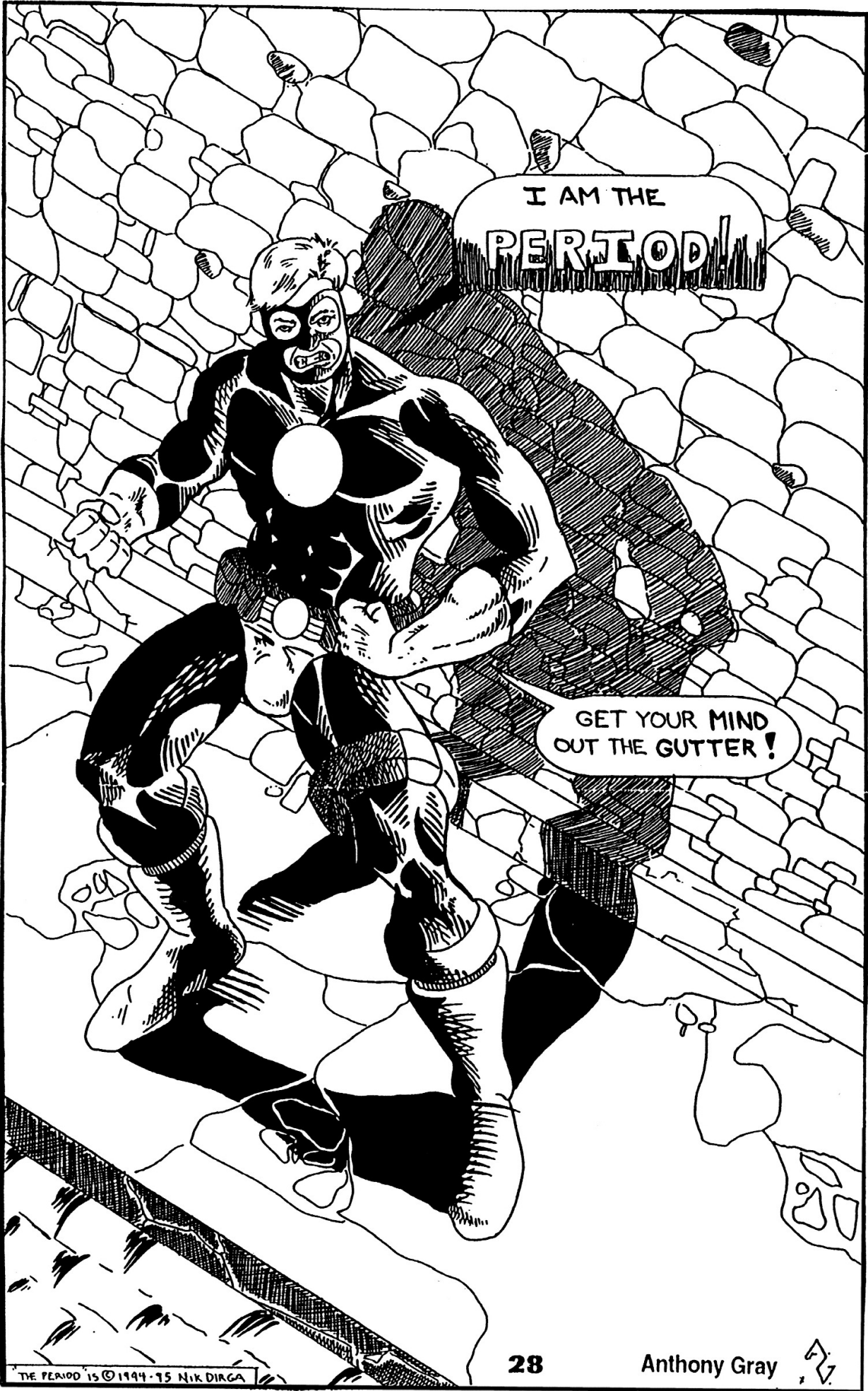




VIOLENT MAN VS RAMBUNNY

written by Nik Dirgo drawn by Will Pfeifer

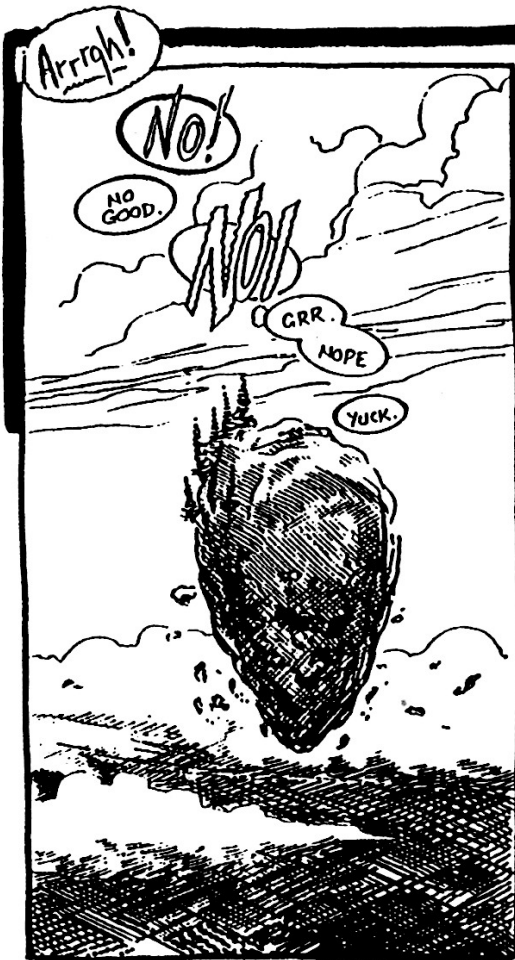






©1995 NIK DIRGA





Arrgh!

No!

NO GOOD.

No!

GRR.

NOPE

YUCK.



RRR

PERHAPS I'M CURSED.



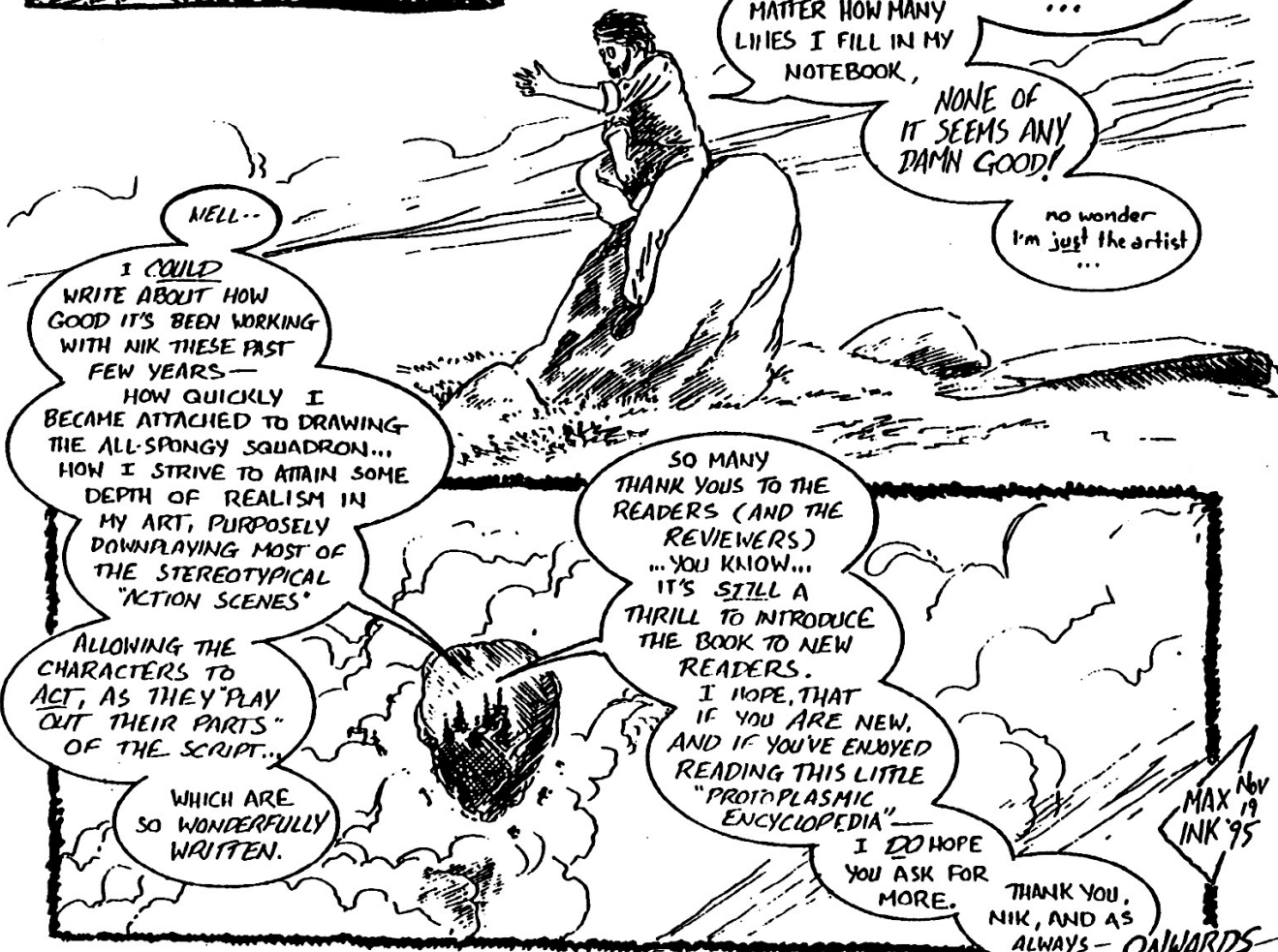
I SIMPLY CANNOT FIGURE OUT A DAMN COHERENT ESSAY—

HERE I AM; ARTIST OF AMOEBAS ADVENTURES, WITH AN ESSAY TO WRITE ...

AND NO MATTER HOW MANY LINES I FILL IN MY NOTEBOOK,

NONE OF IT SEEMS ANY DAMN GOOD!

no wonder I'm just the artist ...



Well...

I COULD WRITE ABOUT HOW GOOD IT'S BEEN WORKING WITH NIK THESE PAST FEW YEARS—

HOW QUICKLY I BECAME ATTACHED TO DRAWING THE ALL-SPONGY SQUADRON... HOW I STRIVE TO ATTAIN SOME DEPTH OF REALISM IN MY ART, PURPOSELY DOWNPLAYING MOST OF THE STEREOTYPICAL "ACTION SCENES"

ALLOWING THE CHARACTERS TO ACT, AS THEY "PLAY OUT THEIR PARTS" OF THE SCRIPT...

WHICH ARE SO WONDERFULLY WRITTEN.

SO MANY THANK YOU'S TO THE READERS (AND THE REVIEWERS) ... YOU KNOW... IT'S STILL A THRILL TO INTRODUCE THE BOOK TO NEW READERS.

I HOPE, THAT IF YOU ARE NEW, AND IF YOU'VE ENJOYED READING THIS LITTLE "PROTOPLASMIC" ENCYCLOPEDIA—

I DO HOPE YOU ASK FOR MORE.

THANK YOU, NIK, AND AS ALWAYS— ONWARDS

MAX 16V
19
INK '95

CONTRIBUTOR'S PAGE



Larry Blake is a small press legend and the creator of such swell comics as *Nightstar* and *Rotgut Funnies*. His detailed, bold style has been winning him fans for years and his books are must reading for any true small press fan...thus, I can even tolerate the fact that Larry dresses up like Gene Simmons from KISS every time he goes out in public. Larry Blake, 69306 St. Rt. 124, Reedsville, Ohio 45772.

Pam Bliss is the creator of the pithy pundit Sparky the Dog, and an all-around great lady. She gave me pretzels at the Chicagocon in 1993 when the snack stand was charging \$10 for a Coke, and for this I am indebted. Get the latest issue of *Sparky the Dog* from her for \$1 at Paradise Valley Comics, P.O. Box 304, Valparaiso, Indiana 46384.

J. Kevin Carrier is small press's very own perpetual motion machine — chances are, if you've ever picked up a small press book, it's had something by Kevin: a letter, a pin-up, a story. Kev is never too busy to help out his friends... and unfortunately, never too busy to stop calling them at 3 a.m. and reading excerpts from *Hustler* to them. 8913 Eldora Drive, Cincinnati, Ohio, 45236.

Tylm Courts possesses the springiest goatee known to man, so it is only fitting he publishes the anthology *Goatee Comics*, with his long-running, surreal "Experiencing Technical Difficulties" series in every issue. He recently did a bizarro jam comic, *What The Hell Is This Jam All About?*, with our own Max Ink, available for free from him at 5545 Montgomery Rd. #1, Cincinnati, Ohio 45236.

Jerzy Drozd has a name just as weird as mine, so right away we hit it off. Jerzy puts out *Bocefus Comics Presents*, featuring the adventures of The Front, my nomination for the single coolest superteam in small press. His Keith Giffen-esque art and lively characters make for a great read. #6 should now be out for \$1.50 ppd. from P.O. Box 221, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan 48804.

Anthony Gray, God help him, has a longtime history of collaborating with yours truly, dating back to his inking of *Amoeba Adventures* #9 in 1992. His own energetic publications feature the adventures of such groovy characters as Dinosaur Man and The Bat. 1123 Miller St., Utica, New York 13501.

Troy Hickman is most probably the funniest man in small press, so I'm not even going to attempt to make a joke about him here. Instead, I'll just salute his inimitable talent and plug his plethora of perky publications, such as *Holey Crullers!*, an ongoing superhero series with Jerry Smith, *Twilight Guardian*, a miniseries with Pam Bliss,

and *Popery*, a humorous anthology. Send \$5 or so for a nice sampling of his wares to 3200 S. 9th st. Apt. A, Lafayette, Indiana 47905.

Tony Lorenz is another unlucky fellow who's had the misfortune to collaborate with me many times over the years, in *Amoeba Adventures* #10 and #12, and in #23 of his long-running science fiction odyssey, *Futuro Tierra*. He also happens to be one of the nicest fellows you'll ever meet in small press. 8708 Friendship Court, Tampa, Florida 33634.

Scott McClung consistently bowls me away with his stunning, fluid artwork and his hilarious, quirky comics — titles like *The Burp Boy* and *Upchuck the Dog Wonder Show* and *Pizazz and Frog Boy* should give you an idea of this demented man's output. His latest can be had for a couple bucks to 537 S. University #6, Norman, Oklahoma 73069.

William 'Ed' Paten is a relative newcomer to small press, but that hasn't stopped him from diving right into the thick of it. He's currently the chairman of the gigantic Small Press Syndicate, and he and writer Juan Villareal put out the chilling new series *Magus Rex* together. Drop Ed a line at P.O. Box 592061, Orlando, Florida 32859.

Will Pfeifer is a true spawn of the media age — a fanatic about pop culture, he produces the hip, funky and infrequent comic *Violentman*, #8 of which is the latest available. Thanks to Will for doing not one, but *two* pieces for this here book! 1004 Franklin Place, Rockford, Illinois 61103.

Jerry Smith *does* live in Tennessee, but he's not as much of a hick as I am. He puts out some plumb-hilarious comics like *Broyles The Rabbit* and *The Electric Weenie*, and if you're not reading them, well, you're just humor-impaired. 3344 Horner Drive, Morristown, Tennessee 37814.

Robert Sumner is simply one of the most dynamic artists in small press, with his kinetic, Neal Adams-influenced style and his impeccable production values. His *Sgt. Roadkil's Fanboy Journal* is available from him for \$3 ppd. at 14949 Tracyann Ct. #202, Beaverton, Oregon 97007.

John Watkins-Chow did this stunning sketch of Dawn Star for us at the last Mid-Ohio Con... you think this looks nice, you ought to see it in color! John puts out the indy comic *The Talismen*, and can be reached at 3222 Bolgos Circle, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48105.

Rich Watson publishes a comic whose name I guarantee will be on everybody's lips one of these days: *Ronnie & David*. This unique superhero tale deals with powerful political, racial and social issues, and is compellingly written and drawn. Get the latest issue for a buck from Rich at 172-32 133rd Avenue, Apt. 11-A, Jamaica, New York 11434.

BACK ISSUES! BACK ISSUES! HOO-HA!

AMOEBA ADVENTURES #1 - Beginning the continuing saga of the All-Spongy Squadron's adventures! 24 page mid-mag, \$2.00

AMOEBA ADVENTURES #2 - Prometheus alone has to free his friends from the clutches of Herr Heinous. 28 page mid-mag, \$2.00

AMOEBA ADVENTURES #3 - "The Visitor" concludes dramatically as someone dies! 24 page mid-mag - \$2.00

AMOEBA ADVENTURES #4 - The introduction of Raoul the Boy Cockroach! 24 page mid-mag, \$2.00

AMOEBA ADVENTURES #5 - Special double-sized issue guest-starring David Letterman! 36 page mid-mag - \$2.50

AMOEBA ADVENTURES #6 - Kicking off the five-part "Details of Design" storyline. 16 page digest - \$1.00

AMOEBA ADVENTURES #7 - Rambunny takes on Macabre. 16 page digest - \$1.00

AMOEBA ADVENTURES #8 - Where is Prometheus? 16 page digest - \$1.00

AMOEBA ADVENTURES #9 - The amazing debut of Manipulator and Dawn Star. 24 page digest - \$1.00

AMOEBA ADVENTURES #10 - The huge conclusion to "Details of Design." 36 page digest - \$2.00

AMOEBA ADVENTURES #11 - Artist Max Ink and guest-inker Larry Towsley lend their talents to "Little Earthquakes." 28 page digest - \$1.50

AMOEBA ADVENTURES #12 - Special monumentally-large "Fiftieth Anniversary Issue!" Loads of guest artists! 72 page digest - \$3.50

AMOEBA ADVENTURES #13 - Featuring the long-awaited return of Herr Heinous. Winner of the UFO Award for Best Single Comic of 1994. 24 page digest - \$1.50

AMOEBA ADVENTURES #14 - Max

Ink takes charge of both the art and writing in this very special Domestic Violence and Abuse Awareness Issue. 48 page digest - \$2.50

AMOEBA ADVENTURES #15 - Introducing the Mindmaster. 24 page digest - \$1.50

AMOEBA ADVENTURES #16 - Max Ink jumps aboard as the new regular artist in "Time's Up!" 44 page digest - \$2.00

AMOEBA ADVENTURES #17 - At long last, the return of Rambunny! 32 page digest - \$2.00

AMOEBA ADVENTURES #18 - The Period, The Asbestos Mushroom and more! 32 page digest, \$2.00

AMOEBA ADVENTURES #19 - A shocking turning point for Prometheus. 32 page digest, \$2.00

AMOEBA ADVENTURES #20 - Part one of "The Dark Ages," as Rambunny faces the full brunt of The Dark One's wrath. Available in November. 28 page digest, \$2.00

PROMETHEUS: THE SILENT STORM - The All-Spongy Squadron's lives are hit by the AIDS epidemic, as an old friend is revealed to be HIV-positive. Digest, \$2.00

SPIF #1 - The token human of the team steps out into his own solo book, plotted by Nik Dirga, written by Troy Hickman and drawn by Max Ink. Digest, \$2.00

ONE-CELLED TALES #1 - For all Amoeba completists, a sketchbook featuring some of the very first protoplasmic art by Nik Dirga. 20 page digest, \$1.00

DR. PHLEGM #1 - The first full-length collaboration of Nik and Max Ink introduces the most mucus-laden villain of all! 12 page digest, 50¢

AMOEBA ADVENTURES: ONLY A MAN - Collecting the long out-of-print *Prometheus* #3-6 with a brand new cover and introduction. 84-page mid-magazine, \$4.00

Ordering Information: All prices include postage. Please make all checks payable to Nik Dirga, not Protoplasm Press. Please allow 3-5 weeks for delivery. Subscriptions to *Amoeba Adventures* are indeed available at the reasonable price of \$8 for 4 issues. We strive for a bi-monthly schedule.

Send them orders to: Protoplasm Press c/o Nik Dirga

P.O. Box 2230

University, MS 38677-2230

The UFO Checklist



These are the latest releases from the UFO (United Fanzine Organization) co-op, currently available during the Fall of 1995. For information on joining the UFO, contact chairman Jim Pack/ 7534 Kingsgate Way/ W. Chester, OH 45069



SMALL PRESS FEEDBACK #20
(\$3.00 from Bob Elinskas/ 1805 Girard St./ Utica, NY 13501)
Editor Bob Elinskas has managed to put together a host of talented individuals that include Gafford, Dirga, and Hickman to produce the definitive guide to small press comic books. Inside can be found reviews, news, articles, advertisements, interviews, and (quite possibly) the kitchen sink. New to the network? Want to know more about it and how to get involved? Then you can't afford to be without this indispensable publication. It's waiting for you! Send for it now!

TWILIGHT GUARDIAN #1
(\$1.00 from Troy Hickman/ 3200 S. 9th St., Apt. A/ Lafayette, IN 47905)
Venture into the world of obsession and neurosis with the *Twilight Guardian*. Recently a psychiatric patient, the *Twilight Guardian* watches the world of reality in a constant search for an opportunity to be a super hero. Troy Hickman writes the words on this one and the super talented Pam Bliss draws the pictures. The story is somewhat of a spin-off from Troy's *Tales of the Pathetic Club* but it has a life all of its own. The network is eagerly awaiting the next two issues. But in the meantime, order this one now!

HOLEY CRULLERS! #1
(\$1.50 from Troy Hickman/ 3200 S. 9th St., Apt. A/ Lafayette, IN 47905)
Troy, with the help of friend Jerry Smith, have carted out three new super heroes for our enjoyment. The first one is *Speeding Bullet*. *Speeding Bullet* is an angst ridden man who has the ability of exceptional speed. Learn all about him with a reporter gaining a story on him. In a second story, we are introduced to Debuton and Moshe Chomsky, super person attempting to find sanctuary from their fate. Good stuff! Order it today!

ANYTHING FOR A CHEAP LAUGH
(\$1.50 from Troy Hickman/ 3200 S. 9th St., Apt. A/ Lafayette, IN 47905)
Troy accompanies some hilarious text pieces with some excellent illustrations. Text humor in the small press comic book network is about as scarce as dinosaur repellent. Get this one quickly. It's small press history

TETRAGAMMATON FRAGMENT #140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145
(\$2.00 ea from Jim Pack/ 7534 Kingsgate Way/ West Chester, OH 45069)
Miss an issue, bunky? Never fear! You can still find out what's happening by ordering back issues.

the Laughing OGGRE

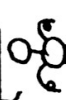
(A COMIC BOOK SHOPPE)

Easy to find, hard to subdue!

**Comics
for any
size
mind!**

I got a reg'lar mind,
but really big feets!

Whoodoggie!
Them's big feets!



Mr. Bigfeet - Zeke
The Ogre Loves All - Freaks to Zeke!



**WE WILL NEVER KNOCK YOU ON THE HEAD, PUT YOU IN A BAG FULL
OF ROCKS, AND SEND YOU TO THE BOTTOM OF A RIVER!**

That's part of the Laughing Ogre Service Guarantee. You won't find your average comic shop making this kind of promise, but we're not your average comic shop.

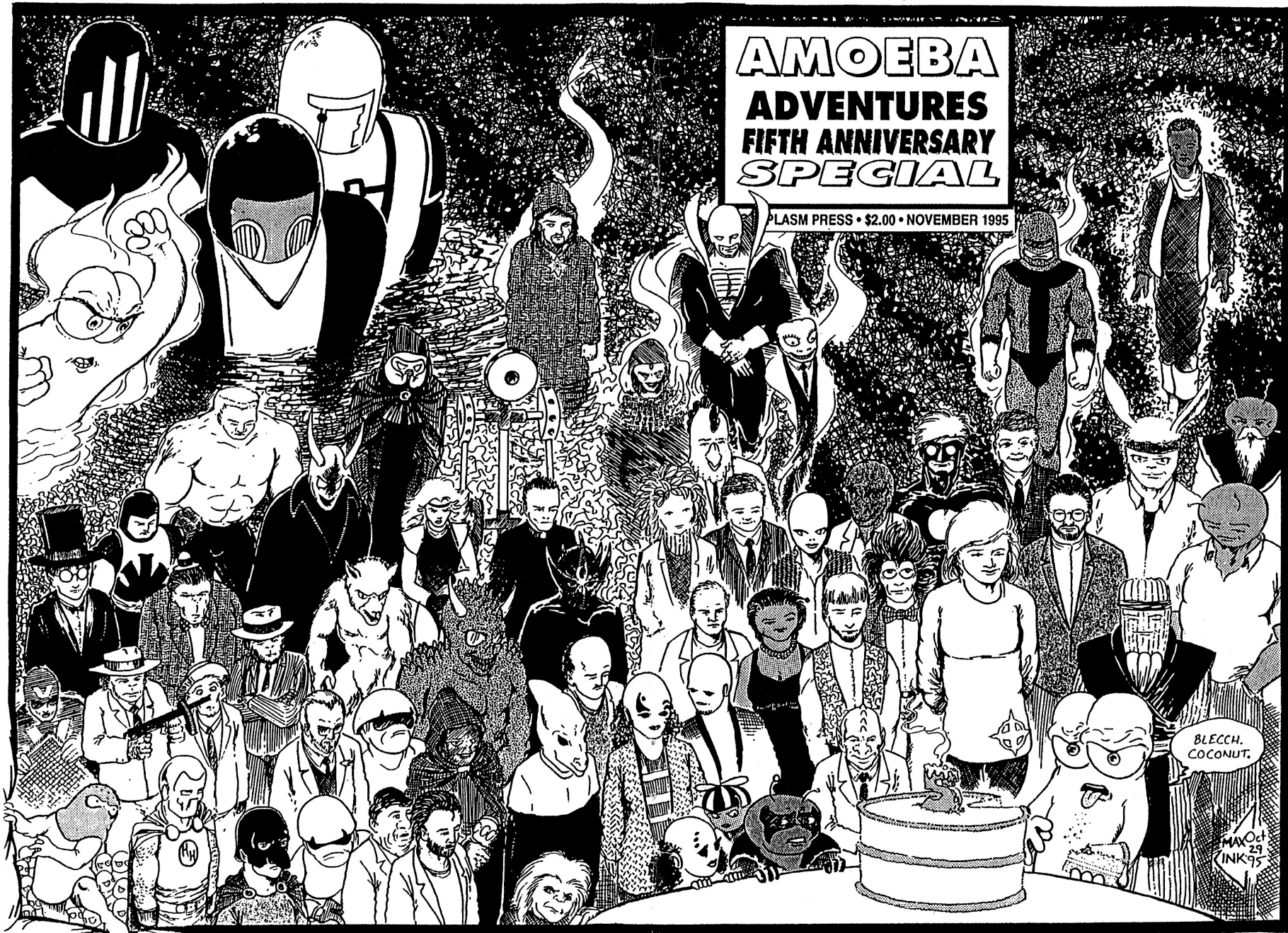
**NOBODY SUPPORTS INDEPENDENT
PUBLISHERS LIKE THE LAUGHING OGRE**
(mostly because they're too skinny to eat).

Advertising stuff: We carry comics (everything, corporate to independent), piles of backstock (100 boxes+), trade paperbacks (compilations), posters, toys, videos, shirts, and a whole lot more! In-house subscriptions, discount plans, and other options available. Ogre-love is legendary!

4258 NORTH HIGH STREET  MON-SAT 11-8, SUN 12-5  (614) 267-0GRE

AMOEBA ADVENTURES FIFTH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL

PLASM PRESS • \$2.00 • NOVEMBER 1995



MAX Oct
29
INK '95