

Armadillo Droppings™

ARMADILLO GAMES
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Monstrous Editor in Chief

Edwin J. (Godzilla Buster) Rotondaro

SPECIAL
GODZILLA
ISSUE!



Special guest artist
Tiya Madden

Special guest Charles Santino

Small insignificant
beings

Panama Red

Keith (Coffee) Houghton

Brian (Baneblade) Malone

Mark (Data Con) Shamon

...e (Spartacus) Huston

...le (Mad) Madden





editorial



Welcome to the Armadillo Droppings first ever theme issue! One of the most recognizable cultural icons of our time is the gigantic radioactive monster who has trashed Japan since the mid 1950s. That's right kids, the main man himself **GODZILLA!** One wonders whether or not his name actually is Japanese or just some crazy concoction of the movie studios.

For most of us, **GODZILLA** was our first taste of Japanese cinema. Never mind that Akira Kurosawa had been making brilliant Samurai epics for years, most Westerners pictured Godzilla when thinking about Japanese movies. Godzilla set the standard for bad B grade monster movies. With his unstoppable physique and radioactive breath, (a not so subtle reminder that the US was responsible for his birth due to the use of nuclear weapons) the mean, green machine stomped his way across Tokyo in a series of epics complete with tiny model tanks, trains, and buildings. (Real state of the art special effects!) An entire generation of oversized radioactive mutants followed to menace the land of the Rising Sun. Godzilla even got to square off against some of them thereby changing his image from implacable foe to giant anti-hero. Love him or hate him, Godzilla looms large in our perception of Japan and things Japanese.

Now personally I think there's a lot more to the Godzilla story than the Japanese are willing to admit. How could a country that has such a rich cultural history produce such embarrassing nonsense? The answer lies in Japan's secret agenda, **WORLD WIDE ECONOMIC DOMINATION!** The Godzilla movies and their imitators helped generate much needed capital for investment in the electronics industry. While we sat back and laughed at these movies, the Japanese were rapidly overtaking us in high tech and heavy industry. We on the other hand couldn't begin to take them seriously. A country whose number one export was B grade sci-fi movies? Who cares if our TVs aren't as good as they used to be? We're still number one. Meanwhile Japan took advantage of our obsession with monster movies to lull us to sleep while they bought out prime US real estate and squeezed our companies out of many lucrative markets.

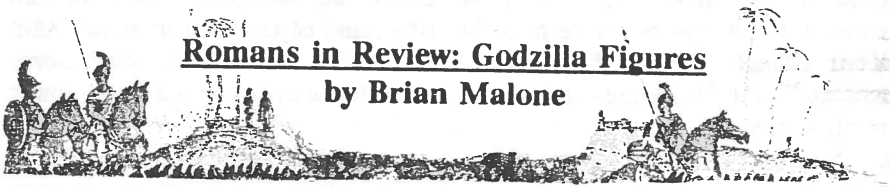
Well now it's too late. Japan dominates the world's economy and even exports real good movies to our numbed senses. We've been duped by a giant radioactive lizard! Even Nike's match up of Charles Barkley against Godzilla in an feeble attempt to demonstrate the superiority of an American made product proves how low we've sunk.

Well enough ranting, it's time for me to put in the usual editorial blurbs about contributors and distributors. To all retail game and hobby outlets, if

you want free copies of the Armadillo Droppings to give to your customers, just drop Keith or myself a line and we'll add you to the list of fine stores throughout the Northeast who carry this publication. We also intend to try and do a review of each and every retailer who carries the Droppings. It may take time, but we will visit you (most likely when you least expect it) and write your store up.

This issue of the Droppings has some new contributors including artwork by Tiya Madden and tidbit from Charlie Santino on Gamra. So what are the rest of you waiting for? Send us your articles on games, miniatures, etc. and you too can be a famous writer!

As always, you can send your articles to me, Ed Rotondaro at 181 Menands Road Loudonville NY 12211, or else send to them to Keith in care of the Droppings. Do it today!



Romans in Review: Godzilla Figures by Brian Malone

Remember back in the days of old when the world was happy and never cold? How a good day spent at the movie house brought nothing but wonder over the mysteries of a nuclear future? At this time all your days were spent worrying not of high prices or lead bannings, but of a quick, painless death from above in a nuclear holocaust. Now you can relive those happy days with models of our favorite movie monster.

In the year 1965 Toho Inc. released Godzilla "King of the Monsters" in the US. This movie was the first of many to come, but the only one to have a star of Raymond Burr's great stature. (Ed's note - You mean he was fat.) Released soon after were a line of monster model kits based on famous movie monsters. Included amongst such notables as Dracula and the Creature from the Black Lagoon was our friend Godzilla. These early kits included glow in the dark pieces and were well sculpted. The kits I remember were clean and free from flash. Unfortunately a good model kit of Raymond Burr has been more difficult to locate, even after the release of "Godzilla 1985".

Between the first release in 1965 and the release in 1985, there were many minor kit releases. Most of these were just re-tooled originals with new box art. Still no good rendition of Raymond Burr appeared.

Finally the '80s brought a new resurgence of items. Vinyl kits, injection molded toys, inflatable punching bags and of course the US release of "Love Theme from Godzilla".

To find these new releases just go down to your friendly game store and inquire, or pay a visit to a comic store or KB Toys. Many of these kits are available from mail order. To find out what's available just get a hold of a sci-fi mag and check out the dealers order form or catalog requests.

COMICS AND GAMING

What's the Connection?



Ed Rotondaro

Recently Keith and I had a discussion about the state of the gaming business and the topic came up "How many gamers also read comics?" If you ever examine the pages of White Dwarf to see where Games Workshop products are carried, many of the stores list themselves as both game and comic book shops. So there must be some kind of connection right? Also Keith thought it would be a good idea to review some of the local stores who carry the Droppings and who by coincidence also happen to be comic book stores!

So with this thought in mind, I set out to check the pulse of comics and gaming and see if there was any link between the two. One thing I learned in the course of writing this article was the need to maintain some degree of "journalistic objectivity". Wait you say, what is Ed trying to prove? He's coming off like some high brow writer for Rolling Stone instead of the editor of the Northeast's strangest fanzine. Well what I mean by this, is that *I had a preconceived notion of gamers and comics based on my own experiences rather than what was actually going on.* What I learned taught me to approach a subject with a more open mind. (Hey if Pete Huston can carry on with long winded dialogues, then so can I!)

My first stop on my search for the truth was Earthworld Comics located at 327 Central Avenue Albany, NY. Like any good comic book store, Earthworld is snug and packed with comics, trading cards and graphic novels and even some games. J.C. Glindmyer the genial and knowledgeable proprietor took time out from his busy schedule (literally, the man was humping boxes in from his van and trying to unpack stuff when I cornered him!) to talk with me.

JC has taken the cautious approach regarding comics and gaming. He sees his business as comics first and games as something he'll ease into gradually. In his own words, "I've only just started playing games myself so I want to understand the genre before making a commitment to stocking games."

He estimates that maybe 15% of his customers are into both games and comics. As a result, at this time he only carries a limited selection of games such as AD&D and other TSR products. JC noted that often his customers migrate to gaming from comics, usually looking for something that would capture the fun of comics, but on a different level. One of his most interesting observations was that the audience for games generally tended to be older and more intellectual with strong links to science fiction. This

coincided with my own observations and made me wonder why more sci-fi lovers weren't into gaming.

In the course of our discussion, JC noted that game merchandising had made some impact on comics. He pointed out the various comic sourcebooks and handbooks that give readers the background of new or existing comic heroes. Upon examining them I was immediately struck by how much they resemble gaming supplements and sourcebooks.

Earthworld's hours are Mon-Tue 11-6, Wed-Thu 11-8, Friday 11-7, Saturday 11-6 and Sunday 12-5. The phone number is (518)465-5495. Stop by and tell 'em you read about Earthworld in the Droppings.

My next stop was FantaCo Enterprises located at 21 Central Avenue Albany, NY. FantaCo is one the original comic shops in the area having been established in 1978. Store Manager Tim D'Allaird was generous with both his time and insights into the gaming/comic link. Like Earthworld, FantaCo is compact and jammed with goodies. One of their specialties is horror films and they carry a wide variety of rubber masks, movie scripts and other horror collectibles. According to Tim, the store's mail order advertisement in Fangora magazine generates a lot of business in not only horror collectibles, but games.

Tim comes from a strong gaming background and it is reflected in the large amount of games and miniatures he carries. A good quarter of his store is occupied by games, minis and he even carries paints and brushes! By his estimate, at least 45-50% of his customers are gamers and comic book collectors. Tim found a niche when Armadillo Games began cutting back its hours and customers began asking for games. Like any good entrepreneur, he started to fill the void.

He finds that the strongest link between comics and games comes from the horror gaming titles such as Vampire. This may also be due to the fact that his customers know that FantaCo has an extensive selection of horror film merchandise, but Tim notes that AD&D sells quite well along with other fantasy games. For reasons that he can't fathom, science-fiction games and supplements don't seem to move very well for him.

Tim has steered clear of the extensive Games Workshop line of figures, preferring to stock Ral Partha and Grenadier miniatures. His feelings are that the Citadel lines are too extensive and have too many monthly releases to keep up with in a store his size. I was impressed by the number of figures he did carry including boxed sets and large collector figures. According to Tim, his Godzilla collectibles along with other Japanese monster movie merchandise are all hot sellers. He cautions collectors to make their purchases now before the new Godzilla movie is released in 1994 and prices shoot through the roof.

FantaCo's hours are as follows: Mon-Tue 11-6, Wed-Fri 11-8, Saturday 11-6 and Sunday 12-5. Their phone number is (518)463-1400.

Well after talking with JC and Tim, I have come to the conclusion that games and comics have their own separate audiences that occasionally intersect. The connections appear to depend more on the individual's

gaming or comic preferences. Horror gamers might just go looking for horror comics if only to get some background material for their games. Cyberpunks like myself might pick up copies of Cyberforce or WildC.A.T.s because they cover a genre we like.

In closing I'd once again like to thank JC and Tim for their time, their insights and their courtesy and I highly recommend their stores. Stop in, you might be surprised at what you'll find lurking on those back shelves!



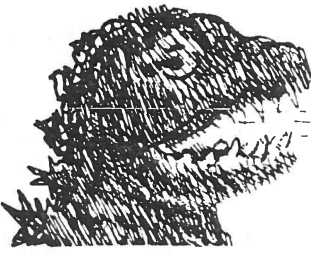
Are we in an economic recovery or are folks just trying to make things difficult for us here at the Droppings? Some of the area's finest game and hobby establishments have moved since the last issue of the Armadillo Droppings, so here's the run down:

IMAGINATION GAMES AND COMICS:

In early September, George Vasilakos moved **Imagination Games and Comics** to **Builders Square Plaza, 1814 Central Avenue, Albany NY 12205 (518)452-3969**. The new store has the same hours as his previous store, 12-8 Monday thru Saturday and 12-5 Sundays. With more space and a lot more parking, the new Imagination Games and Comics is an improvement over the original. Hey there's even a Chinese restaurant next door as well as O'Toole's Pub. Now you can satisfy all your appetites for games, comics, lo mein and beer without having to use your car! Seriously folks, stop by and check out the new Imagination Games and Comics. Tell then Ed sent you and maybe they'll let me back in the store!

TALES OF SPACE & CRIME:

The Saratoga Science Fiction & Mystery Bookshop has split, cloned and evolved! Originally located at 454 Broadway in Saratoga Springs, owners Mary Southworth and Karl Olsen have moved to a new glitzy store in the Wilton Mall which is off exit 15 of the Northway (187). This means they are now open nights! Oh Happy Oh joy! The Wilton Mall store's hours are Mon-Sat 10-9:30 and Sun 12-5. **(518)584-2699**. In addition to carrying the newest in science fiction, fantasy and mystery, the store has a superb collection of used and hard to find out-of-print books. The Broadway store is still open with hours of 10-6 Mon-Sat and Sun 12-5. **(518)583-3743**. Additionally the Broadway store is now carrying sci-fi and fantasy games in addition to the newest in mysteries, fantasy and science fiction. Either store is well worth a trip from anyway, and yes they do carry the Armadillo Droppings!



Panama Red's Video Picks
"Godzilla...A Monster Wasted."

Hey fans, it's the Godzilla Issue, so here I am with Godzilla tapes up the ying-yang. What can you say about Godzilla and all those movies that hasn't already been said. I've always liked the concept of Godzilla, but I think the movies are nothing more than a case of celluloid bad bowels. It's the kind of shit that keeps drizzlin' out, with no signs of relief in sight.

I was originally going to talk about the worst of the Godzilla movies, but they all stink. So I'm going to list all (as far as I can bear to remember) the Godzilla movies, starting with the most disgusting waste of a perfectly good monster and progressing to the least offensive turd I could find. So let's get this over with shall we?

Godzilla's Revenge (1969), made with battle scenes from "Godzilla vs. the Sea Monster" and "Son of Godzilla".

Son of Godzilla (1967), baby Godzilla must mean there's a mommy Godzilla somewhere doesn't it?

Godzilla 1985 (1985), a cheap rerun of the original with Raymond Burr (the other big guy).

Godzilla vs. Megalon (1976), humorously poor.

Godzilla vs. Monster Zero (1966), aka "Monster Zero", aka "Invasion of the Astro-Monsters", Godzilla visits friends abroad.

Godzilla Raids Again (1959), aka "Gigantis the Fire Monster", the first sequel to the original Godzilla.

Godzilla vs. the Cosmic Monster (1974), aka "Godzilla vs the Bionic Monster", aka "Godzilla vs MechaGodzilla" (sometimes mistaken for a separate movie), Godzilla fights a metal version of himself.

Godzilla on Monster Island (1972), aka "Godzilla vs. Gigan", Godzilla talks?

Godzilla vs The Smog Monster (1972), what a nice 'zilla.

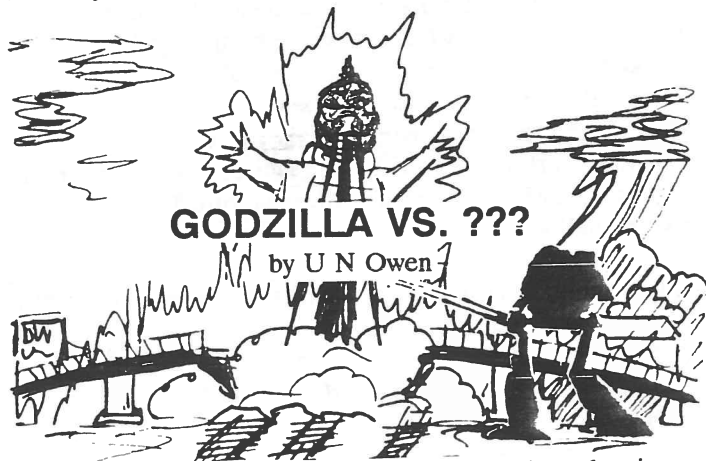
Godzilla vs. The Sea Monster (1966), Godzilla beats up a shrimp.

Godzilla vs. the Thing (1964), aka "Godzilla vs. Mothra", slightly better special effects.

Godzilla (1954 Japan, 1956 US), aka "Godzilla, King of the Monsters", aka "Gojira", the original with Raymond Burr added to the US version.

Bambi meets Godzilla (1987), my personal favorite because its only 90 seconds long!

Well, there you have it. Now go wipe yourself before it stains.



Recently, some friends and myself, were wondering what it would take to kill Godzilla. We came to the conclusion, that the best way to test this theory was to play every Role Playing Game we could think of. After all, we (Not to mention myself, on my own) had the sum equivalence of any game store going, in knowledge concerning RPGs. (Hell, I was already writing my own.)

The next part was easy, assign the best players to their particular game, the one they had shown the most enthusiasm for. (Not to be confused with the most knowledgeable, but don't tell them that.)

AD&D: Godzilla vs. The Red Dragon, (AKA; Keith Yen) The Red Dragon is a multi-level, multi-class character that has achieved by becoming an immortal through his plethora of magic items. Godzilla was first sighted entering Greyhawk Bay. Yens first action was to transform himself into his namesake and cast a multi-growth spell. Alas, this was to no avail; Godzilla charged and hit Yen straight on. His last Saving Throw of caffeine & day old nicotine shielding had no effect. Godzilla moved on.

Runequest: Godzilla vs. The Rune Sword, (AKA; Janet Sushi) Godzilla now had the power but not the means to cross dimensions to find Tokyo. At first, Godzilla was held at bay. Was the 'Glob of Stench' going to stop him? No, this time Godzilla simply breathed. (Apparently leery of venturing too close, the stench has had the same effect on myself!)

Star Trek: Godzilla vs. The Borg, (AKA; Mike Mitamura) The Sword caused the desired effect. It sent Godzilla into a parallel dimension, in which Tokyo lay! The time lines had also been effected and Godzilla found himself in space, face to face, with the Borg...to be continued next season.

Car Wars: Godzilla vs. The Road Kill, (AKA; Jon Wynagen) Godzilla had made land fall on the island of Kyushu. He appeared different, half of his body was transformed into 'LaGodzilla' the Borg. Jon, armed every weapon on his overly equipped sedan, and fired. LaGodzilla proclaimed "Resistance is futile," as he walked on. Jon lasted no longer than Bambi did.

Call of Cthulhu: Godzilla vs. Kathulew, (AKA; Lew Noklue) Miskatonic University was notified of the impending doom, and decided to send the legendary VonSwan. He, as you know, is a well educated man, but of low intelligence. Thus, the university assigned two students, Beamass & Buthead, to consult in intellectual matters concerning LaGodzilla. By the time they arrived, LaGadzilla was in the sea, between islands on a straight course for Tokyo. VonSwan wiped out his copy of the 'Necronomicon', so he could transform himself into Kathulew. It was a good thing, Beamass & Buthead accompanied the Professor, for you see, they noticed he brought with him the wrong book! He had a copy of "The Complete Russian History" instead. LaGodzilla didn't waste any time. This time a snack was in order. However, as he "chomped" down on our trio, a whiff of smoke could be seen rising out of his mouth. Some say they heard a voice asking, "Am I dead yet?"

Champions: Godzilla vs. The Superman & Wolverine (AKA; John Summo & Tim Wichway) By now the world knew they had to send in the best they had. Superman made a fast ball special out of Wolverine. The Mutant boasted, "This is what I do best", and was it ever. He was swallowed in one gulp, never to be seen again. About this time, Superman, had taken hold of LaGodzilla's tail. Without a thought, LaGadzilla pounded Superman and then flicked him into orbit; straight into the sun.

Star Wars: Godzilla vs. The Death Star, (AKA; Matt Obnocshen) Admiral Obnocshen, spotted the Man of Steel and started powering up the Death Star. LaGodzilla seemed to detect the radiation building up. With a single breath Admiral Obnocshen, along with the Death Star, had been sent straight to video.

Dark Conspiracy: Godzilla vs. The Skeptic, (AKA; Pete Kimshe) Unknown to LaGodzilla, there was an arrogant, belligerent little man, who was totally clue less to the reality of his surroundings. People were running in every direction yelling, "Godzilla, Godzilla is coming.." Kimshe just stood there with his copy of the Skeptical Inquirer in hand, yelling "There is no rational explanation for this creature to exist. Thus, I am forced to surmise, that this creature about to stomp on my head, does not exist." The Skeptic was never heard from again.(At least I can wish, can't I?)

BattleTech: Godzilla vs. The Assault Lance, (AKA; Ed Tanaka) LaGodzilla now faced the mighty strategist and his best Mechs. Ed calculated the heat that would be generated, if he was to fire all his weapons at once. Something, he has never done, in fear of not being able to move. Like it mattered! LaGodzilla grabbed himself, gave a yell, and made a Michael Jackson spin. His mighty tail crushed the Mechs, before they ever got off a single shot. (NOTE: Ed wanted me to point out, that if the rules published in White Wolf #33 'Creature Feature' had been used he would have stood a chance. Yeah right Ed, and if my manuscript was seen by anyone, they would steal it on me. Well you never know, maybe you are right.) (Ed's note - I'd never lose to a Jap science fiction monster if I had my ideal Battletech unit!)

Cyberpunk 2020: Godzilla vs. The Street Urchin, (AKA; Tom Takahash) Finally, a perimeter of defense was taken up by the remaining defenders. Tom was to be on the first line of defense. He started a cybernetic smoke screen out of Sinsemillas Thai Sticks. Unfortunately, all this did was to make both of them very high and hungry. LaGodzilla pranced on.

Titanicus: Godzilla vs. The Tit-ton, (AKA; Brian Smaldong) Brian had the best painted Tit-ton on field. However in LaGodzilla's current state of consciousness, this just made for a titillating snack.

Aftermath: Godzilla vs. The Urban Red Neck, (AKA; Tim Nozen) Tim led his band, of Red Necks out of their home made bomb shelters, firing their illegal assault rifles, as they went blindly to their death. The blind leading the blind, how pitiful. I only wish I wasn't one of them.

Napoleon in 15mm: Godzilla vs. Napoleon, (AKA; Art Ledching) We were coming down to our last hope of stopping LaGadzilla, when out of no where, an elite force of Napoleonic live action reenactment types appeared, with a law suit on behalf of the French government, for using a French name without written consent. Godzilla shed all his Borg implants on the spot, not wanting to take on the French government. He just wanted to go to Tokyo.

Rifts: Godzilla vs. The MDC Thing, (AKA; Chris Kareoky) Godzilla faced, what appeared to be, his final confrontation before entering Tokyo. Since Godzilla has XDC not MDC, the Rift runner was as outmatched as if it had SDC. Once again, he stepped on it and entered Tokyo. Was there nothing to stop it?

Data Con: Godzilla vs. The Multi-Genre Visitor from Dimension X, (AKA; Aurelius Toodim) The main event. Mark had his Data Con in hand, for the first time ever, as he furiously looked up the conversion statistics he would need to defeat Godzilla. He decided to create the BOB Entity from Twin Peaks. Why? Well, you see, if BOB was capable of creating a doppelganger of Laura Palmer, he just killed a copy, a shadow of the real person; who was alive, well and living in the White Lodge. As the dim witted visitor went on to farther explain how Laura Palmer could be alive, he failed to notice Godzilla was on top of him, literally. The family drove off without him.

Godzilla was just about to stomp Tokyo, when for no apparent reason he stopped, turned and returned to the ocean. The only possible explanation, anyone could offer in the days that followed, was that some witness reported hearing a voice at the last minute. "Am I dead yet? Am I dead yet? Am I dead yet? Am I dead yet?"

The conclusion our gaming syndicate came to was that, there is no game system out there that can kill Godzilla. However, there was one voice that made him turn back, after all, if you heard the voice, wouldn't you turn back as well?

THE END



Pete's Multi-P Page

This Time, Psychology and Paranormal Investigations

by

Pete "Ghostbuster" Huston

Recently I happened to meet and talk with some of the members of Upstate New York's "Paranormal Investigation" groups. They were quite likable people, maybe a bit weird perhaps, but since when have I ever held that against anyone? They were energetic, enthusiastic, most likely sincere (except for some hoaxey looking photographs of ghosts), but they just didn't seem to be accomplishing very much in the way of in-depth investigation and acquisition of facts. As I went on my merry way I stopped and thought about the differences between "their investigations", which usually seem to end up with still "unsolved mysteries", or my own, which usually move much slower, but eventually solve the thing if given enough time and information.

The first difference is that shaky investigation techniques based on highly questionable methods lead to shaky and highly questionable results. For example, psychic powers, dowsing with forked sticks and other instruments and the acquisition of knowledge through shamanistic out of body trips to other planes of existence all fail to yield proof of any validity and usefulness under controlled conditions. Tests that are designed consistently indicate that although in some cases those who practice these techniques may be sincere (or frauds too) these techniques simply do not lead to acquisition of useful facts. Sleazy TV pseudo-documentaries to the contrary, virtually all major US police departments long ago abandoned the use of psychics as an investigation technique, since they have found self-proclaimed psychics to have no more usefulness for great insight than a large bag of fortune cookies. If you use psychics, etc. to explore haunted houses then you will not learn very much.

Secondly, these people seem to believe that if they "felt" something then to some extent it "must be true". In other words, if a place feels "spooky", then it must be "spooky". If one sees something shimmering in the shadows, then there must be something there even if later investigation shows it to be an optical illusion. If your camera takes a photo and developing reveals a large "blob" in the middle of the picture, then this does not necessarily mean that you took a bad picture, maybe it's a ghost! One of the above mentioned people actually began discussing if those blobby shimmers you see when you look in the sky (caused by liquid on the eyeball, they move when you blink) are actually an indication of "something" really there, perhaps from another "plane of existence".

Sorry folks, it just doesn't work that way. Optical illusions are usually just optical illusions. Weird beliefs are often nothing more than delusions. And in the immortal words of John Belushi (as Sigmund Freud), "sometimes a banana is just a banana!"

In fact there exists an entire branch of psychology known as "anamolistic psychology." This focuses on explanations for "anamolistic", or out of the ordinary experiences. Why do people believe strange things? Psychology, believe it or not, can provide explanations.

Here I will provide brief capsule reviews of books that are excellent examples of these things. In a previous column I reviewed The Psychology of Transcendence by Andrew Neher (Dover Books, co. 1980, 1990). It's still recommended (and money wise, the best value on this page).

Hidden Memories - Voices and Visions from Within by Robert Baker (Prometheus Books, 1992) is an excellent book, but bit narrow in focus. Dr. Baker is a retired psychologist who now has the time and freedom to write about his favorite subjects and this he does quite well. In Hidden Memories he focuses on how a human being can create entire worlds out of his imagination without even realizing that he's doing it. He discusses how our memories work and how we can become confused and remember things without ever realizing that we learned them. Since it quite a strange experience to be spitting out facts and songs and poems and things without remembering ever learning them, many people look for a mysterious explanation. Some assume that this material is coming from a supernatural or paranormal source. Others assume it is the product of "repressed past life" recollections or perhaps that they are "channeling" the material from a "dimension where everyone talks like Shirley McClaine" (now there's a scary thought).

They Call it Hypnosis, also by Dr. Baker (Prometheus Books, 1990) deals with what hypnosis is and how it works. In essence, he states that hypnosis cannot improve memory, cannot recover "repressed memories" and cannot do many of a hundred mysterious and bizarre things that it is claimed to be capable of. Essentially hypnosis indicates a condition where a person "acts hypnotized" and then performs in a manner in which he attempts to fulfill the expectations of the "hypnotizer". As such it does not require the hypnotic subject to be compelled to tell the truth. In fact, people under hypnosis constantly state things that are not true, for one reason or another.

If these books have a fault it is their high price and availability only in hard cover. Still, I found my copies worth the cost and they can often be found in public libraries. If your local library doesn't have copies, ask them to purchase these. (If you don't they'll just purchase something else instead.) Tell the librarian the Droppings sent you! (Ed's note - No way Pete. Don't drag us into your crazy world of paranormal nonsense.)

For lack of space, I'll just briefly mention a few others:

The Psychology of Anomalous Experience by Graham Reed (Prometheus Books, 1988) is a general sort of text book dealing with anomalous experiences. It's a good book and a fine place to start. In my opinion it tends to overemphasize the role of mental illness in such experiences, but it's still well worth reading.

Cults, Faith Healing and Coercion by Marc Galanter (Oxford University Press, 1989) explains for lay-people the psychology processes whereby human beings join groups and then form their opinions to conform those held by the new group. It also discusses how in some cases these opinions and beliefs can be held despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary. It further explains that this is not necessarily a bad thing and is in fact how Alcoholics Anonymous does so much good in the world by changing the behaviors of its new members. I found it fascinating.

When Prophecy Fails by Festinger, Riecken and Schachter (Harper and Row, 1956 - but still in print!) This is a classic in the field of sociology, believe it or not. It is also one of the few scientific studies of a UFO cult written by sociologists who joined the group. (Oh what people will do for extra credit and a PhD Thesis!) It remains a classic study of cognitive dissonance theory and how people respond to: A) the announcement of the end of the world, and B) failure of that announcement to take place.

Also you might try scanning issues of magazines such as The Skeptical Inquirer. This is available for browsing at the Schenectady Public Library and for purchase in the Barnes & Noble Superstore on Wolf Road in Colonie. (Unabashed plug! Not only does this magazine regularly carry articles and reviews dealing with paranormal claims, science and anomalistic psychology, but the issue that should be out when you read this carries an article by ME on Traditional Chinese Medicine! Buy it for all your friends!) (Ed's note: Pete don't count on when the Droppings will get out. We don't have the slightest clue from issue to issue.)

CORRECTION

Oops! We made our first mistake ever. In issue 26 in "On the Road with Keith Kuralt" we misspelled the Complete Strategist's name. It should be The Compleat Strategist, using the more archaic English of Chaucer. I realized this as I was typing it, but was too lazy to correct Keith's many misuses of the name. So to all our friends in Manhattan and elsewhere, sorry 'bout that. To all our enterprising readers we say if you can find another mistake in future issues of the Droppings and bring it to our attention, we'll give you a free copy of the next issue!

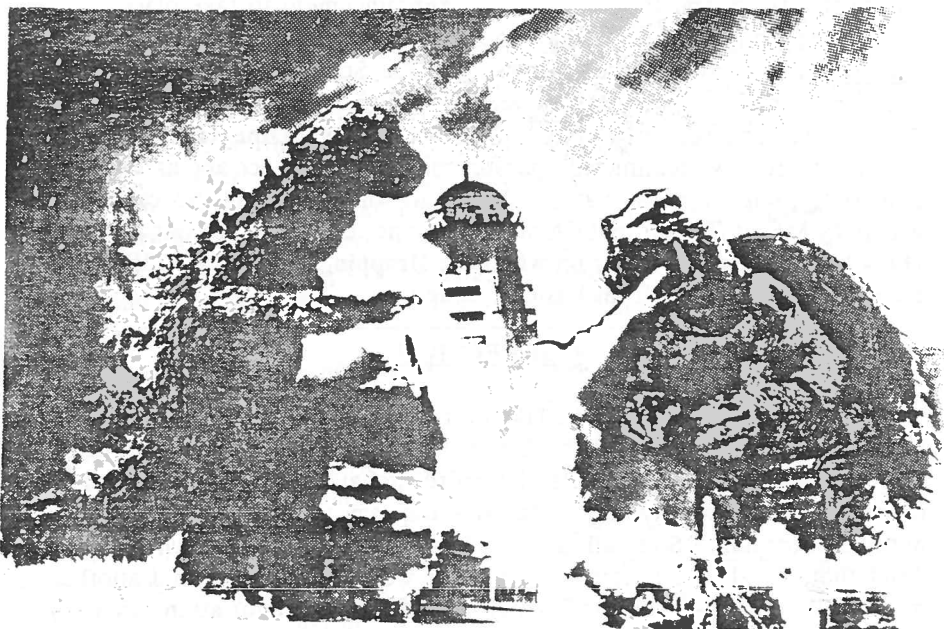
GODZILLA VS. GAMERA: FACT OR FANTASY?

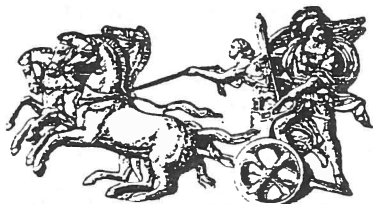
by Charles Santino

I'm shocked. *Shocked!* I just found out that Godzilla and Gamera have never clashed in mortal combat. They've never even met! It turns out they're the property of two separate, competing Japanese studios. This news stupefied me because, in the monster movie archives of my mind, I've created a false memory of a titanic struggle between these rubber behemoths. I could swear I've seen them slug it out, along with their respective supporting casts of jumbo creatures. *Never happened.*

Godzilla you know and love, but Gamera may be unfamiliar to you. He's a giant, fire-breathing turtle. He also flies by tucking his head and legs into his shell, then firing jets from his shell-holes while spinning wildly around and around. Sometimes the jet-blasts come from just his rear legs so we can see his head and front legs. He doesn't spin when he flies in the rear-jet mode. (Kind of makes Godzilla seem plausible by comparison.) Gamera's starred in at least eight movies. I've seen five; all highly recommended, of course.

So I'll re-file *Godzilla vs. Gamera* under pure fantasy for now. But maybe someday...





On the Road with Keith Kuralt "It's all down hill to Poughkeepsie"

"My God man, what have you done for the last twelve months?" exclaimed my faithful often sarcastic man-servant Lumpy.

"Well, I've been layin' around the house in my underwear, suckin' down beers and watchin' ESPN. (Asshole)" I reply in my own ever superior brand of sarcasm.

Lumpy did have a point though. Here we were, about to embark on our annual pilgrimage to Poughkeepsie, NY for the Hudson Valley Historical Miniatures Guild (HVHMG) Show and all I had to enter was a pair of 5mm mating toads and a dwarf wizard missing a leg. (I was sure I'd find that leg before we got to the show.) Lumpy, on the other hand had a scratch built 25mm Baneblade Battle Tank with operational components and real laser optics.

"I could've made a 25mm Baneblade Battle Tank with operational components and real laser optics if I wanted to. I just didn't want to" I explained with some degree of smugness as we packed Lumpy's jeep for the trip. "I have the 5mm Mating Toad category all sewed up... if they have one" I continued, trailing off to a whisper. Lumpy just shook his head and finished packing.

Once in the car, Lumpy couldn't find his tapes. "Homie don drive two houas on da Tru-Way widout no tapes." So Lumpy gets out and opens the back door and... "Thud-crunch-ping-ping-ping." Out plops half his 25mm figures onto my gravel driveway. Being that it's still dark, (way too early for human beings) we're crawling around the driveway with flashlights in our teeth trying to find figures and vehicles and parts of figures and vehicles. Once all was found, Lumpy quips "No problem, these Ork vehicles can be wrecks on my 25mm scratch built Baneblade Battle Tank with operational components and real laser optics diorama." I almost rolled my eyes right out the back of my head.

Finally, we're off. No fog, the sun coming up and the tunes blasting away. "It must be time for our first stop for coffee." And Damn the Thruway rest stops are open. It was truly a beautiful thang. Yes, Yes.

Everything went well until we got off the Thruway, zigged and zagged down RT 299 and 9W and attempted to cross the bridge into Poughkeepsie (Lord that's a hell of a thing to spell), where we met with a 25 minute wait to cross due to construction. No matter, Lumpy was in high spirits when we reached the Animal Lodge where the show was. I was also hopeful, but for another reason. I was sporting some mighty cheap paint to sell in the dealers area to all those modelers and miniaturists.

I set up the booth while Lumpy spent the next hour putting out his diorama and assorted minis. One outstanding thing about this show is that there's always plenty of coffee and donuts right outside the dealers area. Lumpy was in such a good mood, he watched the booth a half-a-dozen times while I wandered off to cop a smoke and load up on that coffee.

At last the judging was done and the awards were about to be given out. At this point Lumpy usually stands near the judges podium to collect MY assorted plaques and wards while I pack up the booth and get stuff ready to go. Alas, this was not to be in '93. Lumpy pulled down no less than four awards. One for a Griffin figure and three including a big old plaque for his 25mm scratch-built whada-ya-call-it. My sole satisfaction in all of this was the Master of Ceremonies mispronounced Lumpy's name every time he handed him an award.

And yet, even as the ceremony drew to a close, I could hardly believe I had gotten no recognition for my 5mm mating toads or my one legged dwarf. I suppose I should have expected this, but I didn't let it bother me. The fact that I didn't win anything, or the fact that our sales were only moderate, or even that an inferior being like Lumpy had such a good showing. It was just that DAMN SHIT EATING GRIN on his ugly face, for the whole two hour drive home that drove me completely MAD!!!

There's nothing my unbearable than a happy Lumpy!

Next year I'm gonna make one of those scratch built things with moving parts and laser dangly bits and let that guy at the podium mispronounce my name. Then I'll be eatin' shit all the way home and we'll see how Lumpy likes it!



**Music Tames the Savage Beast or Why I
Discovered the True Faith and
Began Collecting Godzilla Movies**

by
Pete Huston



Mothra... even the name conjures up visions of cosmic forces beyond our understanding. Naturally with such as inspiration there must be a musical paean to express the inexpressible.

The plot bears a startling similarity to many other movies, but so do many other classics. We cannot belittle them for this, for if stupid plots and derivatiness were any standard by which to judge great works. then the Book of Mormon would have disappeared long ago and yet it flourishes. (I read this in comic book form just last week. Don't bother.) (Ed's note - We at the Droppings wish to state that Pete's opinions on Mormons are strictly his own! We do not judge anyone on their religious beliefs or the lack thereof. I know Mormons have lots of guns so go look for Pete if you have any problems, not me. Hell they don't even pay me to do this!)

Picasso had nothing to work with but art supplies and so it is with the people who brought us Mothra. It rises above its humble beginnings

syncretizing various elements from other films, purifying them in the process and yet surpassing them to create something new and better in the process. An original.

To show my devotion I have learned all the words to the Mothra song by heart. "Maaawwwtttthhheerrraaaahhhhh!!" I repeat many times in my best high pitched voice. Not only does this mantra make me feel good and give me the energy to meet the challenges of a new day, but it is also how the little one foot tall people of Monster Island survive since Mothra is their guardian protector who comes when called with his song. Lo to those who might kidnap the little people and place them in a Tokyo night club act! They do so at their own peril. And after all, what's good enough for the queen of the Monster Island pygmies is more than good enough for me.

Of course as all of you must know the Mothra song is not the most spiritually oriented song ever placed in a Japanese monster movie. That award must go to the classic film Attack of the Mushroom People which bears the classic line, "once you start to eat the mushrooms then you will become a mushroom too. And once you start to eat the mushrooms you can never stop. Hee hee hee hee hee hee hee, etc."

You know the older I get the more I realize that a lot of things in life are like that. (Ed's note - like crack.) Makes me quiver deep inside every time I think about it.

In the beginning of this film a group of Japanese are on a boat and are about to be shipwrecked in fifteen minutes on an island that has been used for atomic testing. It's not obvious how long they have been on this boat in the middle of the ocean so they begin to introduce themselves to each other in mismatched dubbed voices. One attractive woman in a large potato sack style bikini (circa early 1960s) announces that she is an actress so naturally they all insist that she sing a song.

The message apparently is that singing is good for all of us. Not just singers, but actresses, auto mechanics, potato peelers, Asian bums, any state workers that might exist and game store operators too.

She dances around the boat for about a full three minutes singing the following ode to seamanship or love or any other number of great themes:

"La la la la la la la la... la la la... la la la la... etc." but at this point it begins to repeat itself, since I think that the translators got a little lazy.

Oh well, I'm sure that it's really all quite wonderful in a Zen sort of way and analogous to all those monks who sit around trying to wash bathroom wall tiles until they become "a mirror to see one's true self in."

And then there's Godzilla, a Christ like figure in any sense of the word. (Ed's note - I'll bet the Mormons don't think he's Christ like Pete.) Slain by an ignorant mankind and then risen; there when truly needed but elusive to those who search for him out of petty reasons or simply because they desire proof of his existence and suffer for their lack of faith. Scourging mankind and showing him the pettiness of his creations, but still there when truly needed. Protecting us from Ghidrah and Rhodan, but not from ourselves. Teaching us humility.

Still, for some reason there is no Godzilla song that I know of. Oh of course there's the Blue Oyster Cult smash mega hit all time classic entitled simply, "Godzilla", but that's really only spiritual in an Amy Grant/Mambo-Voodoo/Don't think-jump up and down sort of way. Amy, after all is the one who tried to introduce the concept of "vapidity" into Christian/pop thinking. And with great success I might add. At last, even cheerleaders and other bimbos can enjoy all the benefits of bubble gum-popcorn theology.

But for those of us who are truly deep religious thinkers we need something with substance. A whole wheat spongy sort of inspirational music that we can really sink our teeth into and build bricks out of. Therefore I offer the following which fits in quite nicely to the tune of "O Come all ye faithful":

"Oh come all ye monsters, Joyful and triumphant.
Oh come ye, oh come ye to To-o-ky-o!!
Come and destroy us, Kick down our buildings.
Oh come let us run from him, oh come let us run from him,
Oh come let us run from him, Oh no Godzilla!!"

Oh there goes the fire department,
Stomped in little pieces,
And there goes the army,
stomped, stomped, all stomped."

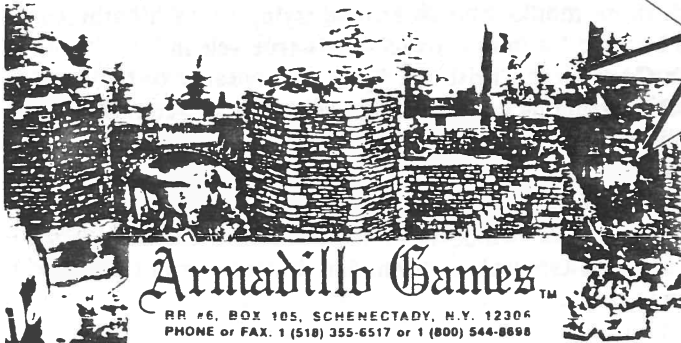
O.K. so it doesn't fit perfectly perhaps, but wasn't that what the great films themselves were trying to teach us whenever they showed us scenes with Raymond Burr? One doesn't need to fit in perfectly to be part of something good.

Bless you all and have a nice day.

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CAPSULE REVIEWS

by
Ed Rotondaro



This edition of Capsule Reviews will once again concentrate on the latest offerings for two of gaming's hottest titles, **BATTLETECH** and **CYBERPUNK 2020**.

In the months since the last issue of the Droppings, FASA Corporation has been quite busy releasing supplements for Battletech. The latest scenario pack is "Day of Heroes", a 103 page booklet (\$12.00) that covers the continuing adventures of the "Gray Death Legion". For those unfamiliar with the Battletech universe, the Gray Death Legion is one of the premier mercenary units in the game, and was also responsible for the rediscovery of Star League Era lost technology.

The pack consists of seventeen scenarios that cover the Gray Death's battles in the war of 3039, the Clan invasion and finally the Second Skye Rebellion of 3056. The usual background information is included along with Mechwarrior stats for selected members of the Gray Death Legion. I have one gripe regarding these stats, they are way too low for such "legendary mechwarriors". Now I realize that FASA is trying to create "balanced" characters, but there is no way that an elite mechwarrior has gunnery and piloting skills of 4 and 5 respectively. These people have been around for over twenty-five years, they should be a lot tougher than that.

The battles run the gamut from small unit actions with armor, infantry and mechs all the way up to massive company versus company actions. To speed up play, this pack includes some optional rules for movement whereby players move a full lance instead of a single mech. Other rules cover the use of Inner Sphere powered armor, portable sensors and the effects of bad weather and rough terrain on combat and movement.

Generally the scenarios lack balance, but that's typical of FASA. The background material is useful to a GM running a campaign, but overall I recommend this only to die hard fans of Battletech and rate it B+.

Solaris the Reaches (\$15.00) is a new MechWarrior supplement that gives you more detail on the seamier side (what a redundancy!) of the gaming world of Solaris. Included in this supplement is a booklet detailing the outer environs of Solaris City along with five maps of smaller arenas that up and coming mech warriors can test their skills in. Most of these arenas are too small to even consider for any kind of serious battle. Also included are the backgrounds of several smaller mechwarrior stables and stats for three new arena battlemechs. New optional rules are included to reflect the many types of damage a mech can take during arena combat.

My main gripe with this supplement is that most of what is included should have been in the original Solaris VII boxed set. Apparently FASA is

finally getting the message that in order to run a good campaign, a GM needs detailed background materials such as generic NPCs, typical room layouts and even encounter reaction tables, all of which are included in this supplement. Still, there is some decent material for a GM running a mechwarrior campaign based on Solaris VII. Overall I rate this one A-.

Hot Spots is the very latest offering for Battletech/Mechwarrior (\$12.00). It consists of two booklets, one for the players and one for the GM. The players book lists typical mercenary contracts on a wide variety of worlds. Details regarding the contracts, pay scale, supply availability, opposition forces, planetary conditions and local politics.

The GMs booklet lists the same things, but in much more detail! The real politics behind the contract are revealed along with a system for generating opposition forces for campaigns set in 3025, 3050 and 3055. It appears that somebody with a brain finally realized that a lot of Battle Tech players are not following the FASA linear universe and like running their campaigns before the advent of the Clans and high tech. The opposition generation charts alone make this supplement a standout, and the political updates give the GM a lot of flexibility when designing a campaign.

Hot Spots offers mechwarriors everything from garrison duty to full scale raids against Clan held worlds along with the petty intrigues of planetary governors and far flung corporations. There are modifiers for the size of the players unit, currency conversion, how friendly the natives are and even pregenerated damage to the opposition forces (**at last, pirates come in with battle weary mechs instead of mint condition units!**)

Hot Spots is one of the best thought out Battletech/MechWarrior supplements to date. It fills in many of the gaps that a GM needs to run a balanced campaign in any time line. Overall this one rates an A++! Buy it now!

R. Talsorian Games has released several new items for Cyberpunk. One of the most interesting is "Home of the Brave", a source book for America in the dark future (\$14.00). This ambitious product gives players and GMs the details necessary to run a Cyberpunk campaign just about anywhere in the US. The book starts off with a somewhat revised timeline that shows how America became Cyberpunk. Other chapters detail the new America along with wages, living conditions and typical citizens. Religions, travel, sports and education are all covered along with music and entertainment.

A large portion of the book is devoted to what government still exists along with the size, equipment and mission of the army, navy, marines and air force. It is here that the quality of the writing really shines. Mike MacDonald, Craig Sheely and the rest of the contributors realize that even the corporations can only go so far with the US government. While the Feds can't police the whole country, they can and will kick ass when required. Even the Euros fear the space forces of the Air Force who have standing orders to vaporize the Crystal Palace in the event of war.

The bulk of the book covers the various regions of the US along with new and existing cities, industries and local politics. Lots of plot hooks are included for GMs to run adventures in any part of the country.

Home of the Brave's strongest features are its return to reality. Too often Cyberpunk games and supplements spin off into anarchistic fire fights. No society can possibly hope to function if it's that busted. There has to be some sort of order outside the corp zones despite the wild imaginings of the writers. Home of the Brave does a good job of fleshing out the dark future of the Cyberpunk 2020 universe. I recommend it to all 'punks looking for some reality in their campaigns. Overall A++.

Deep Space (\$12.00) is the new Cyberpunk supplement that replaces the original now out of print Near Orbit. Like its predecessor, Deep Space lets you take Cyberpunk to the final frontier. It incorporates all the material found in Near Orbit along with new data on Mars, Jupiter and the rest of the solar system. New spacecraft are revealed along with equipment and skills. Interesting artwork depicts such things as the dreaded lunar mass drivers that ESA uses to keep the US in line along with the newest deep space exploration vessels. A multi-part adventure rounds out this package.

Deep Space is generally well thought out, but I have reservations about its usefulness to most C-punks. Do you really want to bring your characters out to space where they can't use most of the weapons, and run the risk of radiation damage or death from depressurization?

Overall Deep Space is well written, but will only appeal to GMs who either intend to run a campaign based in space, or who feel the need to challenge the players with an adventure where they are not in their element. Overall I rate it A-.

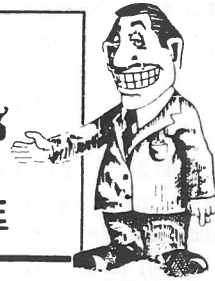
Finally for all Battletech fans there is a new fanzine entitled "The Mech Factory" available for \$4.25 a copy. The new 'zine is quite well done with crisp graphics and a very slick layout. Its contents include new 'mech designs, new tech items and a column of answers to rules questions from FASA via Genie on-line. Like most fanzines, the Mech Factory has its share of questionable rules and tech items, but overall the publishers seem to have a good grasp of what the players are interested in. Subscriptions are \$11.00 a year for three issues. Send your payments to The Mech Factory, care of Gregg Dieckhaus, 1223 Dunloe, St. Louis, MO 63201. Make your checks payable to Gregg Dieckhaus.

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MYSTIC GATE BBS: Mystic Gate BBS is a new on line computer gaming bulletin board. There are two different lines, a high speed line capable of 14.4K baud (518-762-3385) and a roll over number capable of 2400 Baud (518-762-3382). The BBS is part of the FIDO NET and has just started a new section on play by E-Mail gaming for role players. Marc Shamon one of the Droppings contributing editors will be the main sub-sysop for the gaming and will be assisted by Tim Rowe. Marc is currently running a RIFTS game and Tim will be running ShadowRun. They are currently taking new gamers and GMs all the time. Be forewarned: this particular BBS has a mature theme and would prefer not to have kids on line.

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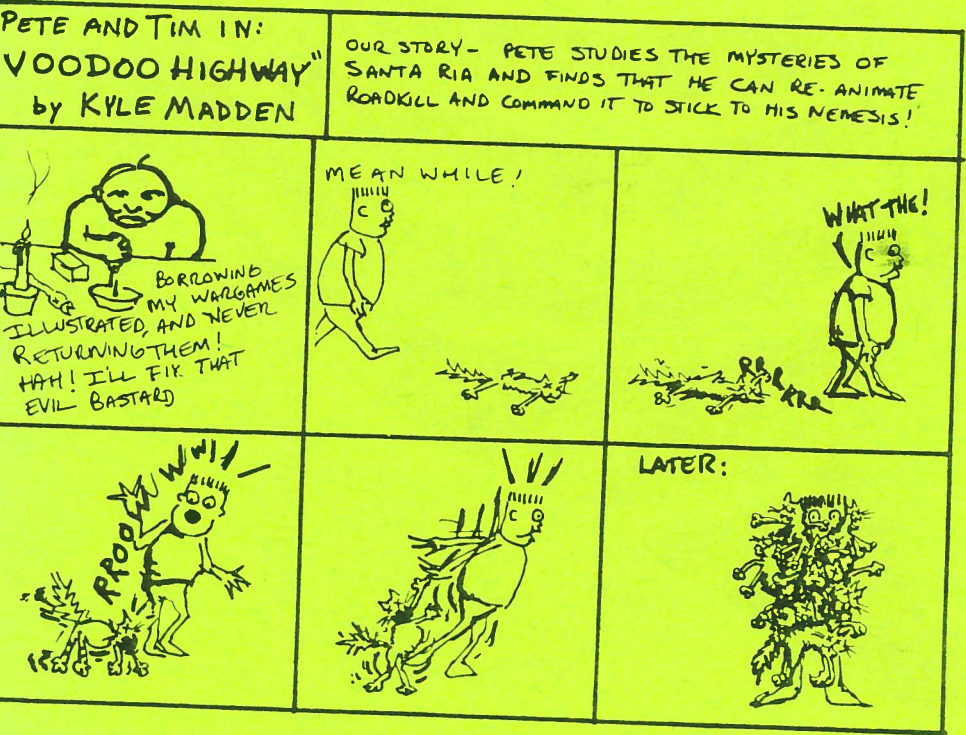
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