

The First Adventure of Tom Duck and Harry

by David Mudrick



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Reston, Virginia

May 2025

To readers who started the adventure within the last twenty years and have been patiently waiting for its complete publication... Both of you

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Foreword

Tom Duck and Harry, a pig, reside at Cow Manor, the home of African American farmers Al and Ellie MacDonald, a short hop as the duck flies from the hamlet of Gozaimasu, Ohio. Harry was born on the farm and has never traveled other than to the nearby town, but he has a broader, if questionable, world view gleaned from the *Southern Ohio Bugle* and radio and television broadcasts captured on the MacDonalds' front porch. Tom, a former resident of New York City, has fled the rat race to find relief in this pastoral setting. Although content with his new life, he thinks an exploration of the nearby lake and its environs would be educational for him and his porcine pal. The ensuing adventure with its unforeseen events and unusual acquaintances, sometimes bordering on the bizarre, proves enlightening, if not life changing, for both of them.

If the plot seems to be unscripted and the drawings look like they were executed on the cartoonist's lap while commuting by public transportation, you are correct. Although originally drafted in 2004 and 2005, the adventure was not completely published for twenty years, in May 2025, which may be an auspicious time to let us know that things could always be worse.

Day 1 - Down the River

Tom strikes a nerve when he proposes a local trip to Harry. What follows is an epic historic-hysteric journey.

















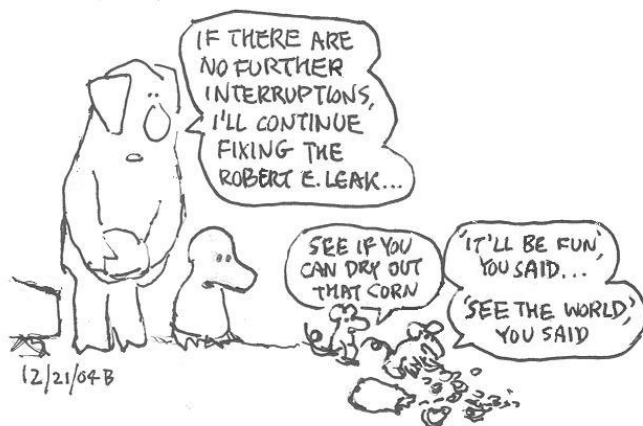








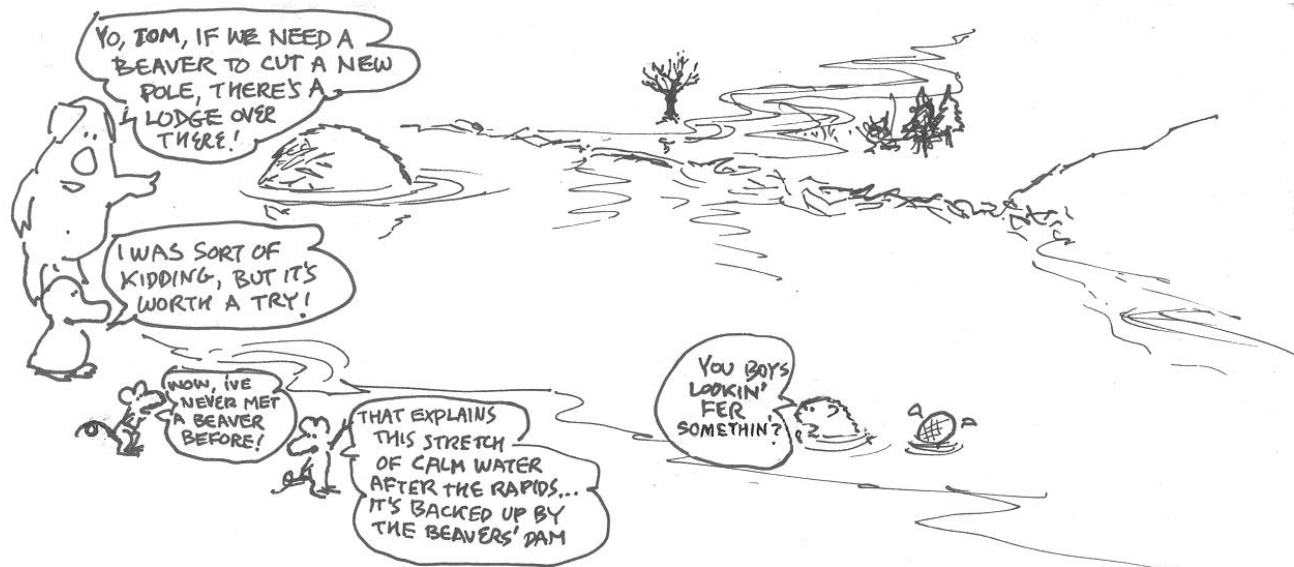


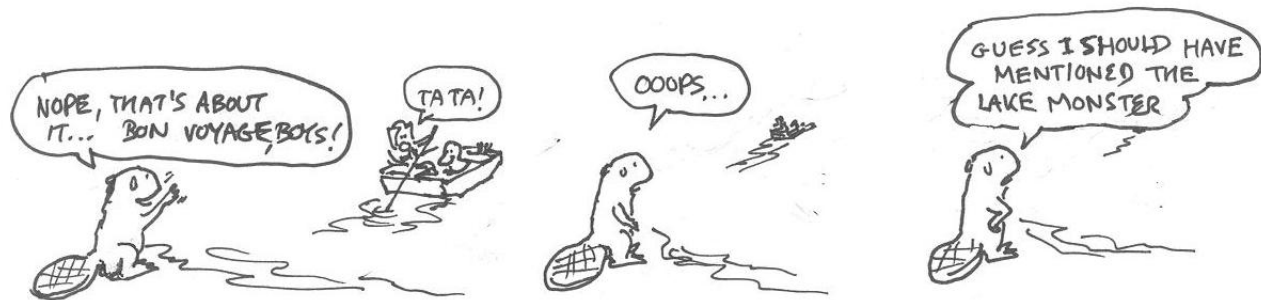


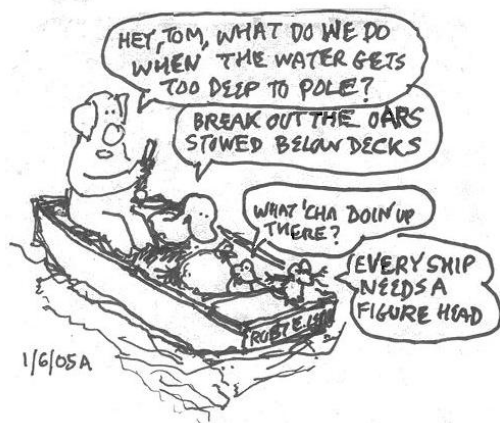


Day 2 - Strange Trip to Pine Island

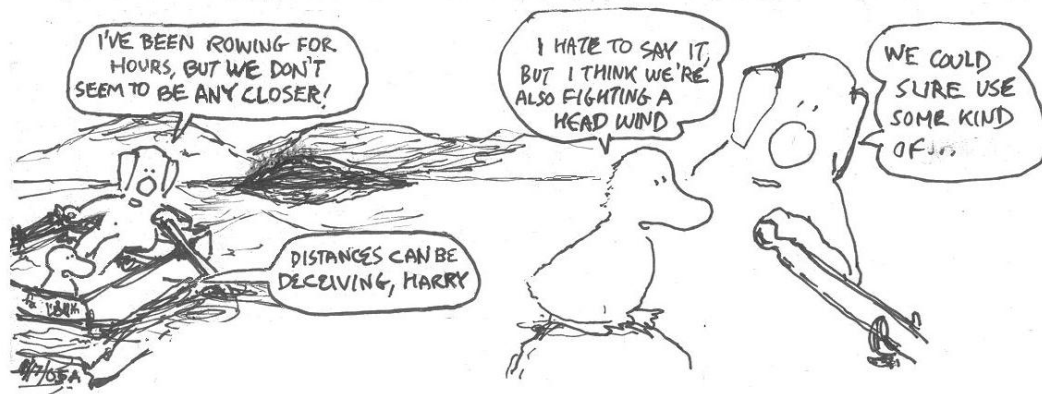
Tom and Harry, accompanied by the erstwhile stowaway rats, set out for the iconic island they have seen on every trip up Tractor Hill. The unexpected and startling nature of their progression to the island leaves them unnerved on the beach.

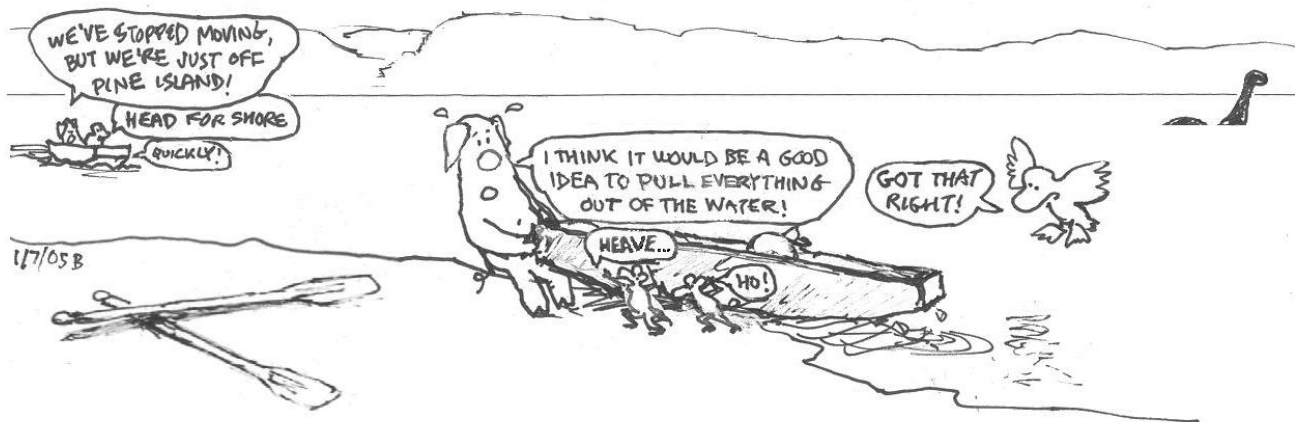


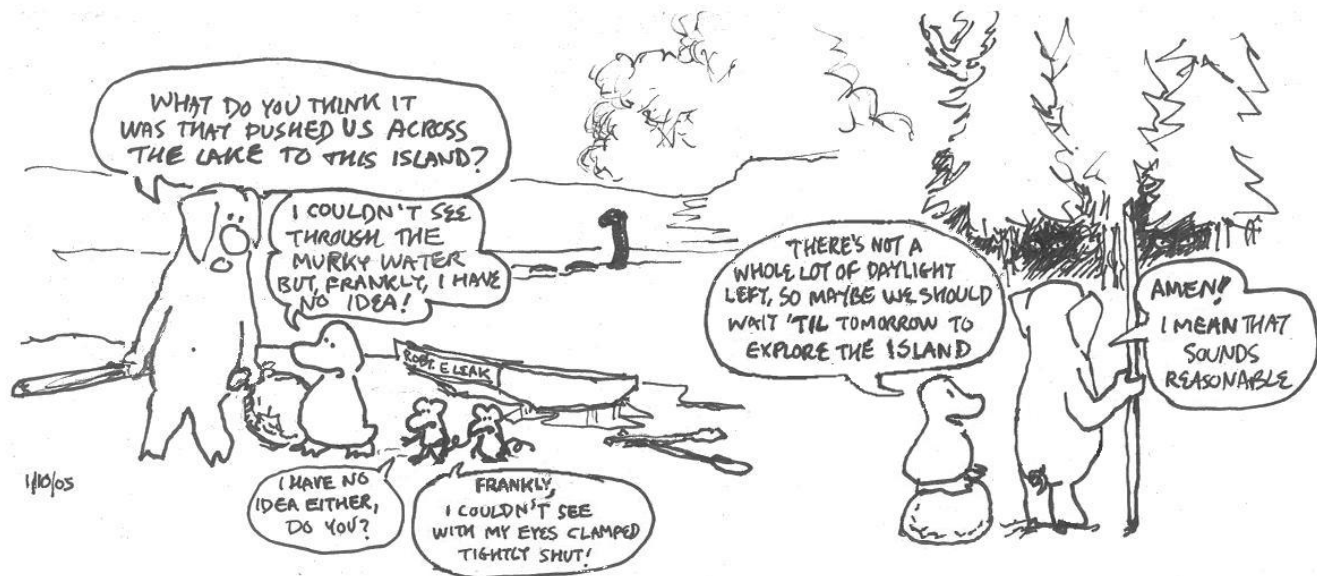












Day 3 - Into the Woods

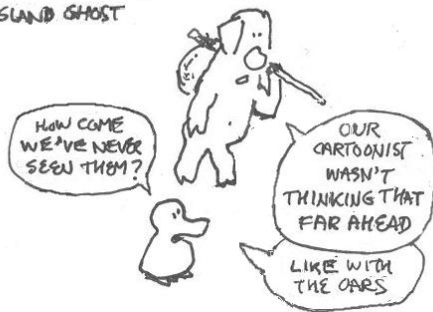
The Corps of Discovery plunges into the piney woods only to find that reaching the summit is truly an uphill struggle.







"LEGEND SAYS THEY WOULD LURE SHIPS AGROUND WITH FALSE LIGHTS ON STORMY NIGHTS... THEN ATTACK THE CREWS AND PLUNDER THEIR CARGOS! THAT'S THE STORY BEHIND THE 'PINE ISLAND GHOST LIGHTS' PEOPLE STILL CLAIM TO SEE OCCASIONALLY"



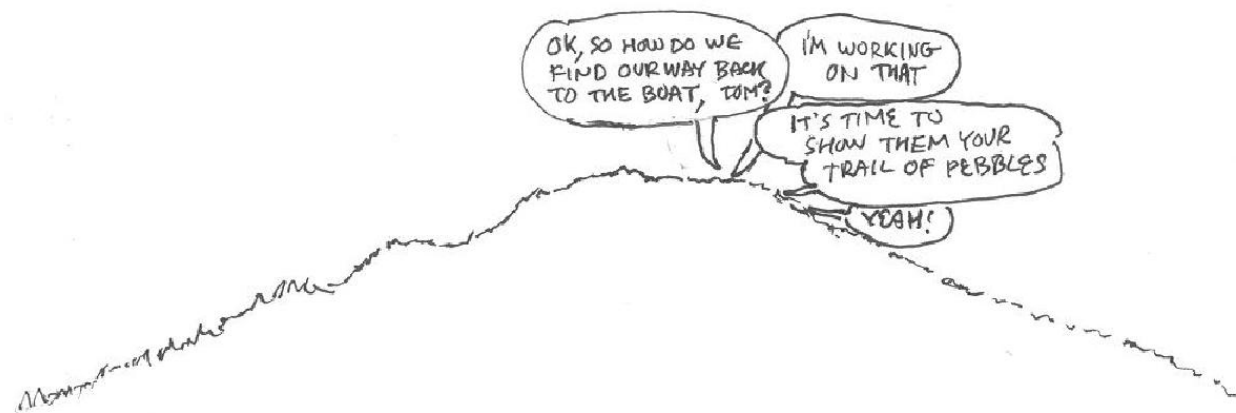
















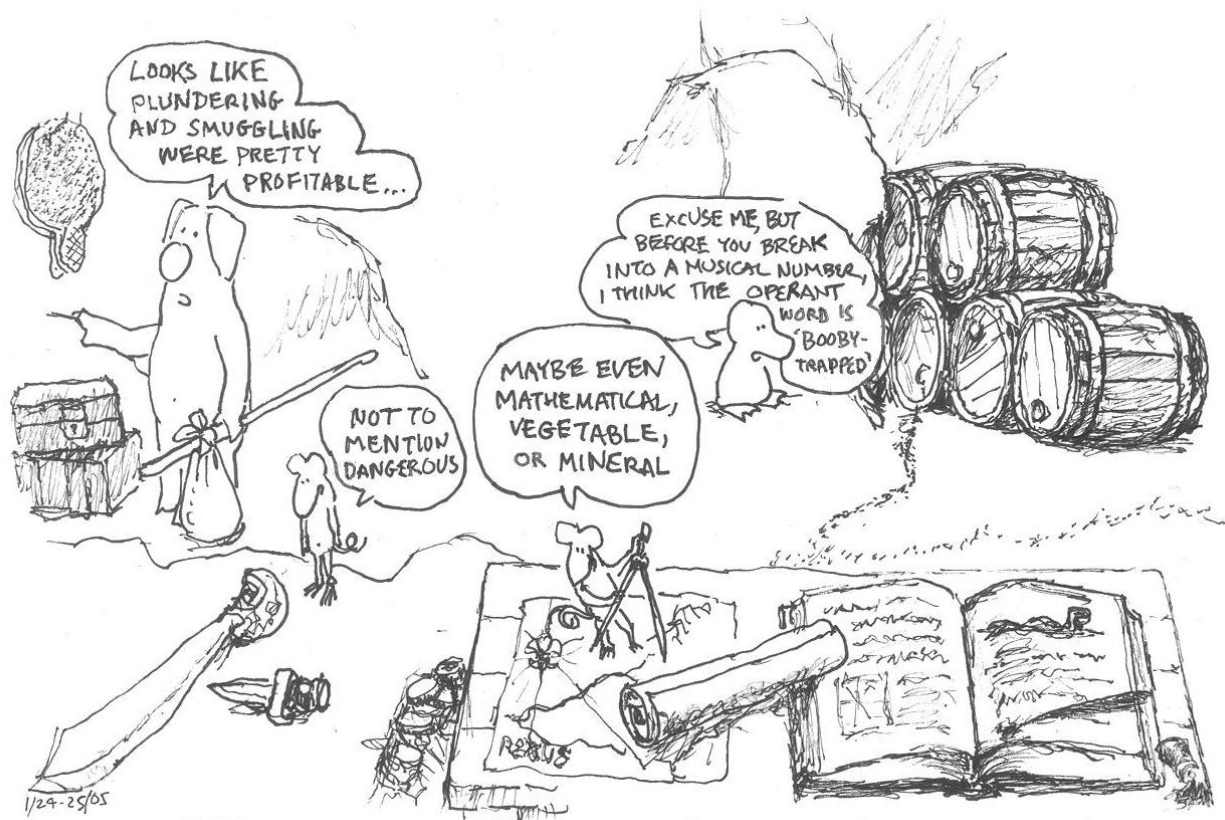
Day 4 - The Belly of the Beast

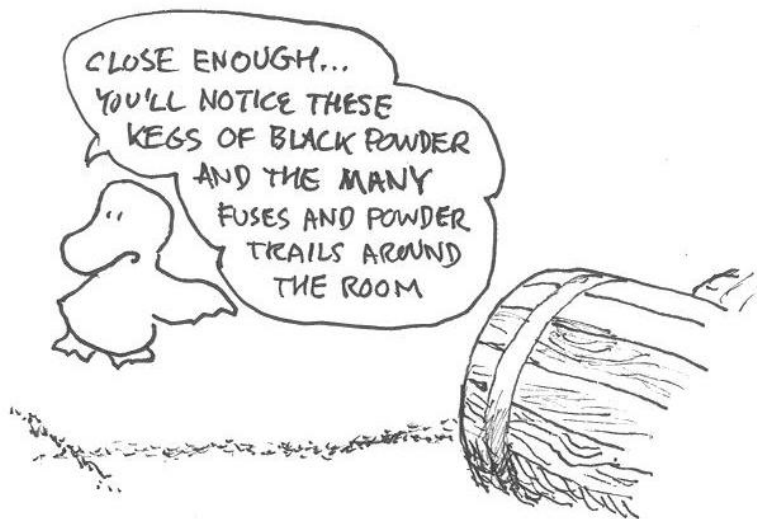
Our intrepid band literally delves into the secret of Pine Island, but can they reemerge?

MORNING FINDS OUR CREW
HARD AT WORK!











A SEA SERPENT
ON A LAKE IN
SOUTHERN OHIO...
ISN'T THAT A
BIT OVER THE
TOP?



1/26/053



WELL, THEY WERE A
SUPERSTITIOUS LOT...
LET ME CHECK THE
PREVIOUS PAGES...

UH, HAS ANYONE
ELSE NOTICED IT'S GETTING
DARKER IN HERE? MAYBE
WE SHOULD SPEED THINGS UP
BEFORE WE HAVE A...

BOOM

WHAT WAS THAT?!
WELL, DEAR READER,
COULD THIS BE THE
END OF TOM DUCK AND
HARRY THE PIG... AND
THEIR LITTLE RATS, TOO?





TOM, THE FURTHER
WE GO INTO THE
CAVE, THE DARKER

-BOINK- OUCH!
IT GETS

FEEL THE
AIR FOR
CURRENTS...
THEY SHOULD
BE FLOWING
IN OR OUT OF AN
ENTRANCE

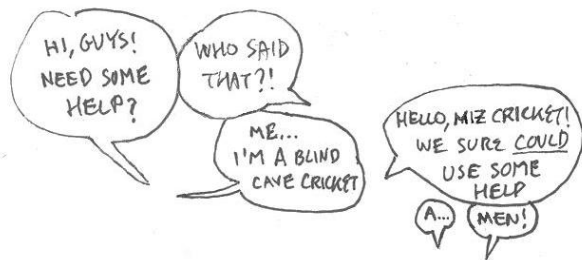
DID YOU GET
THE FEED BAG?

YES, ALONG
WITH A SHINY
THING TO REFLECT
LIGHT, BUT THERE
ISN'T ENOUGH TO SEE

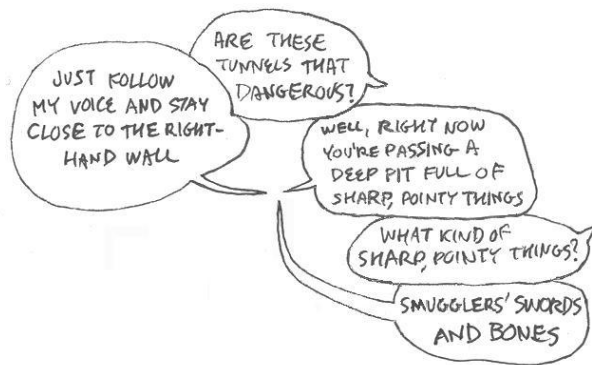
BOOM-M-M

BA-BOOM

1/27/05B



1/27/05c





HEY, I THINK
I CAN SEE A GLIMMER
AHEAD!

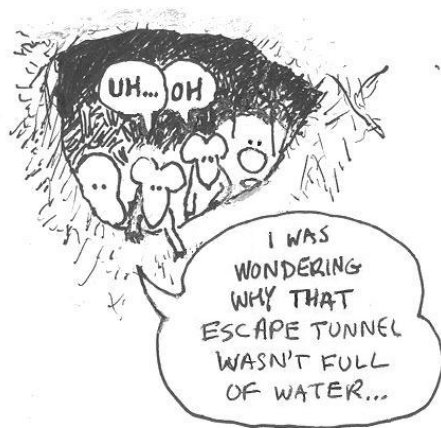
THAT'S RIGHT!
JUST FOLLOW THE
LIGHT!

1/27/65 D

THANKS SO
MUCH, MIZ
CRICKET!

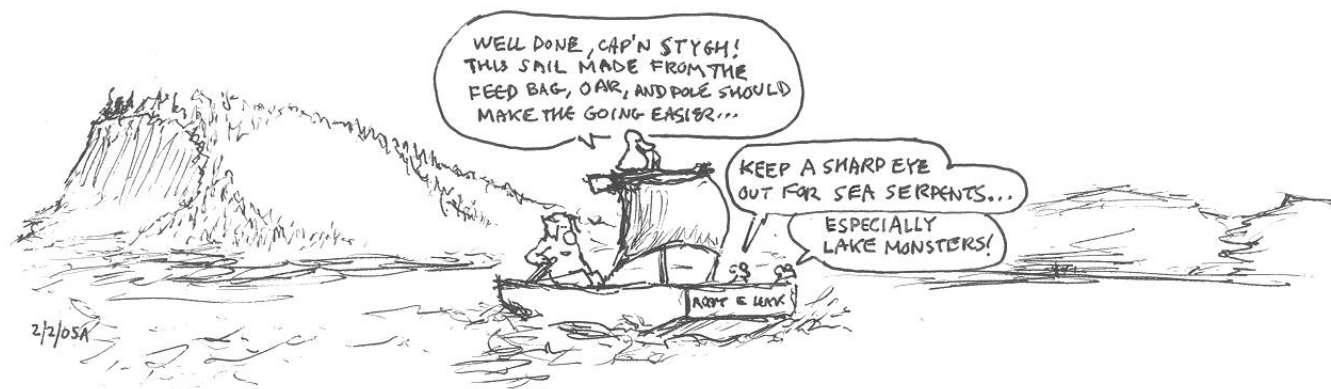
OH,
BY THE WAY, THE
LAKE MONSTER
SAYS, 'HELLO'

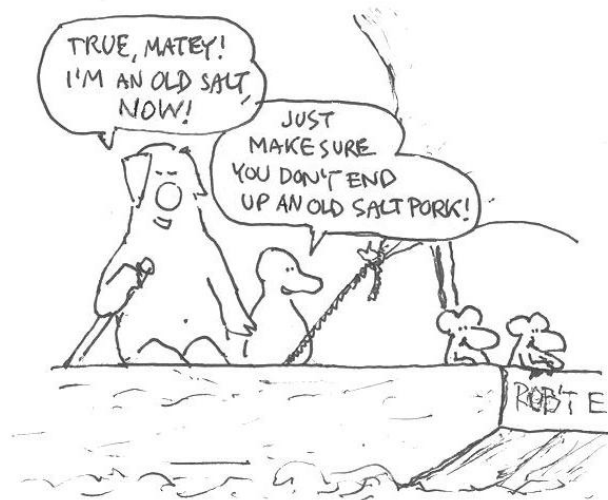












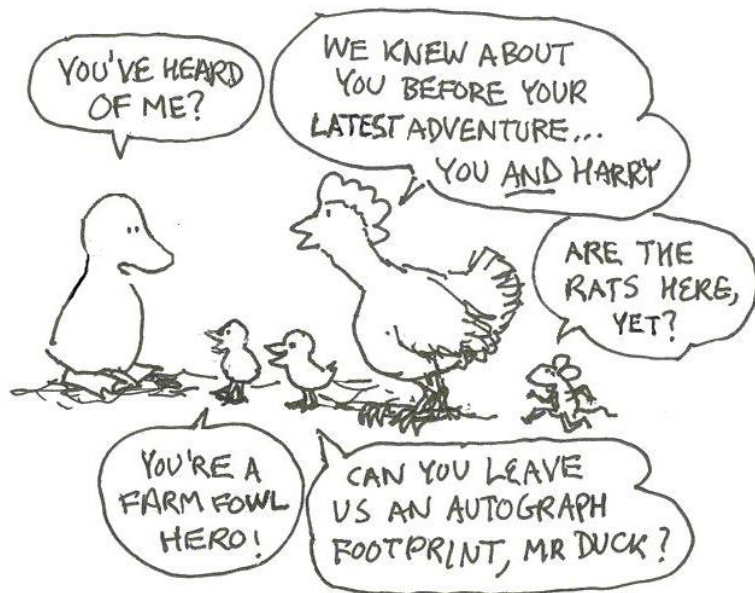








2/6/05A



AND SO, ON A SMALL
FARM ON A LAKE IN
SOUTHERN OHIO, A
PARTY GOES ON LATE
INTO THE NIGHT...

THEN TOM
NOTICED
THE FUSES...

AND YOU
SHOULD HAVE
SEEN HARRY
ON THE ROPE...

OF COURSE
I WAS SCARED,
BUT WE
WENT ON

THEN, AGAIN, IF THAT
BIRD HADN'T COLLECTED
OUR PEBBLE TRAIL, WE
NEVER WOULD HAVE...

2/6/05B

Day 5 - Long Day's Journey into the Sewer

The next morning, our crew sets sail for further adventure, again not knowing where night will find them.

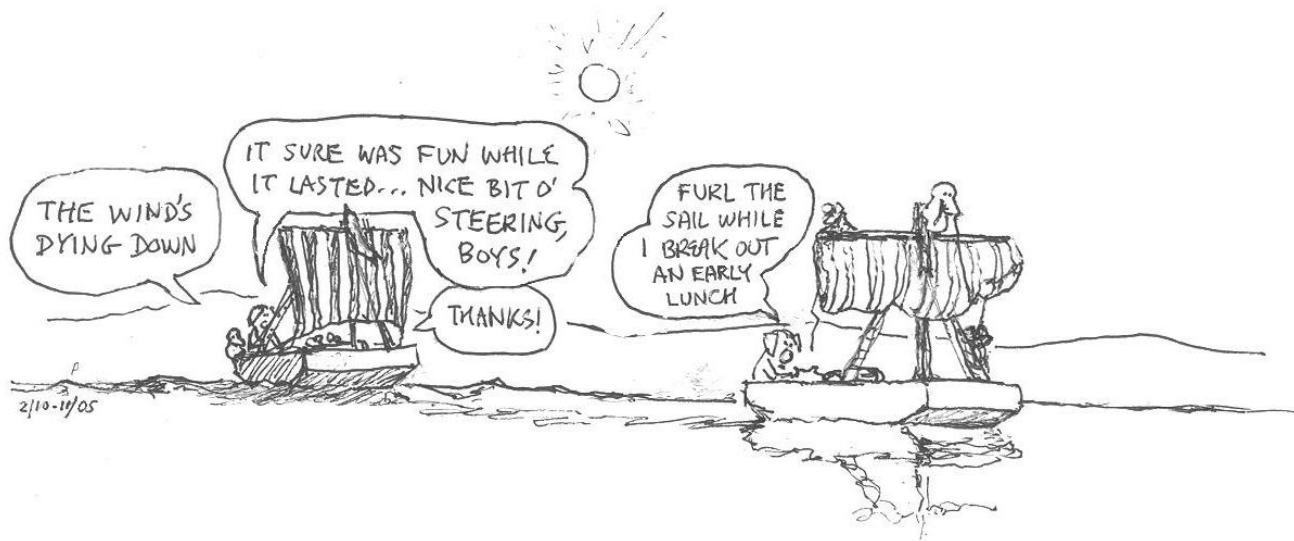






APLOGIES TO WINSLOW HOMER





WITH YOUR WEATHER BEAK,
TOM, HOW LONG DO YOU THINK
THESE DOLDRUMS WILL LAST?



HARD TO SAY,
HARRY, BUT YOU REMEMBER
WHAT HAPPENED LAST TIME
WE WEREN'T MAKING
HEADWAY!

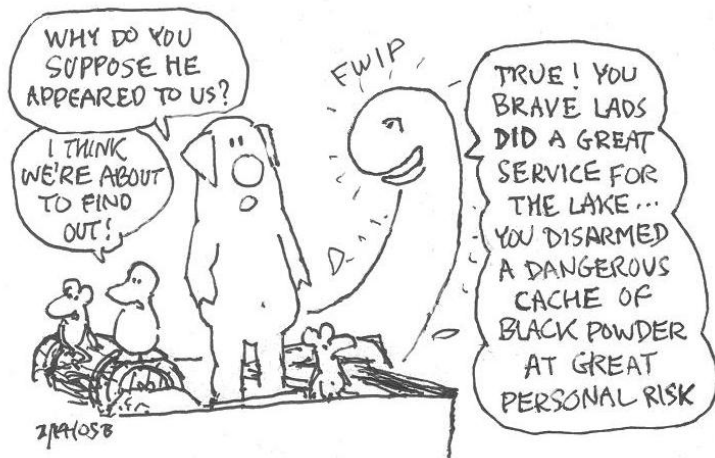
YOU DON'T
MEAN...

THE LAKE
MONSTER?!

ARE YOU BOYS IMPLYING
THAT I'M NOTHING MORE
THAN A CHEAP DEVICE
TO MOVE THE PLOT ALONG?





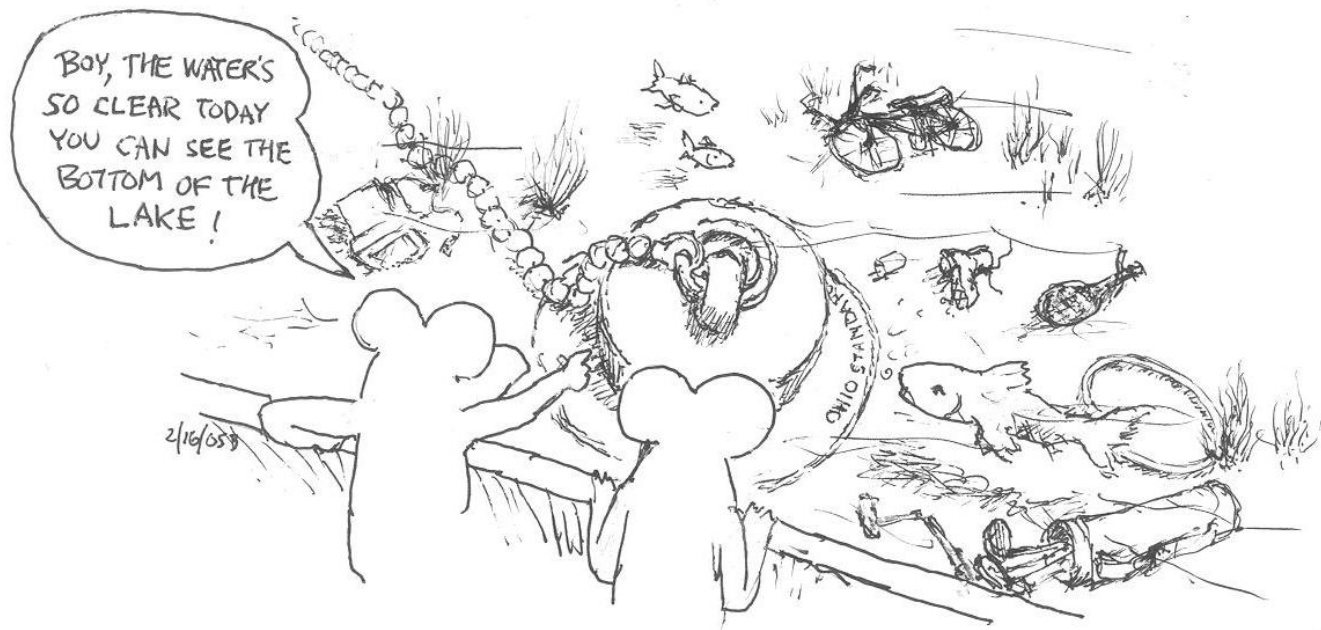


























Day 6 - Pig in the City

After an overnight stay with the sewer rats, Tom and Harry continue their explorations, this time footloose in an urban setting.

AND SO, THE NEXT DAY,
THERE'S A TRANSFER OF
PROVISIONS AND A FOND
'FARE THEE WELL'

WE'VE DRYDOCKED
THE ROBT'E LEAK
FOR OUR VISIT
TO THE CITY...

AND WE'VE
DRY STOCKED
YOUR SEED CORN
IN THESE OLD
PLASTIC MILK
JUGS... KEEP
THE LIDS TIGHT

ONCE THEY'RE
LOADED ONTO
THE 'RATMOBILE'
HERE, THEY'LL
BE HAULED TO
A DRY SECTION OF
THE SEWER

WHEN WE
WORK TOGETHER,
WE'VE GOT A
LOT OF PULL!

ONE SMALL TUG-
FOR A RAT...
A TUG-O-WAR FOR
RATKIND







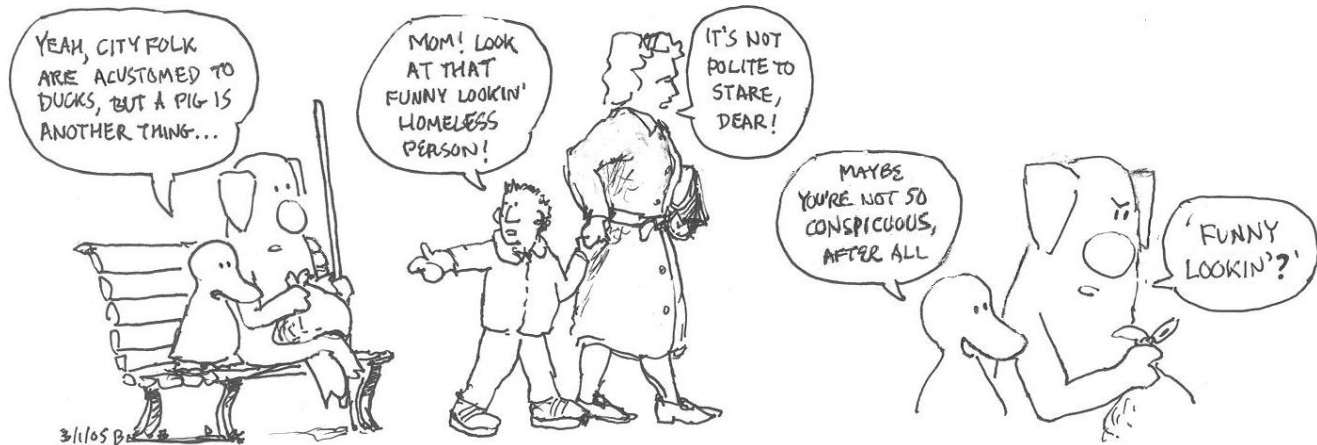
*Action before thought



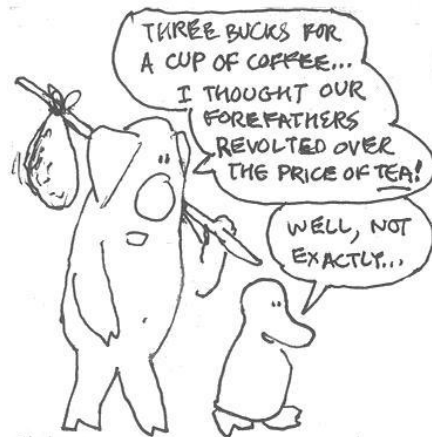




3/1/054



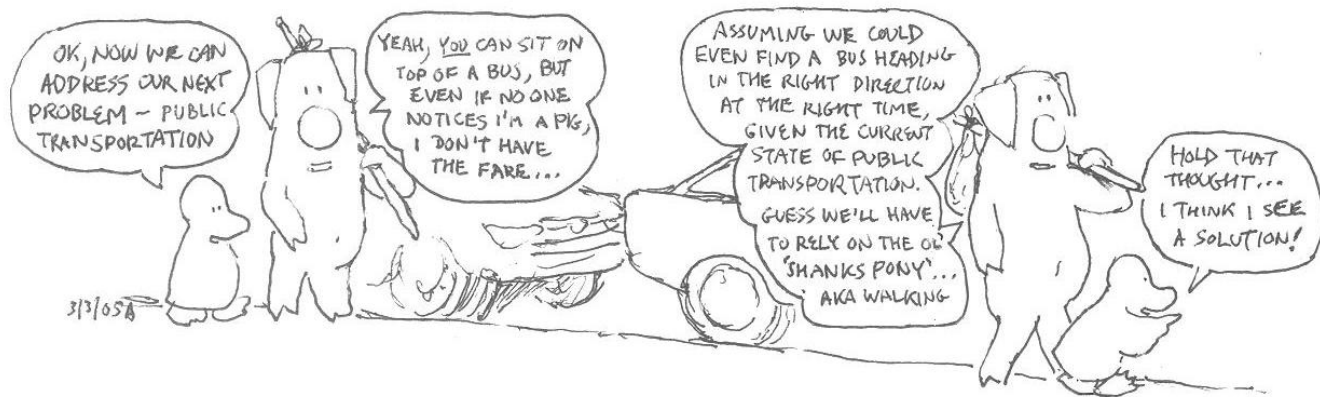




3/2/05B







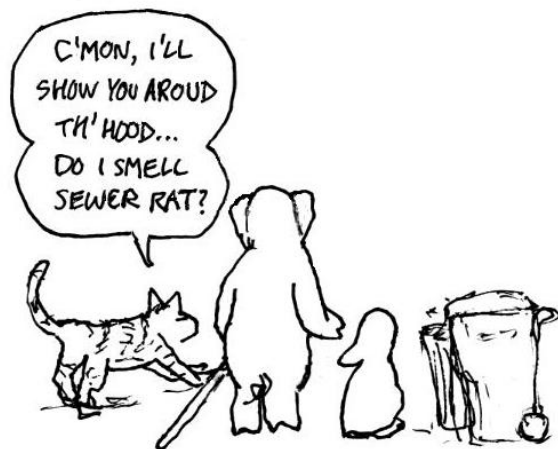


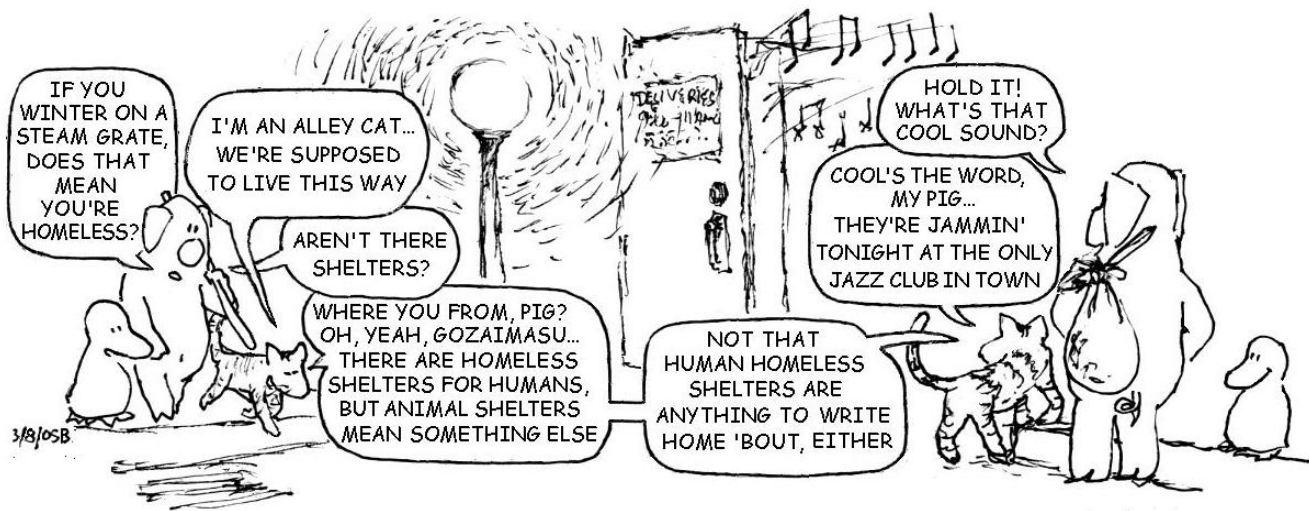




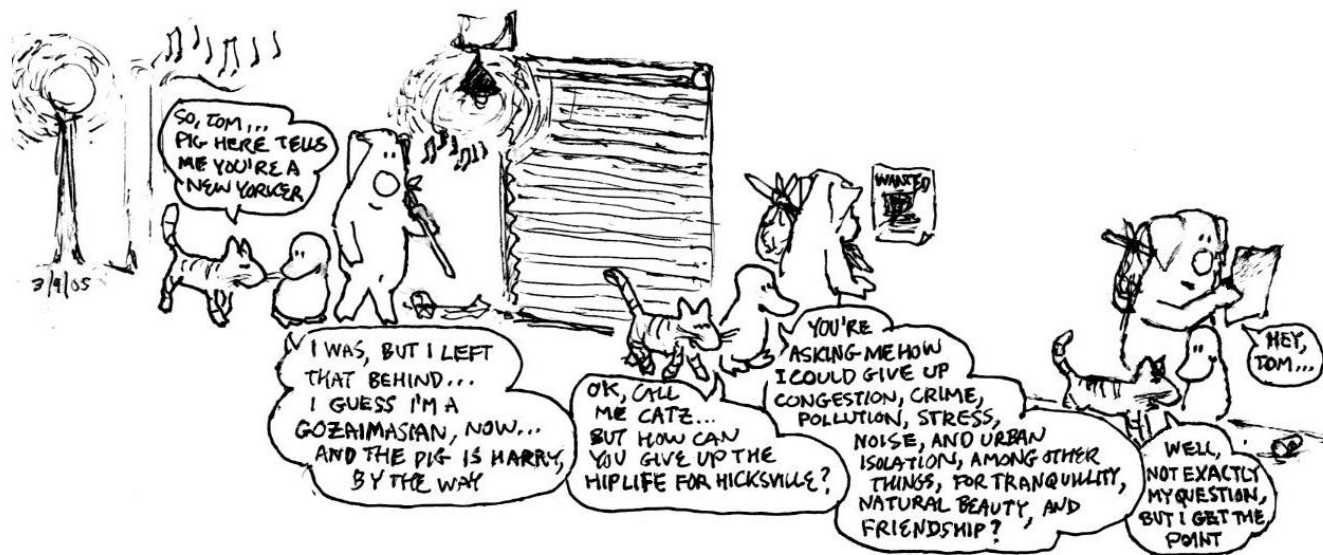


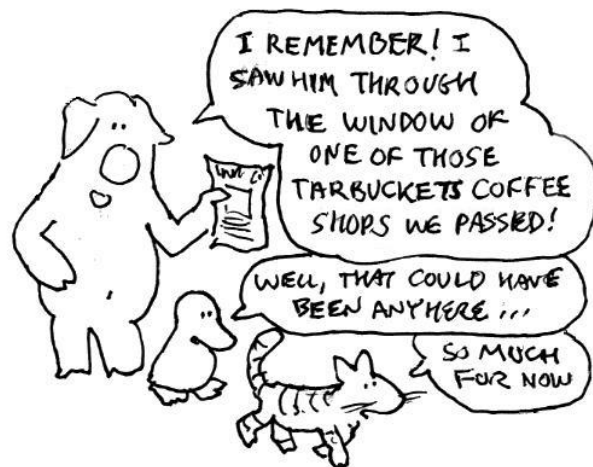


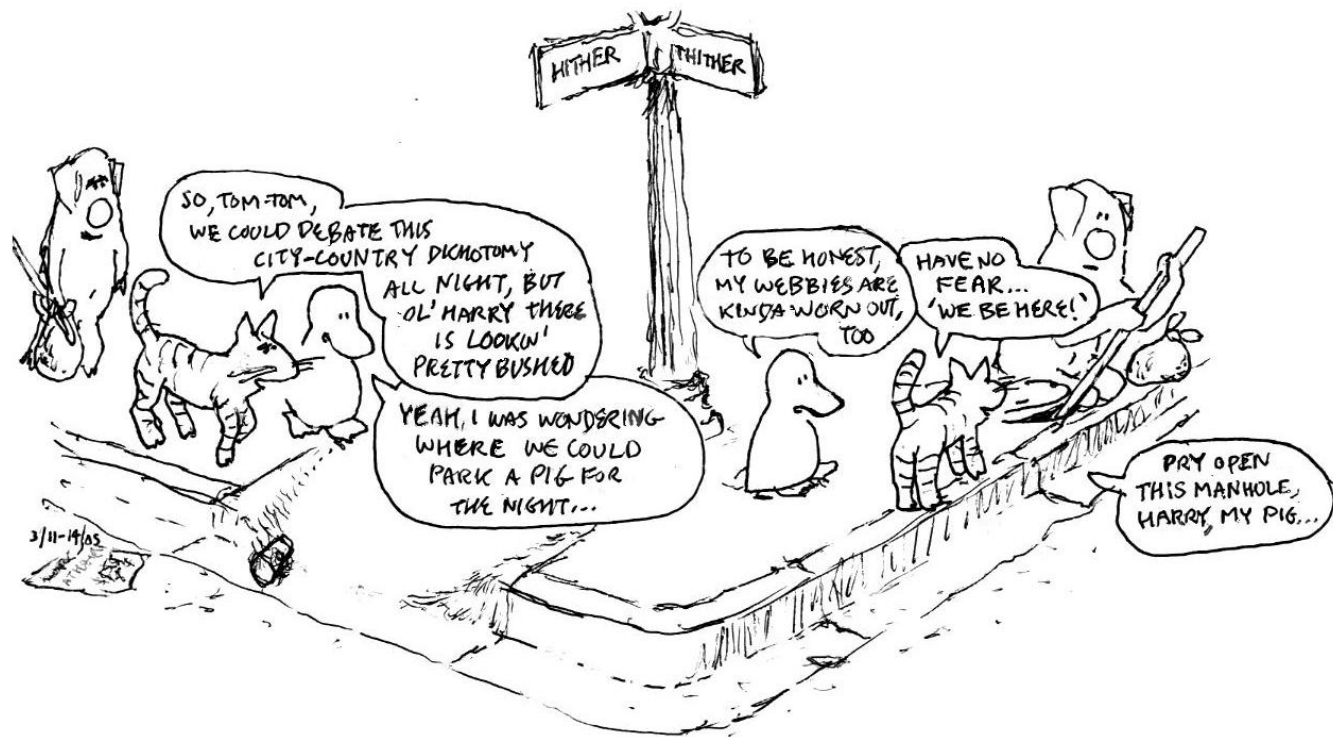


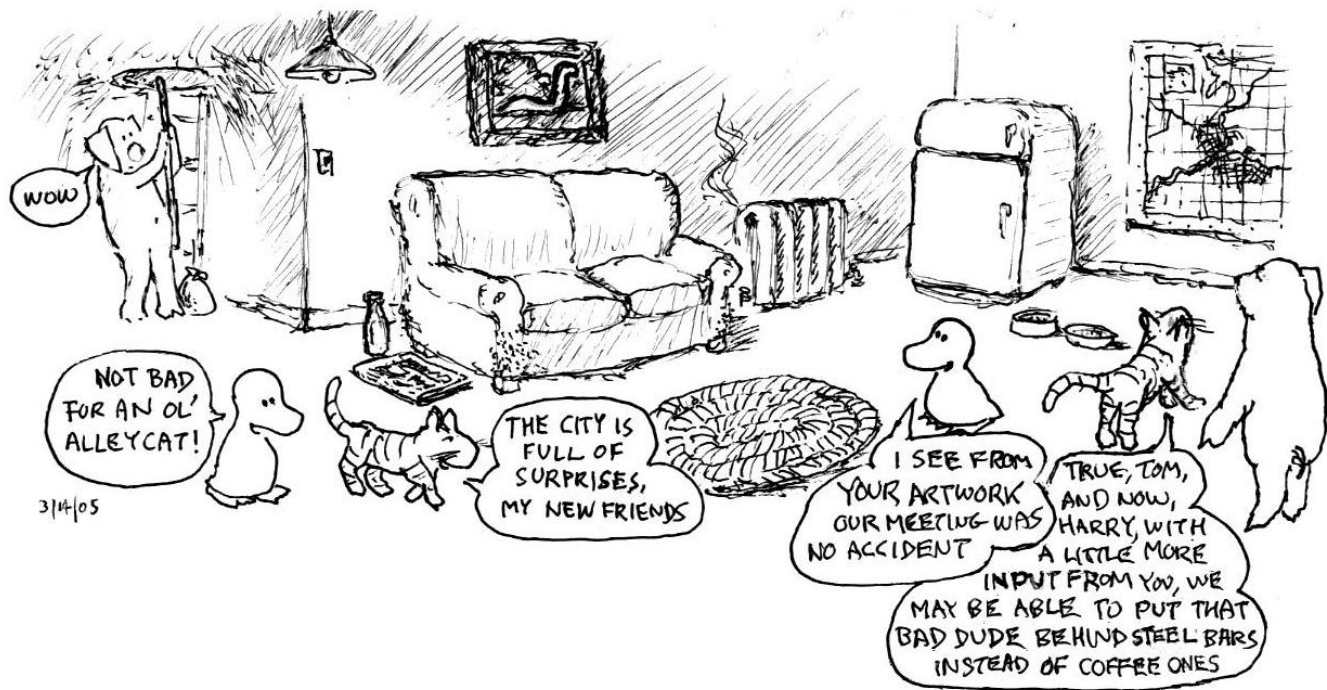


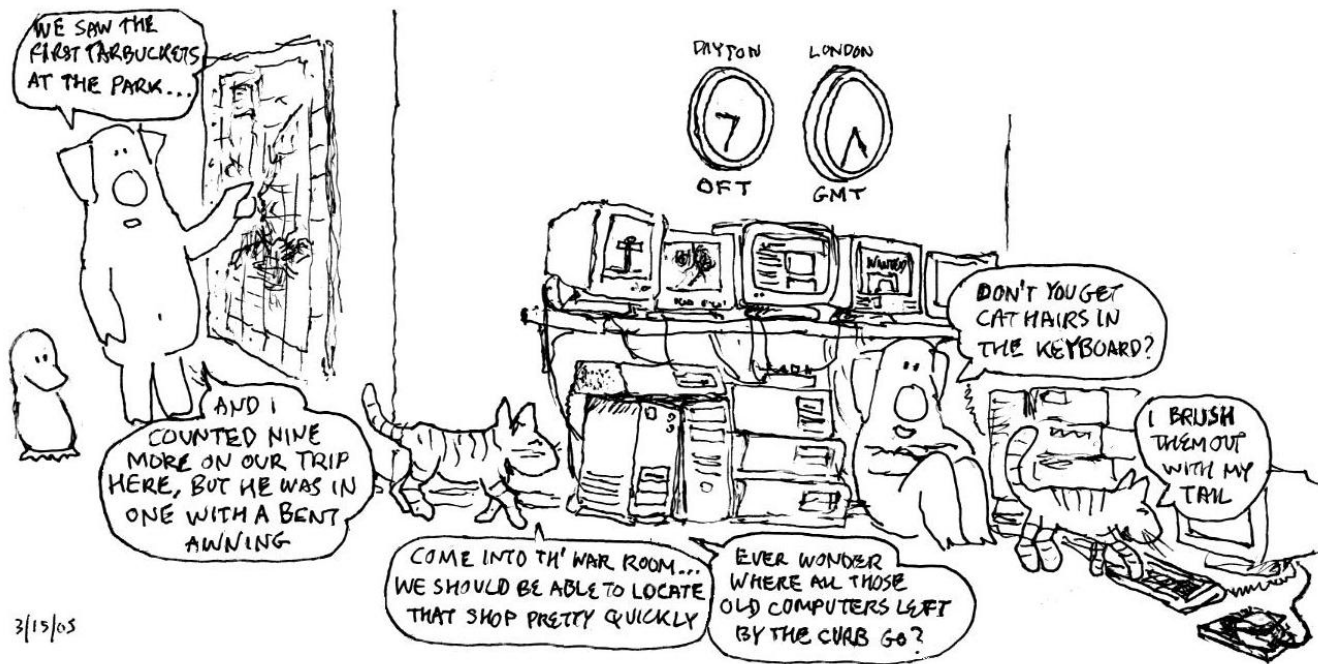




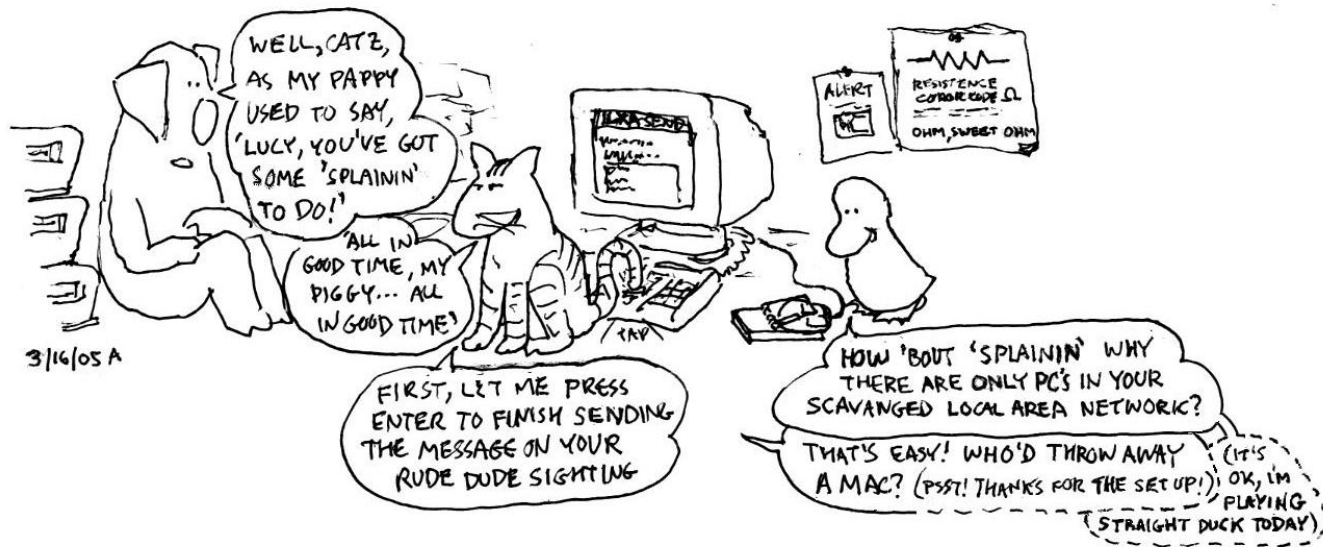








3/15/05





Day 7 - The League of Extraordinary Animals -or- Mutiny on the Leaky

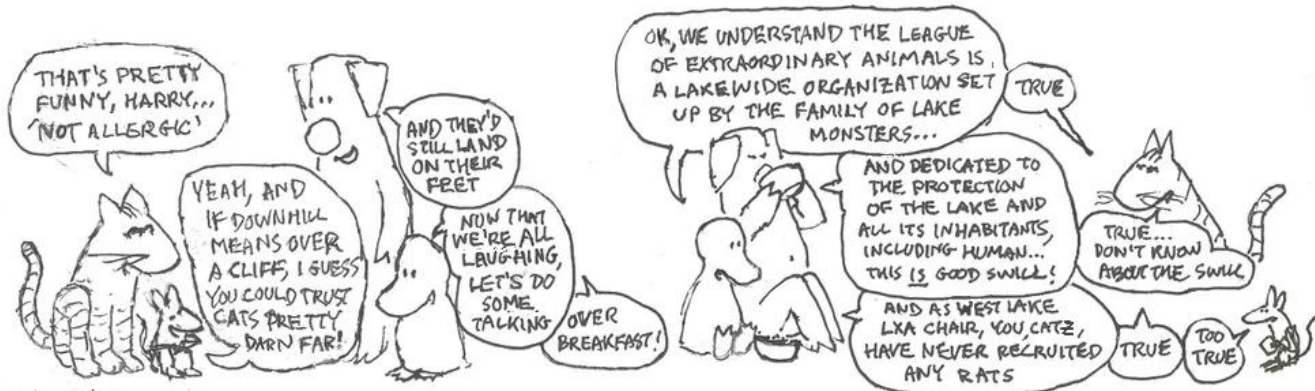
What started out as a random adventure becomes a critical mission to save Gozaimasu, the lake, and all the area residents.





3/17/58





2/18-21/05



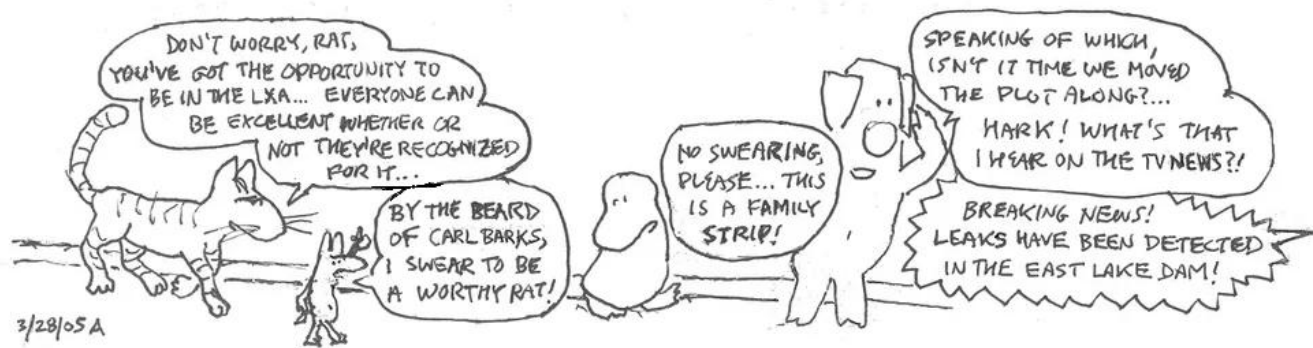
TOM, WITH HARRY AS HIS
WITNESS, RELATES THE
STORY OF THEIR
EAST END
OF THE
LAKE
ADVENTURES,
WITH PARTICULAR
EMPHASIS ON THE COURAGE
AND CONTRIBUTIONS
OF TWO FARM RATS...







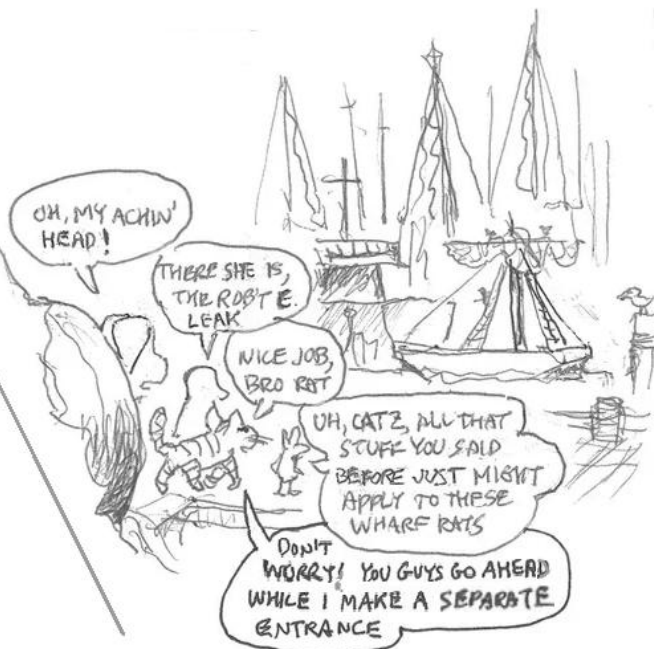








AND, SO, YET ANOTHER RAT RACE,
BUT WITH A SLIGHTLY MODIFIED
CAST OF CHARACTERS...







3/29-30/05







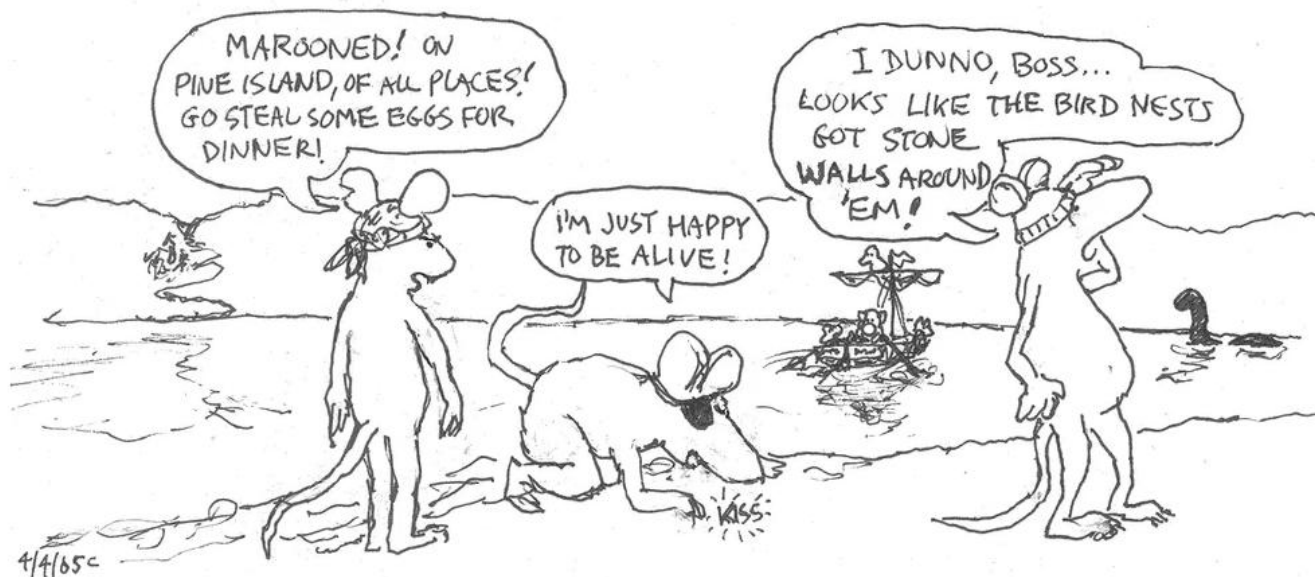
WHUMPH

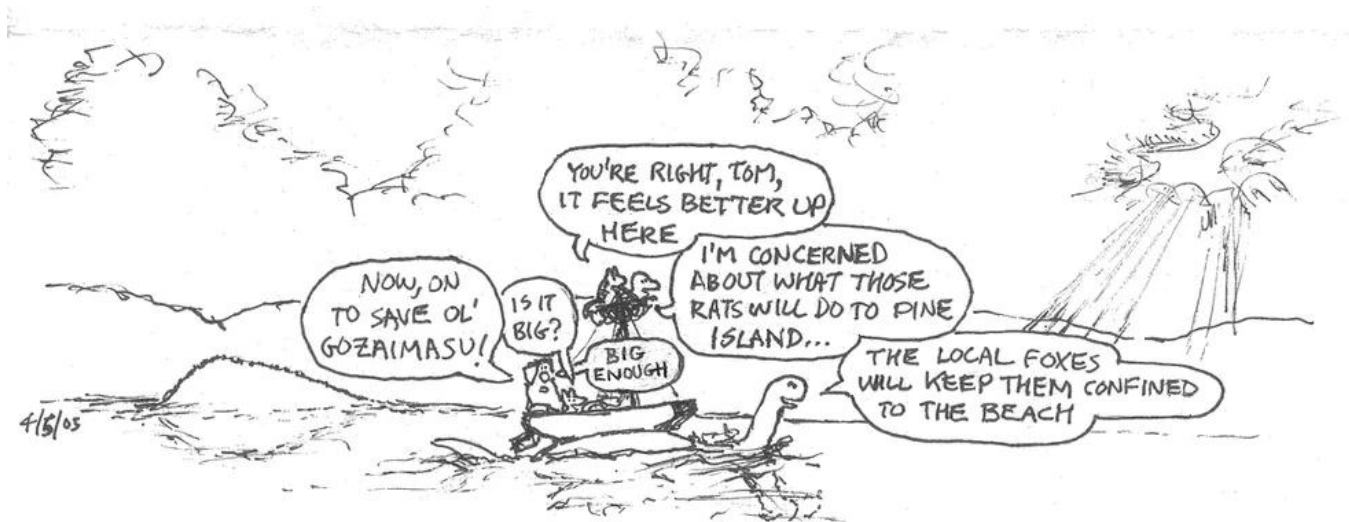


4/2-3/05















*GOOD NEWS, BAD NEWS DEPARTMENT: WHEN DRAWING THIS STRIP I REALIZED THE EAST LAKE DAM HAD TO BE NATURAL & THE LAKE WOULDN'T HAVE EXISTED IN COLONIAL TIMES; HENCE, THE GIANT PREHISTORIC BEAVERS. I GUESSED CENOZOIC, WHICH TURNED OUT TO BE CORRECT. IN FACT, WONDER OF WONDERS, THE

SCIENTIFIC NAME TURNED OUT TO BE CASTOROIDES OMIOENSIS! HOWEVER, ONE SOURCE SAID THESE GIANT RODENTS, AS LARGE AS A BLACK BEAR, DIDN'T FELL TREES OR BUILD DAMS!!! NEVERTHELESS, NATIVE AMERICAN LEGEND CREDITS GIANT BEAVERS WITH CREATING MASSIVE LAKES - DM

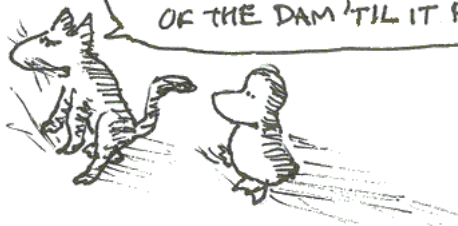
THEN THE CORPS OF ENGINEERS BEEFED
IT UP IN THE FIFTIES BY OVERLAYING IT
WITH A REINFORCED EARTHEN STRUCTURE
CAPABLE OF CARRYING AUTOMOTIVE TRAFFIC...
SPEAKING OF WHICH, I SEE CAR LIGHTS
APPROACHING, NOW!

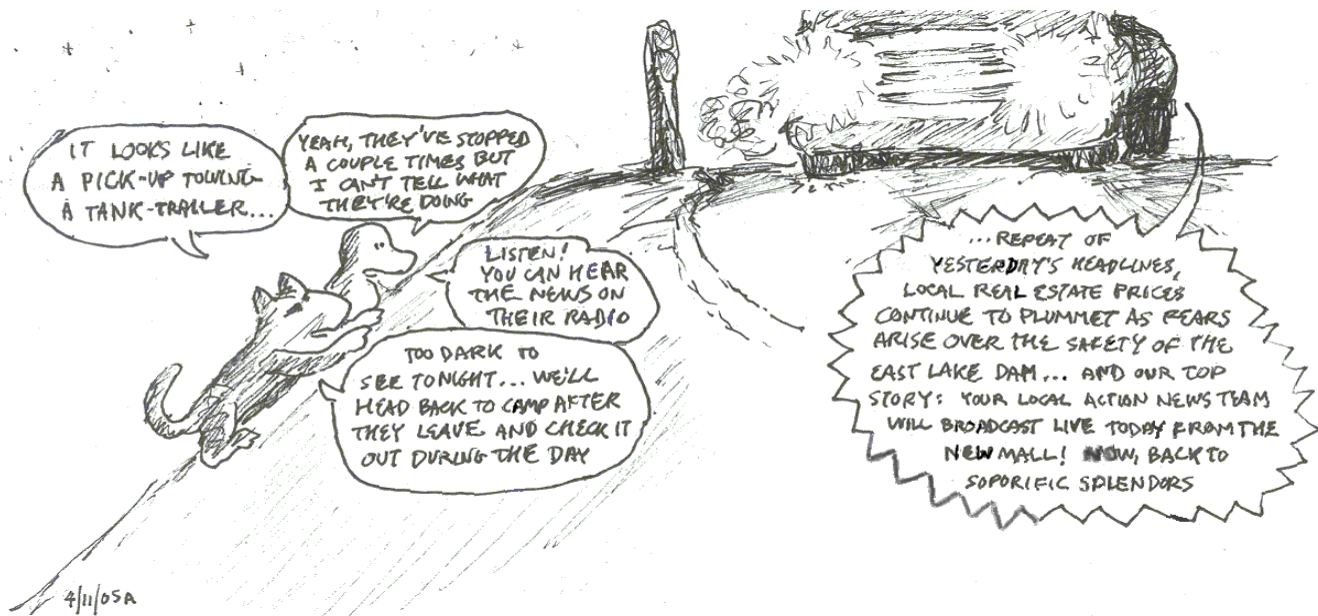


THAT'S WORTH INVESTIGATING!
NORMALLY, THERE'S NO TRAFFIC
AT THIS TIME OF NIGHT OR WE'D SEE
THEIR LIGHTS FROM OLD MAC'S FARM,
COW MANOR

4/7/05C

WE'LL LIE LOW HERE ON THE FACE
OF THE DAM 'TIL IT PASSES



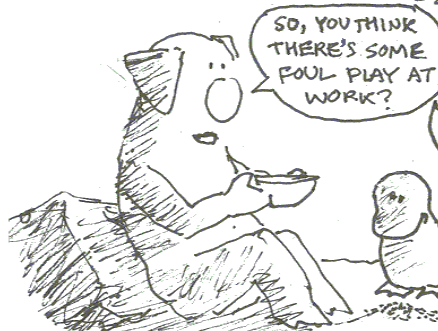


...REPEAT OF
YESTERDAY'S HEADLINES,
LOCAL REAL ESTATE PRICES
CONTINUE TO PLUMMET AS FEARS
ARISE OVER THE SAFETY OF THE
EAST LAKE DAM... AND OUR TOP
STORY: YOUR LOCAL ACTION NEWS TEAM
WILL BROADCAST LIVE TODAY FROM THE
NEW MALL! NOW, BACK TO
SOPORIFIC SPLENDORS

Day 8 - Return to Old Gozaimasu

Tom and Harry find themselves in Gozaimasu, but there is no time to visit the Tastee Diner or take in a movie at the 1-1/2 Cinema Complex.

MORNING, AND A QUICK
BREAKFAST OF COLD SWILL,
DRY CATFOOD, PARCHED
CORN, AND ASSORTED TREATS:



4/11/05B

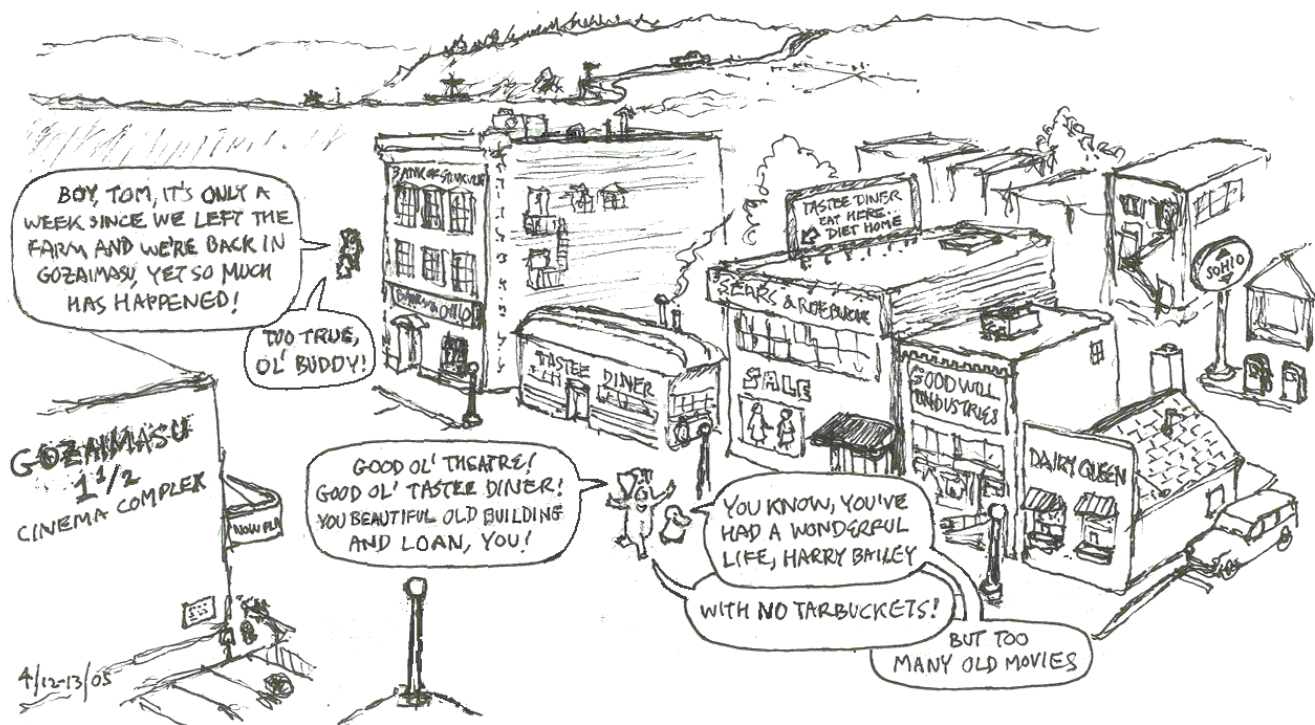
SO, YOU THINK
THERE'S SOME
FOUL PLAY AT
WORK?

THAT'S HOW IT SEEMED
AT 3:30 THIS MORNING, BUT
THINGS ALWAYS APPEAR A
BIT ODD AT THAT HOUR

YEAH, AND I'M GLAD THIS IS
DRY FOOD SO I WON'T DROWN WHEN
I FALL ASLEEP IN THE BOWL...

WOW! LAST NIGHT STARS
AND THIS MORNING A SUNRISE!
YOU DON'T SEE EITHER OF
THOSE IN THE SEWER!





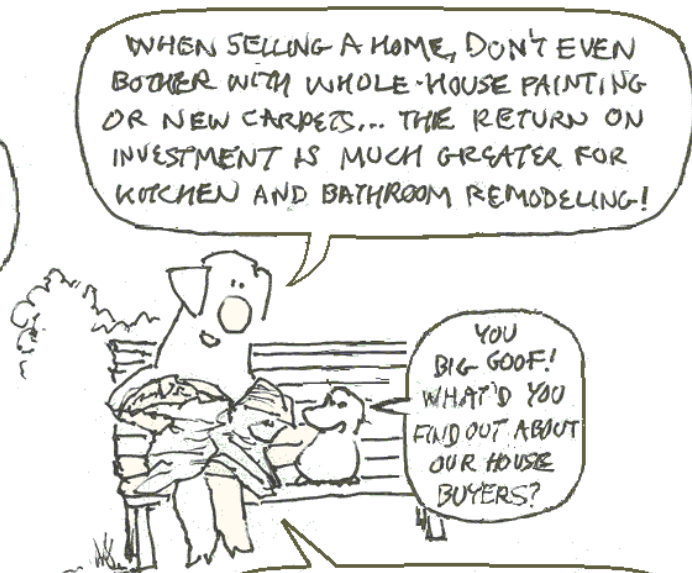




OK, MY, DO TELL!
NO WAY! MY WORD!

WHOA, HARRY!
WHAT'D YOU
FIND OUT?

4/4-15/05



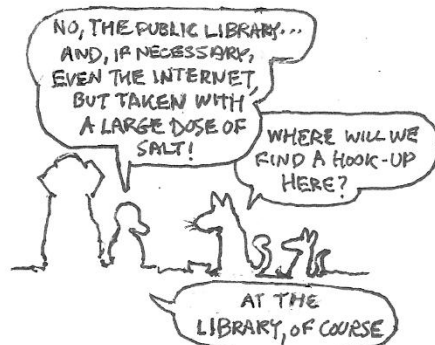
WHEN SELLING A HOME, DON'T EVEN
BOTHER WITH WHOLE-HOUSE PAINTING
OR NEW CARPETS... THE RETURN ON
INVESTMENT IS MUCH GREATER FOR
KITCHEN AND BATHROOM REMODELING!

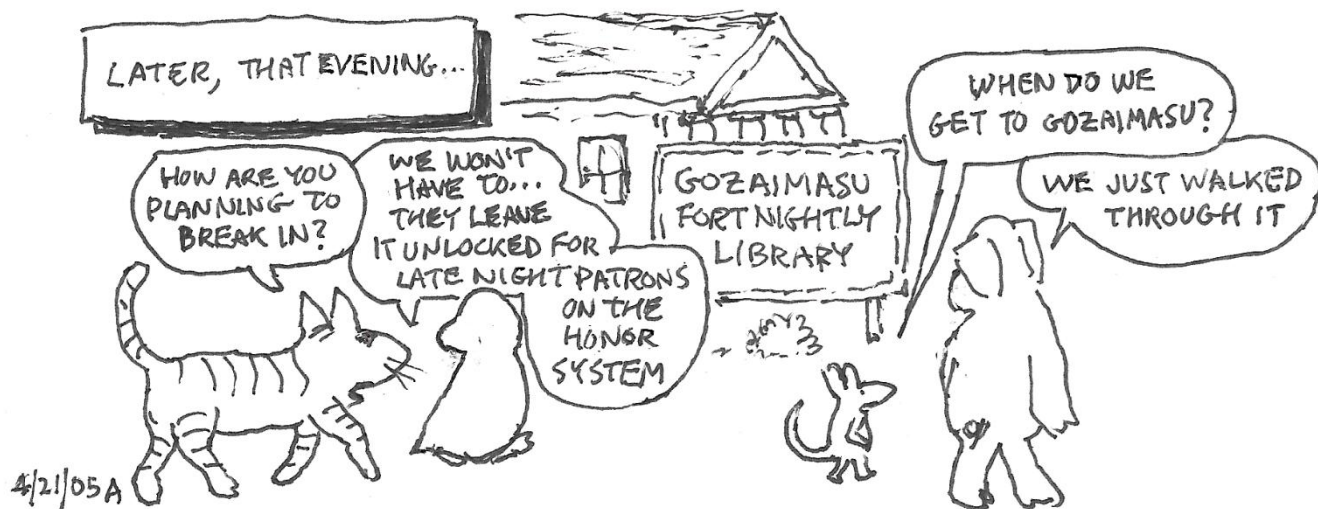
YOU
BIG GOOF!
WHAT'D YOU
FIND OUT ABOUT
OUR HOUSE
BUYERS?

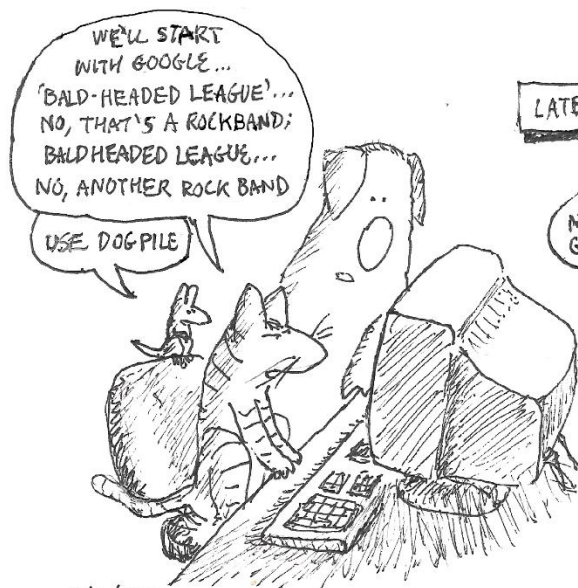
IT SEEMS ALL THE LOCAL SALES
HAVE BEEN TO THE SAME CLIENT,
AN ORGANIZATION CALLED THE
BALD-HEADED LEAGUE











4/21/05B

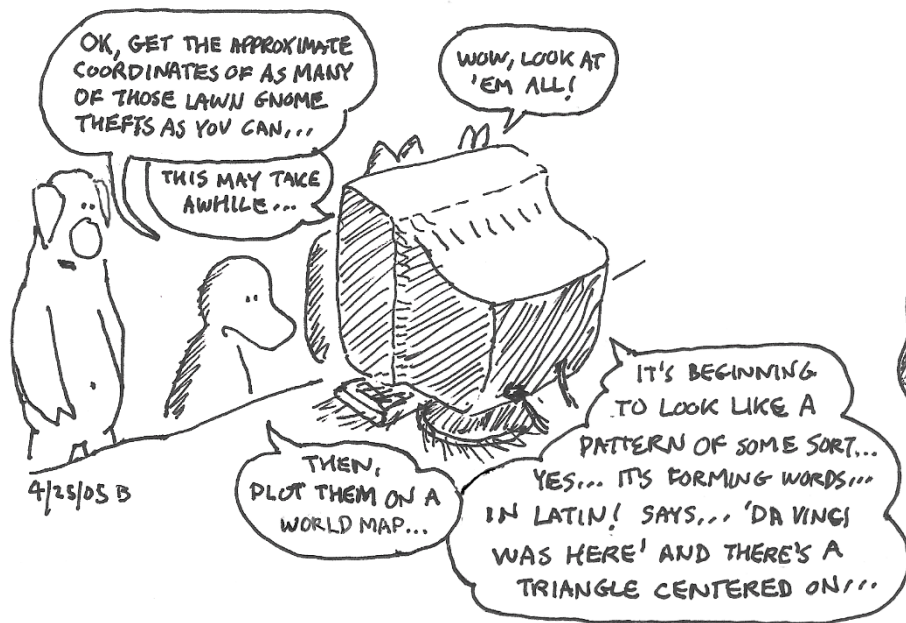
LATER...

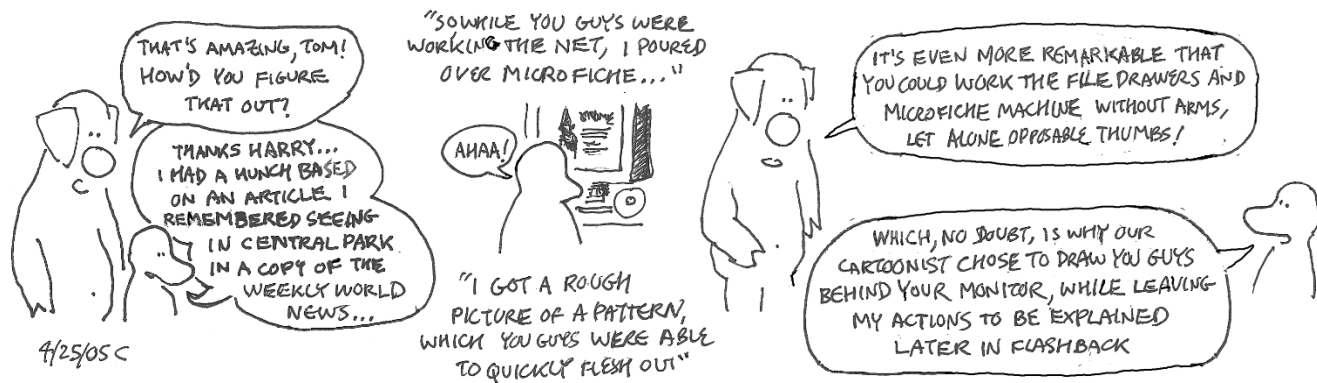


LATER STILL!









NICE BIT OF DETECTIVE
WORK, SHERDUCK, BUT
WHAT'S THE CONNECTION
BETWEEN LAWN GNOMES AND
THE BALD-HEADED
LEAGUE?

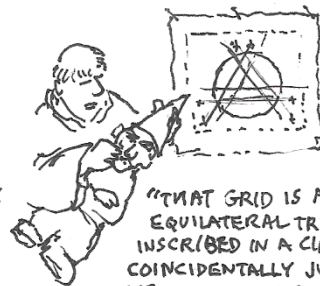


THAT'S
THE RIGHT
QUESTION,
DR CATZON...



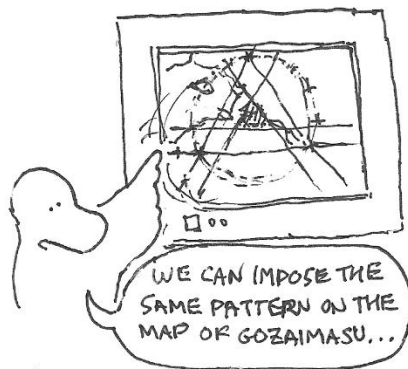
"YOU SEE, THE ARTICLE I READ
SAID THAT TRUE LAWN GNOMES HAD
ORIGINATED IN MEDIEVAL TIMES
FROM A MONASTERY IN WHAT IS NOW
RUSSIAN-ANNEXED FINLAND

"EACH GNOME WAS UNIQUELY
IDENTIFIED WITH ITS OWN
TWO-PART NUMBER, ALL OF
WHICH FIT TOGETHER IN
SOME MEANINGFUL ARRAY
WHEN LAID OUT ON THE RIGHT GRID...

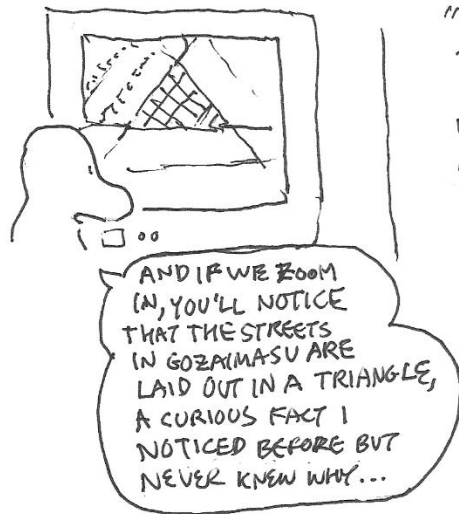


"THAT GRID IS AN
EQUILATERAL TRIANGLE
INSCRIBED IN A CIRCLE, NOT
COINCIDENTALLY JUST LIKE
THE OLD CIVIL DEFENSE
SYMBOL USED DURING AND
AFTER WORLD WAR II..."

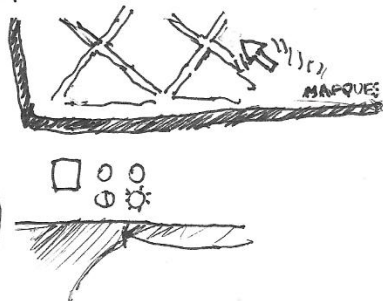
4/26/05A



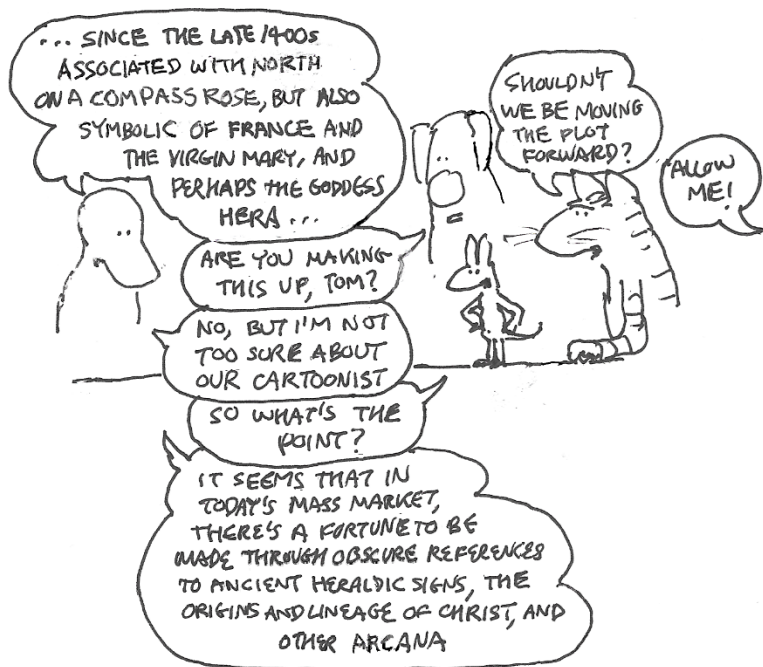
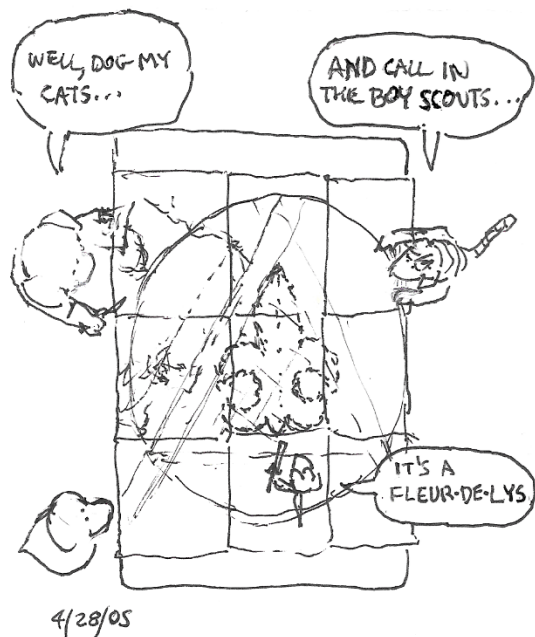
4/26/05B



"BUT IF WE START TO LAY OUT THE PROPERTIES BOUGHT UP BY THE BALD-HEADED LEAGUE, I BET WE'LL SEE AN INTERESTING PATTERN EMERGE..."









FWOP!

OK, I SEE ILLUSIONS, THREATS, AND ENIGMAS
WON'T WORK ON YOU, WHICH
LEAVES THE LAST RESORT...

WHICH IS?

THE
TRUTH!

I WAS HOPING
FOR PALM
SPRINGS!

YEAH! WE
DON'T EVEN
KNOW THE
MEANING OF
ENIGMA!

THIS BETTER
BE GOOD...
WE LOST HALF
OUR READERS ON
THAT LAST FWIP-FWOP

THE MYSTERIOUS
BALD-HEADED STRANGER
BEGINS HIS NARRATIVE...

IT WAS A
DARK AND
STORMY AGE...

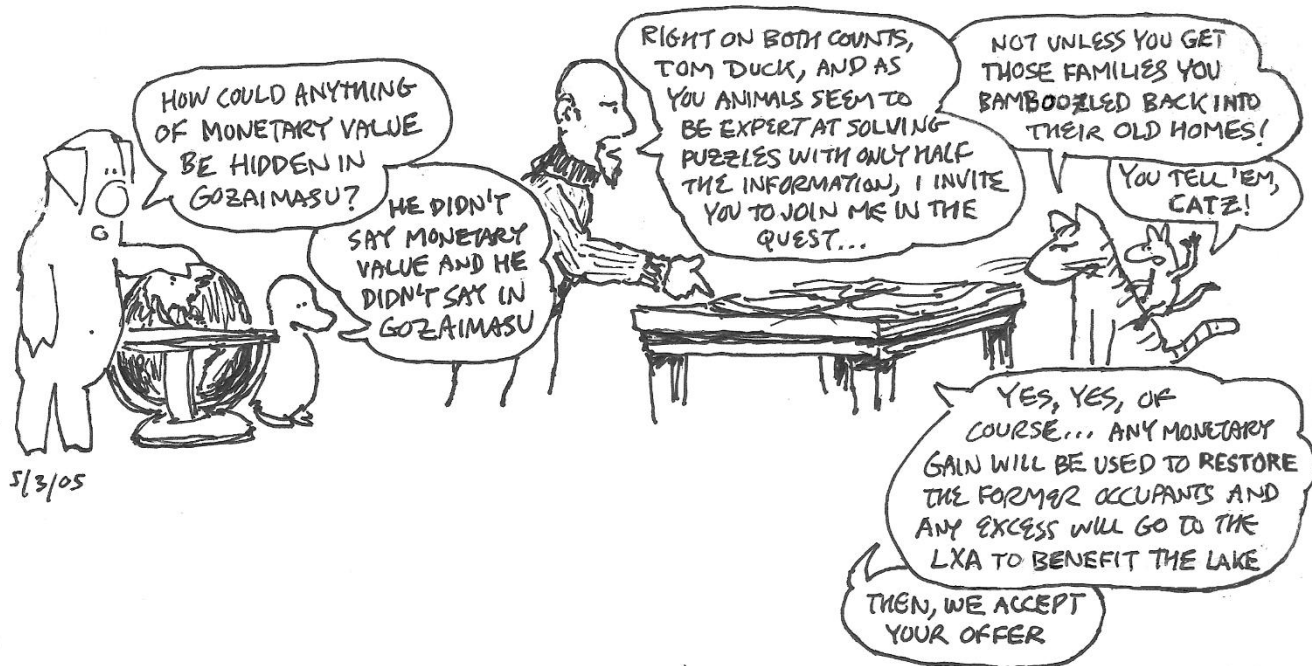
5/2/05

THE BALD-HEADED STRANGER
CONTINUES HIS EVEN STRANGER
NARRATIVE...

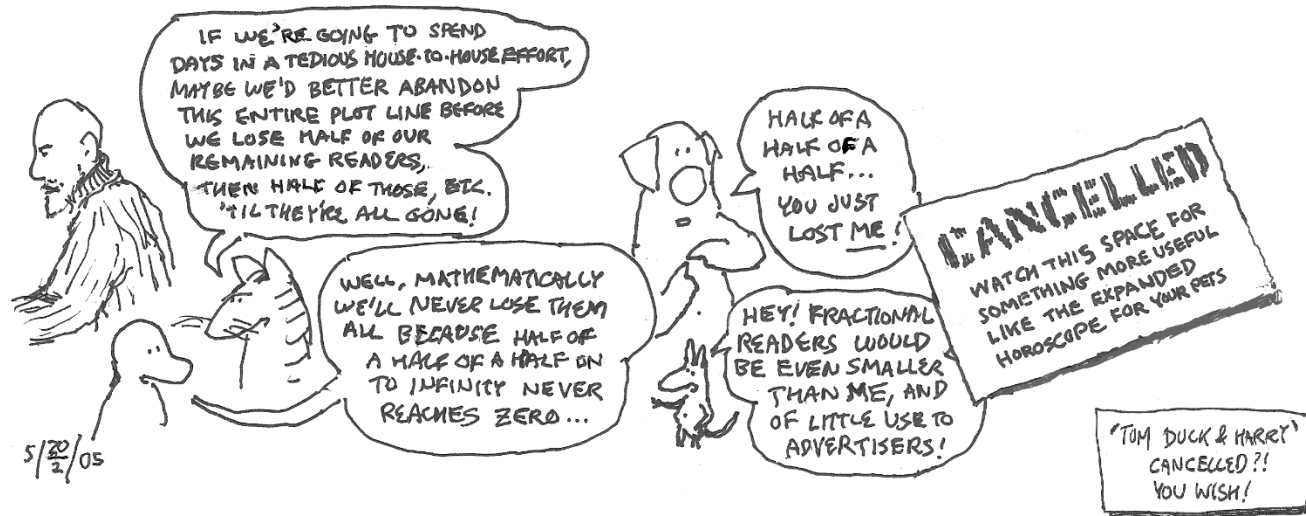
AS THE FORCES OF 'THE ENLIGHTENMENT'
SPREAD ACROSS EUROPE, SO-CALLED ARCHAIC
IDEAS LIKE LAWN GNOMES WERE SUPPRESSED
OR OBLITERATED... SO THE
MONKS SENT A LAST DITCH,
DESPERATE EXPEDITION TO
THE NEW WORLD TO PRESERVE
THEIR ANCIENT TRUTHS



"THEIR PARTY TRAVELLED WITH FRENCH TRAPPERS
DOWN THE SAINT LAWRENCE, THEN WITH INDIANS
INTO WHAT IS NOW OHIO WHERE THEY FOUND
A NATURAL LAKE IN THE ROUGH SHAPE OF A GNOME
(SINCE THEN, IT'S BEEN ENLARGED SO THE SHAPE HAS
CHANGED); AT THE "HEAD" OF THE GNOME, THEY
ESTABLISHED A TRIANGULAR AREA REPRESENTING A
GNOME'S CONICAL HAT, WITHIN WHICH THEY CREATED
A COMPLEX SECRET CODE INVOLVING MULTIPLE LAYERS
OF OBFUSCATION... WHICH EVENTUALLY WOULD BECOME
THE TOWN OF STINKVILLE, TO LATER BE RENAMED
GOZAIMASU, OHIO, BY THOSE TRYING TO LURE JAPANESE
AUTO MANUFACTURERS TO THE AREA"







Day 9 - Working the Grid

Admittedly, our plot has spiraled out of control, but what made you think it was ever planned out in advance?

WE'LL CUT TO THE CHASE BY
SUMMARIZING ALL THAT GNOME-
DIRECTIONAL ACTIVITY.*
HERE'S AN EARLY READING:



AND THAT EVENING, BACK
AT THE GOZAIMASU
FORTNIGHTLY LIBRARY...

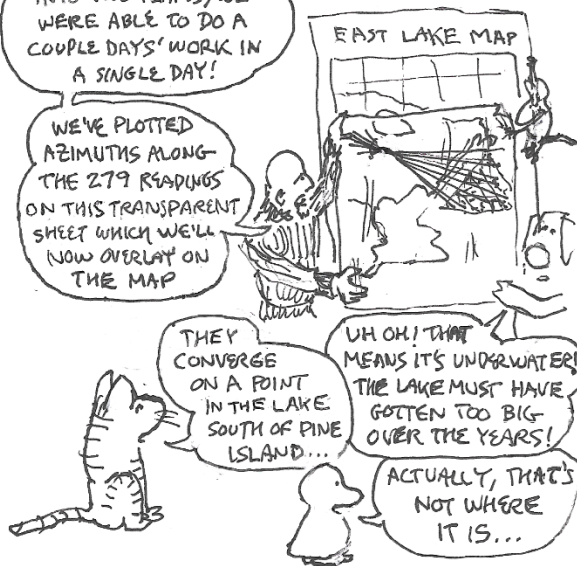
AFTER WE SPLIT
INTO TWO TEAMS, WE
WERE ABLE TO DO A
COUPLE DAYS' WORK IN
A SINGLE DAY!

WE'VE PLOTTED
AZIMUTHS ALONG-
THE 279 READINGS
ON THIS TRANSPARENT
SHEET WHICH WE'LL
NOW OVERLAY ON
THE MAP

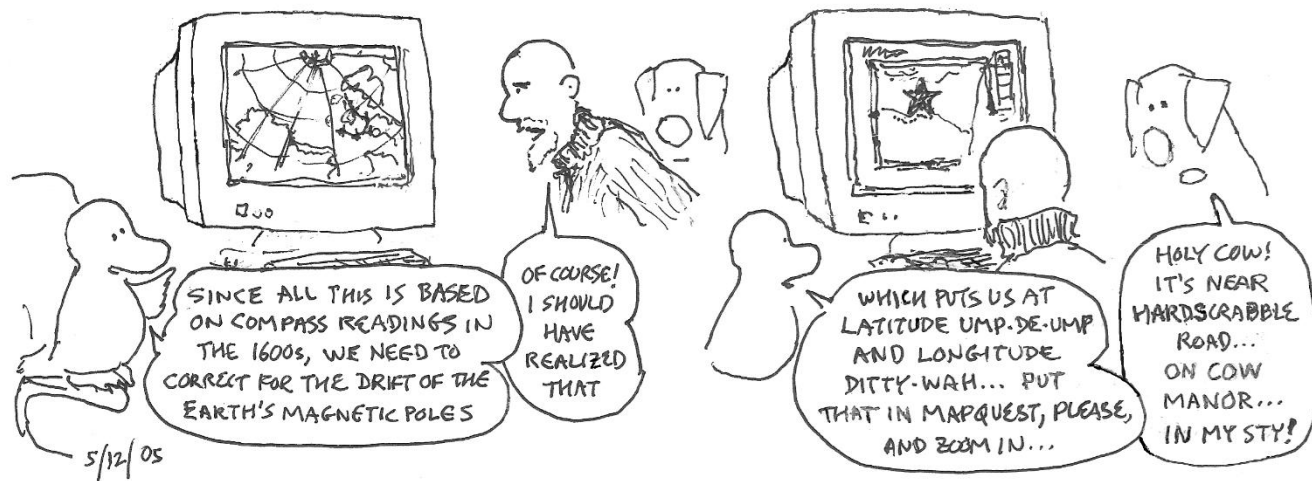
THEY
CONVERGE
ON A POINT
IN THE LAKE
SOUTH OF PINE
ISLAND...

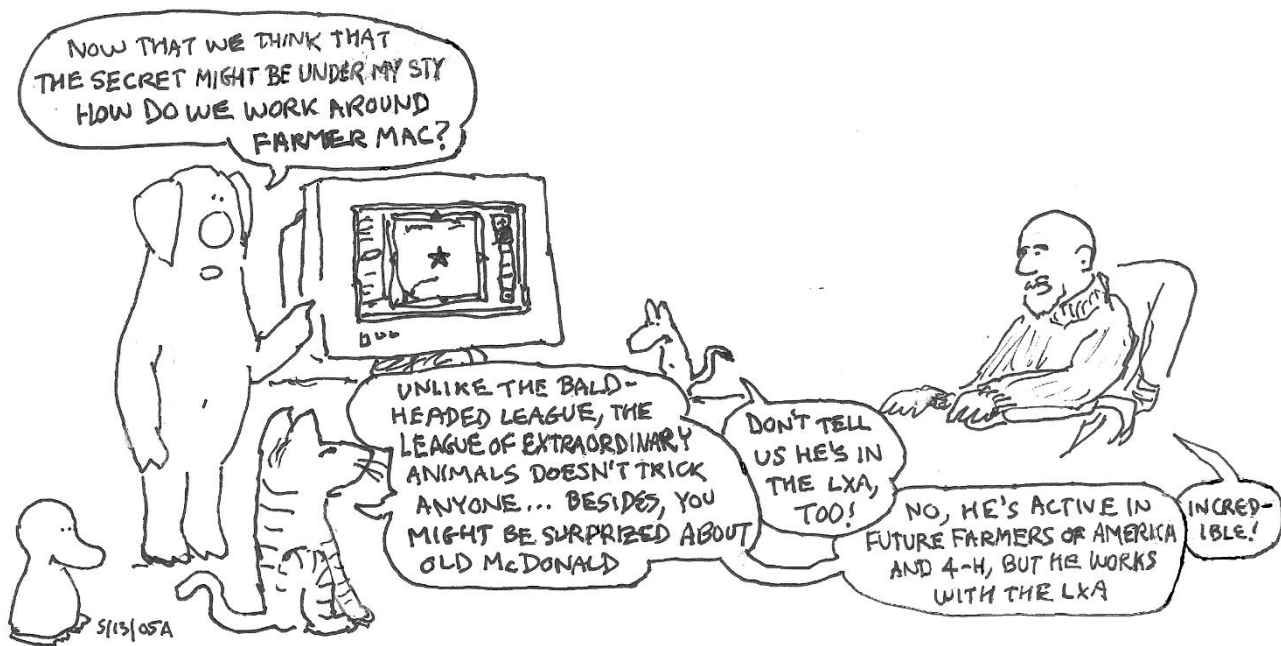
UH OH! THAT
MEANS IT'S UNDERWATER!
THE LAKE MUST HAVE
GOTTEN TOO BIG
OVER THE YEARS!

ACTUALLY, THAT'S
NOT WHERE
IT IS...



*WATCH FOR DELETED SCENES IN THE DVD VERSION





Day 10 - Stand by your Sty

Finally, we can anticipate some resolution. If you're offended by all this, you may demand some restitution, but if you've gotten this far, you have no one to blame but yourself.

EARLY THE NEXT MORNING,
OUR INTREPID CREW HEADS
FOR COW MANOR...

WELL THIS TIES UP
ONE LOOSE END...

WHICH IS...?

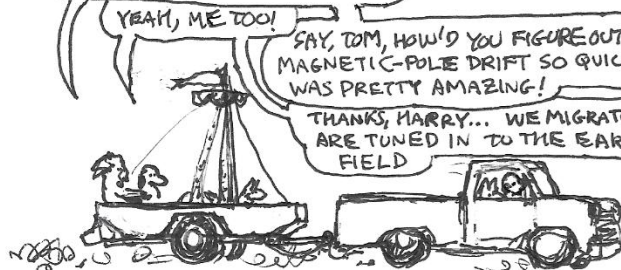
5/13/05 B

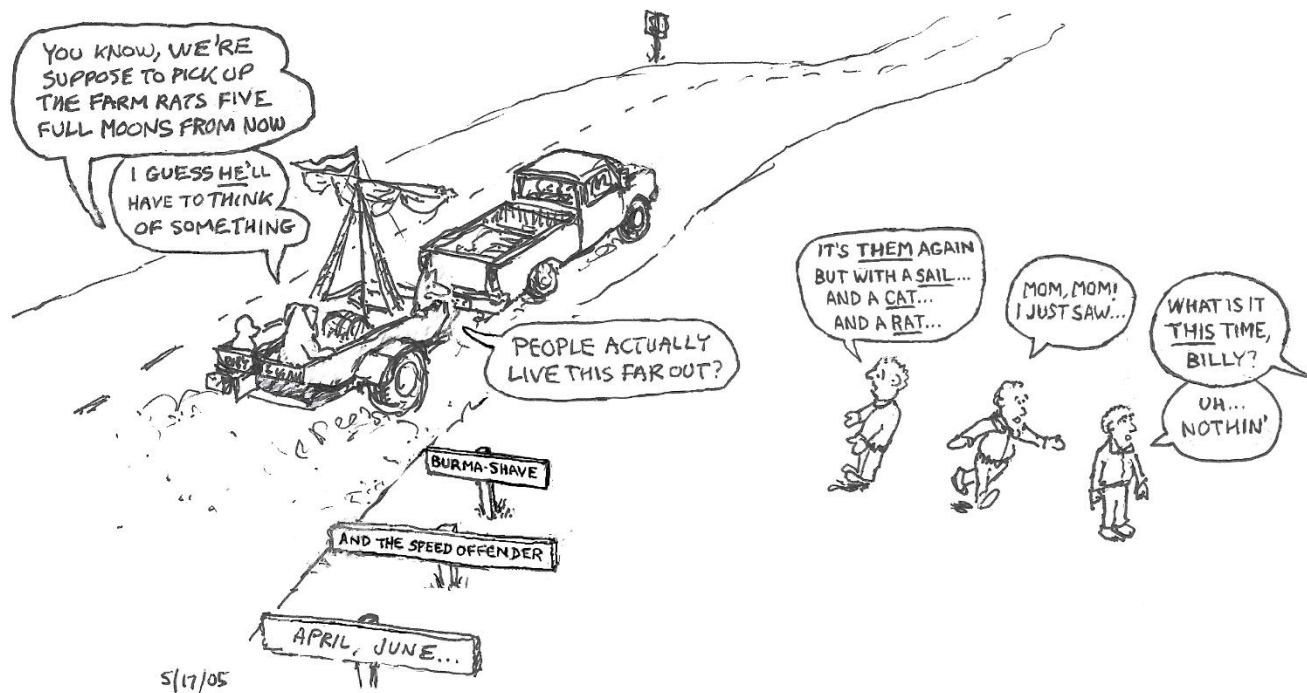
I WAS WONDERING HOW WE WERE
GOING TO GET THE ROBT E. LEAK BACK
UP THE RAPIDS TO THE FARM

YEAH, ME TOO!

SAY, TOM, HOW'D YOU FIGURE OUT THAT
MAGNETIC-POLE DRIFT SO QUICKLY? THAT
WAS PRETTY AMAZING!

THANKS, HARRY... WE MIGRATORY WATERFOWL
ARE TUNED IN TO THE EARTH'S MAGNETIC
FIELD





AND SO...





SO, ONCE AGAIN, WE DELVE
BENEATH THE SURFACE...

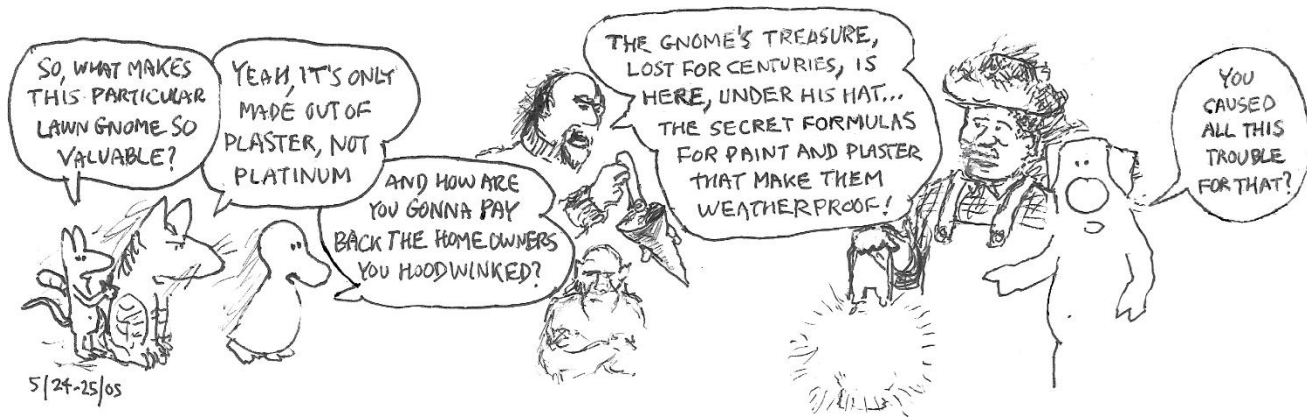
COW MANOR WAS AN IMPORTANT
STOP ON THE UNDERGROUND
RAILROAD IN SOUTHERN OHIO...
MANY AN ESCAPED SLAVE OWED HIS OR HER
FREEDOM IN PART
TO MY GREAT-GREAT
GRANDPARENTS

AND AS FOR YOU,
MR BALD-HEAD,
I THINK YOU'LL
FIND WHAT YOU
SEEK OVER THERE,
SAFE GUARDED FOR
OVER 300 YEARS!

LATIN FOR
'GNOME HOME!'
YES!! THIS IS
IT!!



5/23-24/05

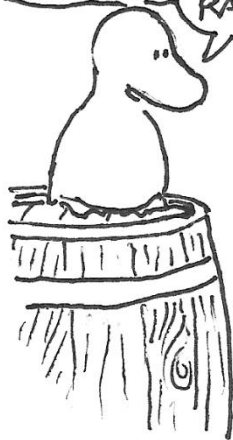






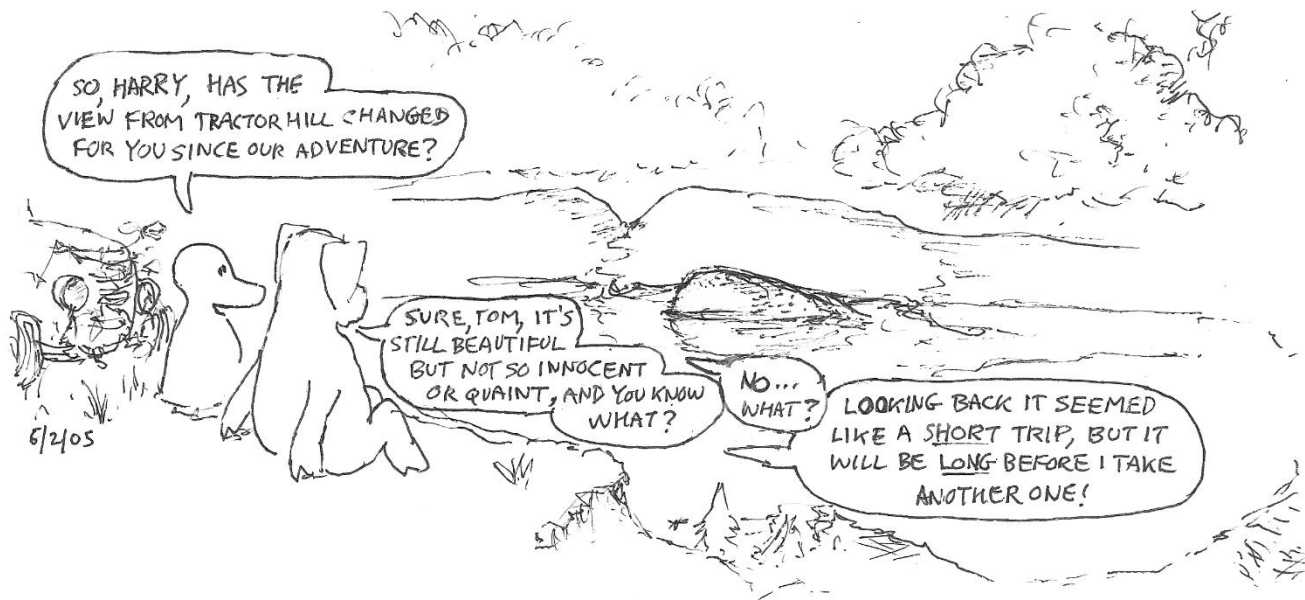


... SO WHEN FARMER MAC
DROVE CATZ AND RATZ HOME,
THEY LEARNED THAT OUR TWO FARM
RATS ARE MARRYING INTO THE SEWER
RAT COMMUNITY AND RUNNING
THEIR NEW
FOOD PLANTATION

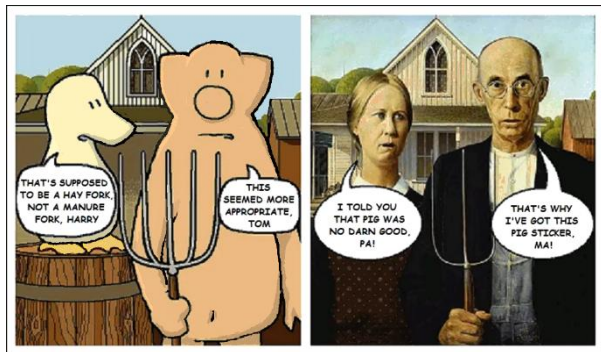


AND HERE'S AN INTERESTING NOTE
IN THE SOUTHERN OHIO BUGLE:

"ALL AROUND THE WORLD, PREVIOUSLY
STOLEN LAWN GNOMES HAVE MYSTERIOUSLY
BEGUN TO REAPPEAR, SPORTING A NEW
COAT OF PAINT! AUTHORITIES REMAIN
BAFFLED."



Want More Tom Duck and Harry?



Check out their website, *Tom Duck and Harry: Ohio Gothic* (<https://tomduckandharry.com>), with additional Tom and Harry features, such as 150 daily and single-panel strips in the *Tom Duck and Harry Sampler*; the first nine days of *The Alaskan Adventure of Tom Duck and Harry*, which is currently stalled in British Columbia; the history of Gozaimasu, Ohio; and other comic strip backstory and trivia.

Best yet, or even worse, there are several major non pig-duck sections, including the following:

- Our Alaska cartoon books: *Too Far North* and *Living Too Far North*
- *Physics Cartoons for Photonics and Quantum Mechanics*
- *The Duck Blind, Where Mess-cellany Lurks* – odds and ends, mostly odds
- Wacky website policies and other metadata
- *The Marmaduke Files*, setting the record straight on that comic strip
- *A Return to the Dark Ages of One and One Half Wits Dot Com*

The Critics Rave/Rage about *The First Adventure of Tom Duck and Harry*

“A stunning *tour de force* among graphic novels!... Oh, I thought you were asking about the latest volume of *Bone*. In that case, a *tour de farce*.”

— *Rolling Stonehenge*

“We waited twenty years for him to finish posting this?!”

— *Journal of Idiotology*

“Thank goodness comic strips can’t be published on Audible!”

— *Audiobooks Review*

“The humor and story line are dubious. The artwork looks like it was executed on the cartoonist’s lap while riding the bus or subway.” [editor’s note: It was]

— *Washington Postage Book World*

“How come the *Rob’t E Leak* keeps changing size?”

— A reader in Ms Finley’s 3rd grade class

“Pork filled... a disgusting abomination!” — Elon Musk