

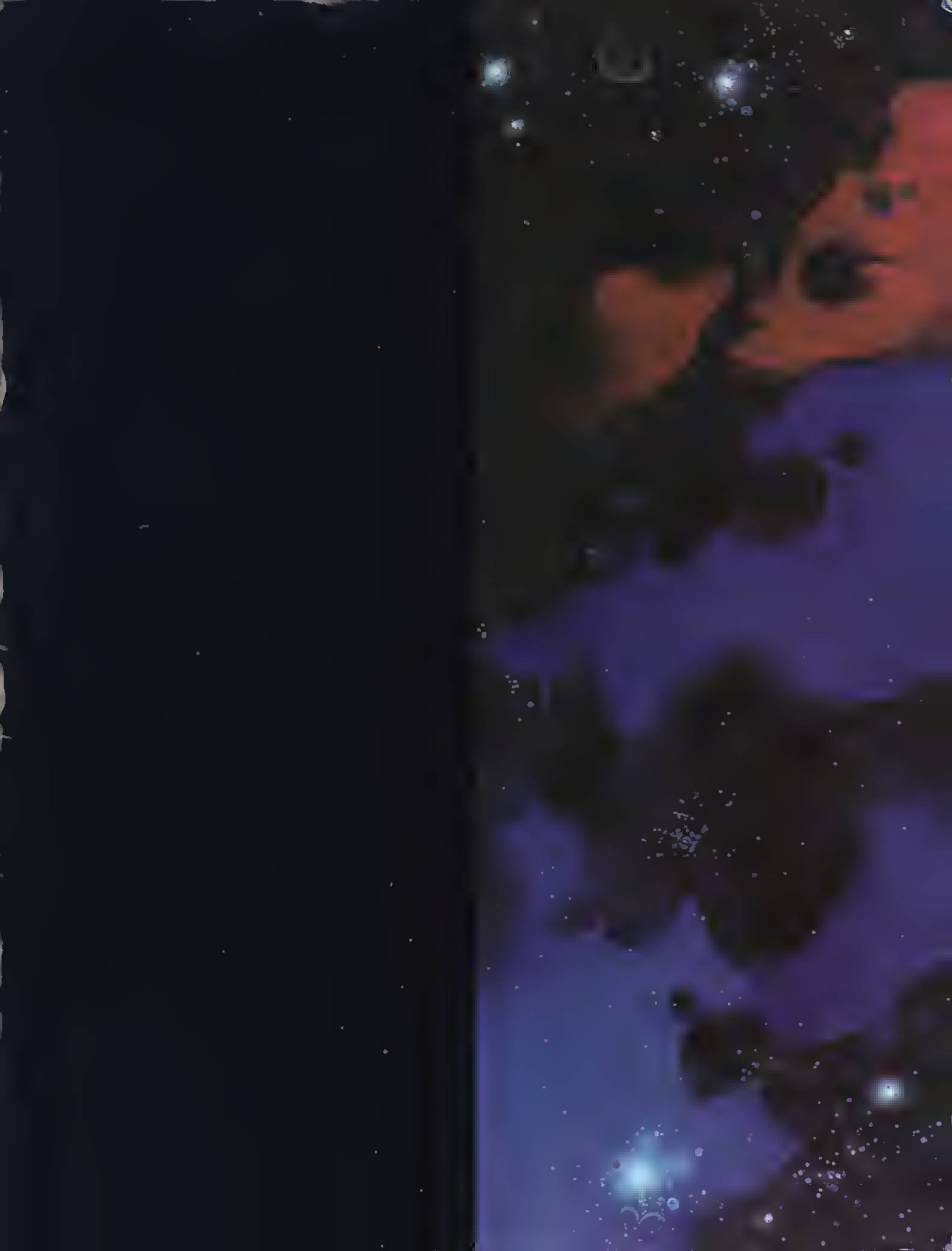
ADVENTURES IN TIME AND SPACE

# DR. WATCHSTOP



**KEN MACKLIN**





# DR. WATCHSTOP

ADVENTURES IN TIME AND SPACE

by **KEN MACKLIN**

ECLIPSE  BOOKS

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# On Being Ken Macklin

by Raymond E. Feist

*Little did Diego DeRivar know that the treasure ship Golden Falcon, sailing out of the harbor with the evening tide, was carrying his beloved Donna Ellena Franchesca Sanchez away from him.*

Oh? Excuse me. I was indulging myself in a flight of fancy, to wit a pirate story, which you can't give away these days, so this is as close as I'll ever get to seeing one I've written in print. But the above sentence illustrates something that really does have relevance to our topic today, "On Being Ken Macklin." For the above sentence is what they call in Lit. 101 *dramatic irony*. And things ironic have much to do with the art of Ken Macklin.

*Who?* The guy who wrote and drew the book you're holding, except for this part you're reading now, which I wrote. Why am I writing this one bit? Because Ken asked me to, and he's a friend, and besides one or two of you out there may have read something I've written; you may even think that I know what I'm talking about and be impressed with the book because my name's in it somewhere. Which is silly, because if you turn the page you quickly realize the reason to be impressed is Ken's work.

To be Ken Macklin, I think, you have to have a slightly whacked sense of *How Things Are*. The Doctor Watchstop stories illustrate this to a faretheewell. But wait...a slight digression. For to be Ken Macklin, one would feel the need to explain something about the age of these stories. So, then, on the age of these stories: some of them are close to ten years old, and some are relatively new, so they show varying levels of polish, or so Ken would have you believe—because another thing about being Ken Macklin is that the work on the easel is barely adequate, the work done last month is unacceptable, and anything older than a year should be burned. For to be Ken Macklin is to be overly critical of one's own work (though he does take occasional delight in thinking this bit of that is particularly good). Now, back to *How Things Are*...

Even the oldest Doctor Watchstop shows that Ken thinks *things are not always what they seem to be*: what I like to call the "so you think you're so smart school" of humor. Dramatic irony, mentioned above, is what lit professors call it when the reader knows more than the characters, and by the end of just about every Doctor Watchstop story, the reader usually knows more than the hapless characters.

Ken delights in images of improbable critters undertaking ridiculous tasks. Preposterous situations, unlikely revelations, dubious invitations, implausible locations, and quirky characters abound in his work, and each illustration, from cover

art to comic story, tells its own tale. For to be Ken Macklin is to be able to put an incredible amount of information in a single picture. And what makes Ken's work unusually original and visually accomplished is not just his attention to detail, but knowing when less is more.

Often Ken trusts the viewer of the art, the reader of the story, to fill in the blanks. For to be Ken Macklin is not to hit you over the head with the obvious, but to let you discover the dry wit and gentle insanity of the universe as he sees it. Often you'll see a picture where you'll *know* what's on the left side of the picture, just out of view. That's a gift. And what's more, it's a brilliant gift when it's "the thing you can't see just on the left side of the picture, just out of view, but you *know* what it is" that *makes* the picture funny. What's amazing to me is the number of times I've looked at a Macklin painting without having a clue as to what's going on, *until I read the title*. Then all is made clear.

One of my favorites shows a small, furry magician (most of Ken's critters are furry or have scales; humans are of marginal interest to him) upon whom sits what appears to be an outsized dragon. You can't be sure if it's a dragon because the head of the creature is out of the frame. But it's *big!* As amusing as this image is, it's not clear what's going on until you read the title, which is "The Wrong Spell." That's the sort of humor that knocks me out. In this, Ken shares a singular view of the universe, a canted perspective that in its own way is as unique to him as Gary Larson's *The Far Side* or Jerry Van Amerongen's very twisted *The Neighborhood* are to their creators. And like those two talented artists, Ken lets you in on the joke. What is more, to be Ken Macklin is to invite you to share in the joy of discovering that there are others around who are just as likely to mess up as often as you do. Characters who, despite otherwise good intentions, determination, and talent, just somehow always manage to make a hash of things.

To be Ken Macklin is to love art enough to be frustrated by one's own shortcomings, yet intrigued by one's possibilities. And to be Ken Macklin is to ride motorcycles hither and yon and to have friends and fans in every part of the globe. To be Ken Macklin is to be a wise, fortunate, gifted, and talented fellow. And to be Ken Macklin is to be a man I am very pleased to count a friend.

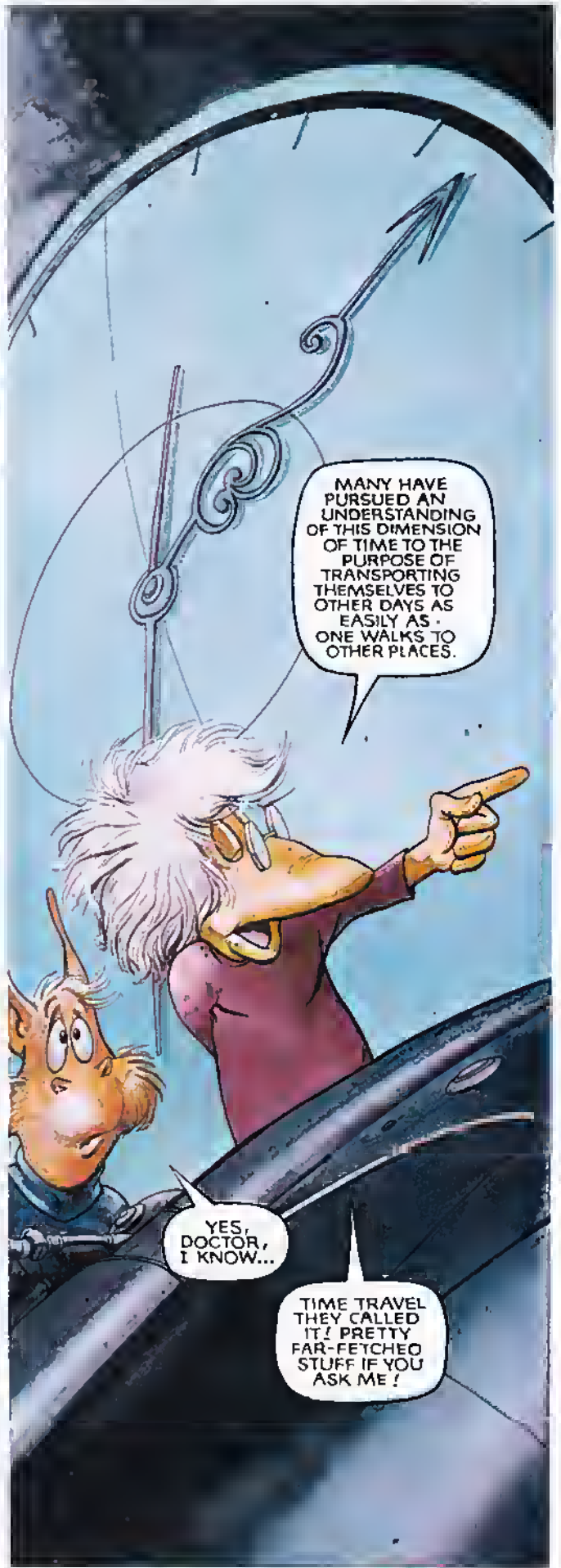
I recommend to you the work you're about to read. And let it be but an introduction to the work of Ken Macklin. For to be Ken Macklin is to know the best is yet to come.







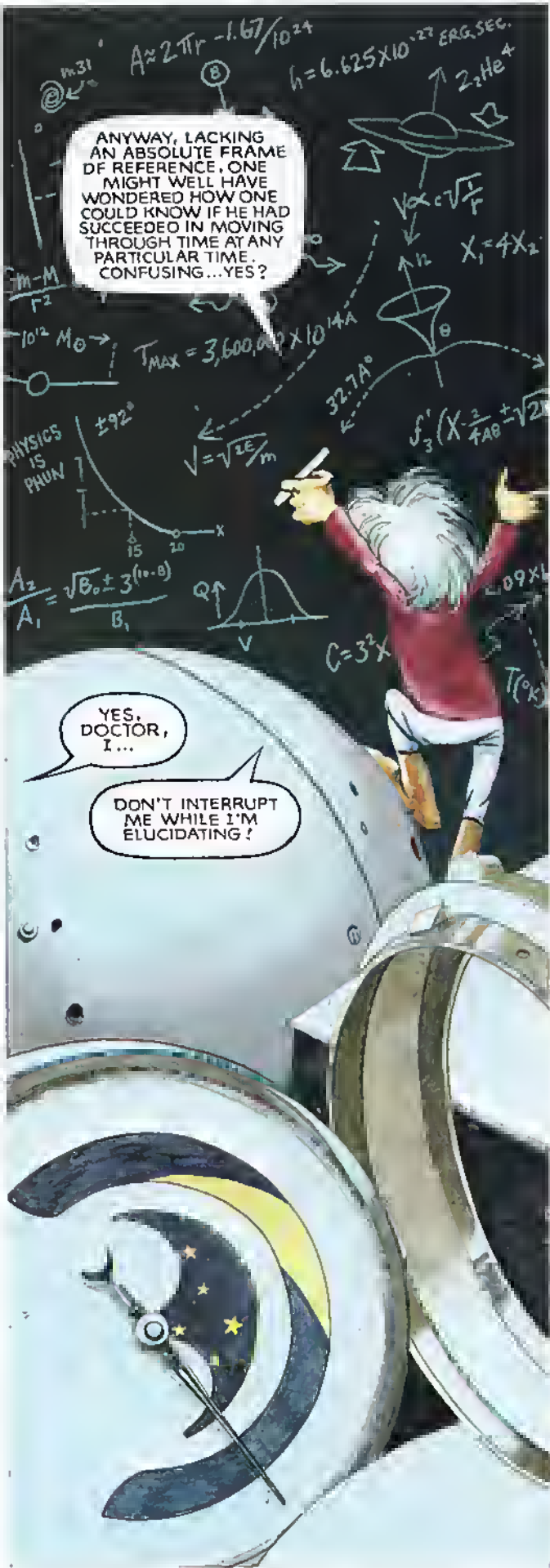
HERE, IN MY LAB, I'M CHALLENGING OUR PLACE IN TIME OR THE TIME OF THE REST OF THE COSMOS TO OURS, DON'T YOU SEE!



MANY HAVE PURSUED AN UNDERSTANDING OF THIS DIMENSION OF TIME TO THE PURPOSE OF TRANSPORTING THEMSELVES TO OTHER DAYS AS EASILY AS ONE WALKS TO OTHER PLACES.

YES, DOCTOR, I KNOW...

TIME TRAVEL THEY CALLED IT! PRETTY FAR-FETCHED STUFF IF YOU ASK ME!









THIS WONDERFUL FEAT WAS ONLY ACCOMPLISHED WITH THE HELP OF YOUR NOTES, THE NOTES YOU LEFT (OR WILL LEAVE) FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS TO COME! I CAN'T REMOVE YOU FROM YOUR TIME, OF COURSE, OR SHARE THE SECRETS OF OUR TIME WITH YOU... THAT MIGHT BE CHANGING HISTORY! BUT, I CAN PERSONALLY COMMEND YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO OUR SUCCESS, AND THE SUCCESS OF MEGALITH ENTERPRISES, THE CORPORATION THAT FINANCED THE RESEARCH!

... WITH MY NOTES?! THEN I'M NOT TO BREAK THE BARRIER TO TIME TRAVEL IN MY LIFETIME?



I THINK, PERHAPS, I SHALL STOP KEEPING NOTES.

END





# DR. Watchstop

One cell at a time

... BUT YOU MUST COME BACK WITH ME TO THE INSTITUTE ...

BUT ... I LIKE IT HERE.

... I HAVE SEEN A TREMENDOUS VARIETY OF FAUNA, BUT, YOU SEE, NONE EVEN APPROXIMATE YOUR UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS.



NOW, SEE, VERY EMINENT ZOOLOGISTS WILL BE MOST ANXIOUS TO MEET YOU AND LEARN MORE ABOUT YOU. THERE'S NO UNPLEASANTNESS INVOLVED AND YOU MIGHT BE GRANTED A GOOD SUM OF MONEY!

MONEY? WHAT'S MONEY?

Hmmm... YES, I SUPPOSE MONETARY COMPENSATION WOULD HAVE A DUBIOUS VALUE TO A SIMPLE PHOTOSYNTHETIC CREATURE, BUT YOU MUST CONSIDER THE HONOR OF HAVING YOUR OWN CHAPTER IN THE EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL BIOLOGY BOOKS!



I CAN'T READ.

NOW LOOK HERE... ABOVE ALL, YOU HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO THE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY! YOU ARE UNIQUE! WON'T YOU RECONSIDER?









# DE Watchstop

ON TIME BOMB

FIFTY-FIVE MILLION YEARS AGO, OUR TIME, A LOST RACE OF BEINGS BUILT THIS CITY-MACHINE. IN ITS TIME, IT MUST HAVE BEEN THE ACME OF THEIR TECHNOLOGY, A TRUE CELEBRATION OF MECHANICS AND ENERGY!

WHAT A PILE OF JUNK.



≡beep≡...INTRUDER ALERT... ALIEN BEINGS ENTERING LEVEL FOUR... ≡beep≡

NOW, DON'T BE SO CYNICAL, MORTON. EVEN AN UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT LIKE YOURSELF CAN APPRECIATE THE UNIVERSAL APPLICATIONS OF PHYSICS AS EVIDENCED IN MANY OF THE WONDERS WE'VE SEEN.

SURE, DOC, I KNOW. BUT IF THESE GUYS WERE SO CLEVER, WHY AREN'T THEY STILL AROUND?





INDEED, ALL THINGS CHANGE, BUT I'M REALLY NOT SURE WHY THEY LEFT WHEN THEY DID. YOU SEE, LAD, THERE WAS STILL AMPLE ENERGY... MANY OF THE MONITORS ARE STILL FUNCTIONING FROM POWER CELLS, EVEN AFTER ALL THIS TIME.



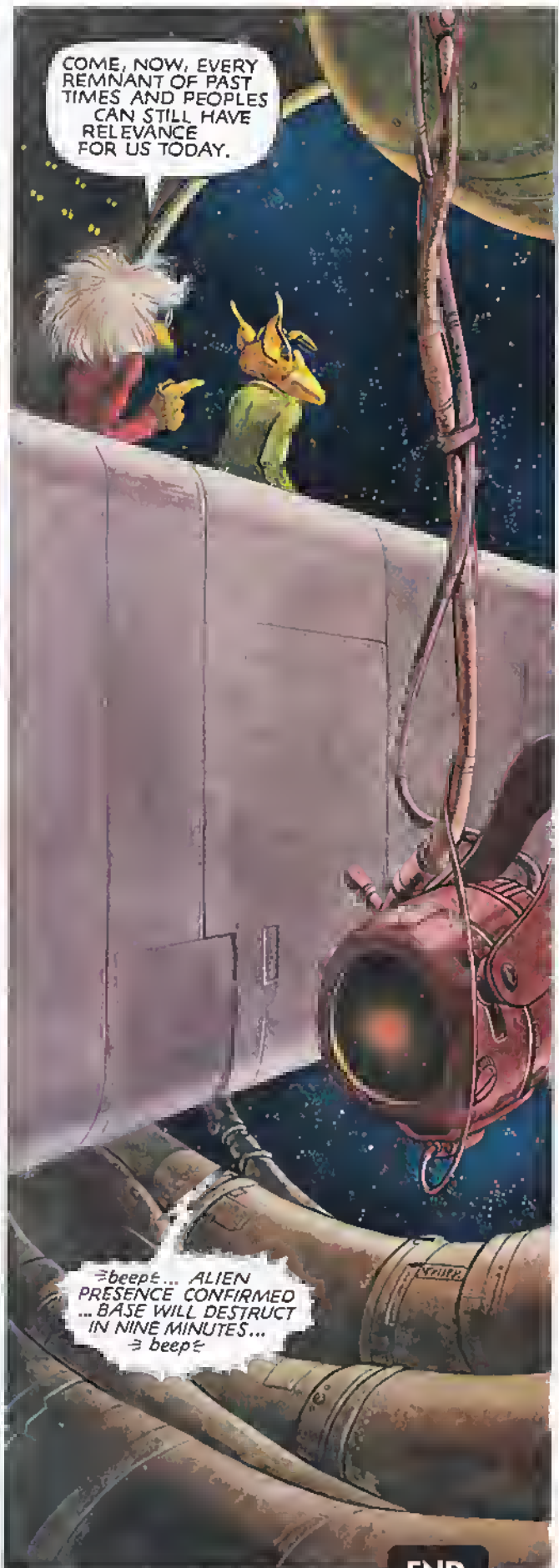
... SECONDARY SENSORS ACTIVATED... *≡beep≡* IMPLOSION BOMB ARMED... AWAITING CONFIRMATION... *≡beep≡*

MY THEORY IS THAT THIS WAS A MILITARY INSTALLATION BUILT FOR A WAR THAT NEVER TOOK PLACE.

SO WHAT WAS THE POINT? IT TOOK A HECKUVA LOT OF MAN HOURS TO BUILD THIS PLACE. PROBABLY KEPT SOME ALIEN ECONOMY GOING FOR A FEW MONTHS.



LOOK, DOCTOR,  
TRACKING SCREENS  
STILL SCAN THE  
LOCAL SECTOR FOR  
SHIPS THAT RUSTED  
CENTURIES AGO.  
THIS STATION IS  
JUST A MEANING-  
LESS RELIC!



COME, NOW, EVERY  
REMNANT OF PAST  
TIMES AND PEOPLES  
CAN STILL HAVE  
RELEVANCE  
FOR US TODAY.

≡beep≡... ALIEN  
PRESENCE CONFIRMED  
...BASE WILL DESTROY  
IN NINE MINUTES...  
≡beep≡

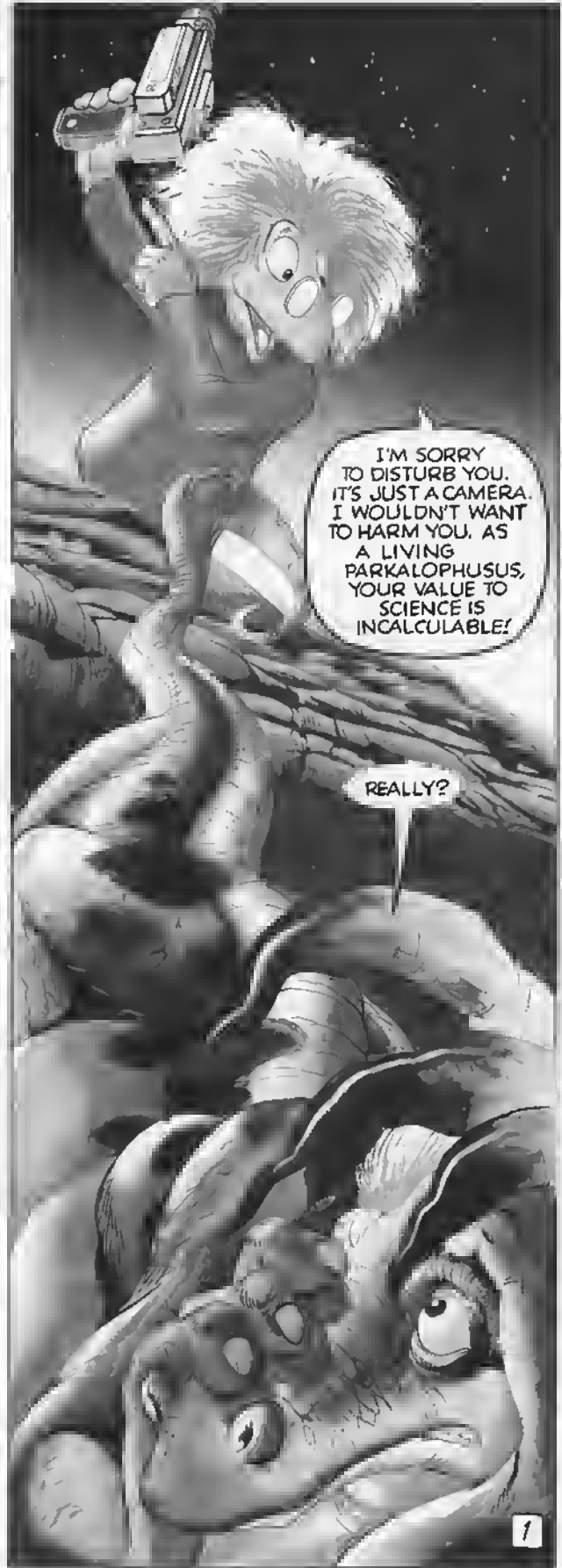
END

Dr. **Watchstop**  
IN  
"UNIQUE SPECIMEN"



DON'T SHOOT!

STORY AND ART: KEN MACKLIN  
LETTERING: L. LOIS BUHALIS



I'M SORRY TO DISTURB YOU. IT'S JUST A CAMERA. I WOULDN'T WANT TO HARM YOU. AS A LIVING PARKALOPHUSUS, YOUR VALUE TO SCIENCE IS INCALCULABLE!

REALLY??

1

THIS IS WONDERFUL...  
THOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN  
MANY SIGNS OF YOUR  
EXISTENCE, NONE HAVE  
BEEN SUBSTANTIATED  
WITH EVIDENCE...  
UNTIL NOW, OF  
COURSE.



IN TRUTH, YOU ARE THE  
ONLY REMARKABLE THING  
ABOUT THIS DESOLATE  
WORLD.



NO RESOURCES  
TO INTEREST  
INDUSTRIALIZED  
RACES... NO ARTIFACTS  
OF PAST CIVILIZATIONS,  
EVEN THE GEOLOGY  
IS NOT UNIQUE.



BUT NONETHELESS,  
HUNDREDS OF TEAMS  
OF SCIENTISTS HAVE  
COMBED THIS WORLD  
RECENTLY, HOPING  
TO FIND THE  
LEGENDARY  
PARKALOPHUSUS.  
THAT'S YOU!



WELL, THEY  
CAN ALL STOP  
LOOKING FURTHER.  
I'M THE ONLY ONE  
OF MY KIND.





NO OTHERS?

NO FAMILY,  
NOPE... JUST ME...  
ROAMING THE  
BARREN PLAINS  
ALONE... AWAITING  
EXTINCTION.



MY HEART GOES  
OUT TO YOU. I  
CONFESS THAT MY  
INTENTION WAS  
TO OFFER YOU A  
POSITION OF  
PERMANENT  
EXHIBIT AT THE  
INTERSOLAR  
ZOOLOGICAL  
SOCIETY ZOO  
ON POLLUX IV  
WHERE ALL  
YOUR NEEDS  
WOULD BE  
MET.

...BUT OUT  
OF RESPECT  
FOR YOUR  
SITUATION AND  
MOST PRIVATE  
SADNESS, I'M  
CONTENT TO  
LEAVE YOU  
WITH YOUR  
DIGNITY AND  
REPORT  
NOTHING  
OF THIS.

FREE FOOD  
AND SHELTER FOR  
LIFE... I COULD GO  
FOR THAT!



WAIT!  
RECONSIDER...  
MY NEEDS WOULD  
BE FEW... FIVE  
MEALS A DAY, A  
POOL... PERHAPS  
SOME VIDEO  
ENTERTAINMENT..

I'M SURE THE  
CURATORS ON  
POLLUX IV  
WOULD SEE  
THAT YOUR  
FINAL DAYS  
ARE  
PLEASANT.



SO, DO  
YOU THINK  
IT WORKED?  
SUPPOSE FRED  
GETS LONELY AND  
TELLS THEM THAT  
THERE ARE  
THREE MILLION  
MORE OF US  
DOWN HERE?

Oh, HE'LL  
PROBABLY  
GET BORED IN  
A COUPLE  
THOUSAND  
YEARS AND SPILL  
THE BEANS, BUT  
AT LEAST WE'LL  
HAVE SOME  
PEACE AND QUIET  
FOR A WHILE.

End

Dr. **Watchstop**  
IN  
"MODERN CULTURE"

SO, ARE YOU  
GONNA GO OUT  
WITH MONIKA  
ON SATURDAY?

I DUNNO.  
SHE'S BEING  
REALLY WEIRD  
LATELY.

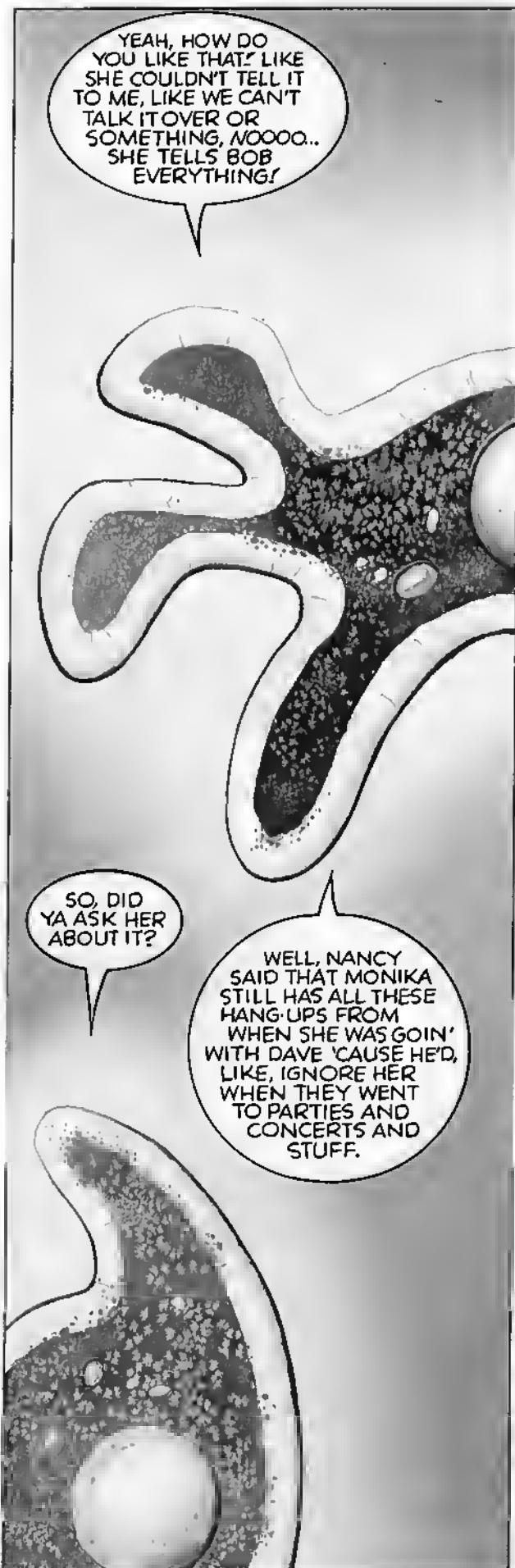
WHAT  
DO YOU  
MEAN?

STORY AND ART BY KEN MACKLIN  
LETTERING BY L. LOIS BUHALIS

WELL, SHE TOLD  
BOB THAT SHE THOUGHT  
I WAS HUNG UP ON BEVERLY,  
AND BEVERLY WALKED OUT ON  
ME 'CAUSE I WOULDN'T GO  
ON A DIET AND I SPENT TOO  
MUCH TIME ON THE PHONE.

SHE TOLD  
ALL THIS TO  
BOB?





YEAH, HOW DO YOU LIKE THAT? LIKE SHE COULDN'T TELL IT TO ME, LIKE WE CAN'T TALK IT OVER OR SOMETHING, NOOOO.. SHE TELLS BOB EVERYTHING!

SO, DID YA ASK HER ABOUT IT?

WELL, NANCY SAID THAT MONIKA STILL HAS ALL THESE HANG-UPS FROM WHEN SHE WAS GOIN' WITH DAVE 'CAUSE HE'D, LIKE, IGNORE HER WHEN THEY WENT TO PARTIES AND CONCERTS AND STUFF.

NANCY SAID THAT?

SHE GOT THE WHOLE STORY WHEN DAVE PUT THE MOVES ON MONIKA'S SISTER PATTY, NANCY'S ROOMMATE.

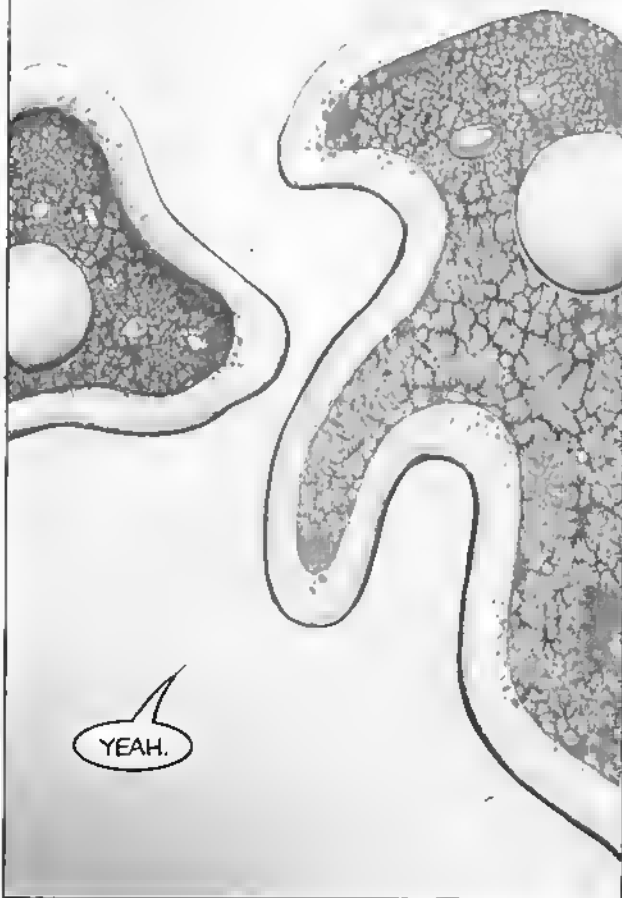
OH?

SO, SHE'S, LIKE,  
TELLIN' BOB THAT, LIKE,  
I'M TOO UPTIGHT AND  
CAN'T CUT LOOSE, AND  
THEN SHE TURNS AROUND  
AND TELLS NANCY THAT  
SHE DIDN'T LIKE DAVE  
'CAUSE HE WAS  
SUCH A PARTYHEAD!

THAT'S  
REALLY  
WEIRD.

YEAH.

I CAN'T  
UNDERSTAND IT!  
THEY'RE NOT  
REPRODUCING!



# DR. Watchstop

## IN "Right Stuff"

NOTHING CAN GO WRONG! IT'S A CINCH! I'LL MAKE HISTORY AND THE BABES'LL SWOON!

I DUNNO. COULDN'T WE JUST GO DOWN TO THE TAR PITS AND TALK THIS OVER?

RELAX! I'VE FIGURED IT ALL OUT. I'VE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT THE PREVAILING AIR CURRENTS, ANGLE OF ATTACK, SURFACE AREA, STRENGTH TO WEIGHT RATIO, AND LIFT. THERE'S NO WAY I CAN FAIL!



NO, REALLY, THAT'S A LONG WAY DOWN. COULDN'T YOU, LIKE, TRY IT IN THE VALLEY FIRST?





END



# DR. WATCHSTOP

## IN "Bugs"



JOVIAN  
COCKROACHES, ONE  
OF THE MOST  
DURABLE ANIMALS  
IN THE SOLAR  
SYSTEM.

THESE CREATURES  
CAN TOLERATE  
INCREDIBLE EXTREMES  
OF TEMPERATURE AND  
PRESSURE. THEY CAN  
ENDURE EXPOSURE TO  
HIGH AMOUNTS OF  
RADIATION.





THEY CAN LAST MONTHS WITHOUT FOOD AND CAN EAT ALMOST ANYTHING. THEY CAN THRIVE ALMOST ANYWHERE AND SEEM VIRTUALLY INDESTRUCTABLE.




LUCKILY, WE'RE BENEATH THEIR NOTICE.



END

# DR. Watchstop

## IN "Relic"



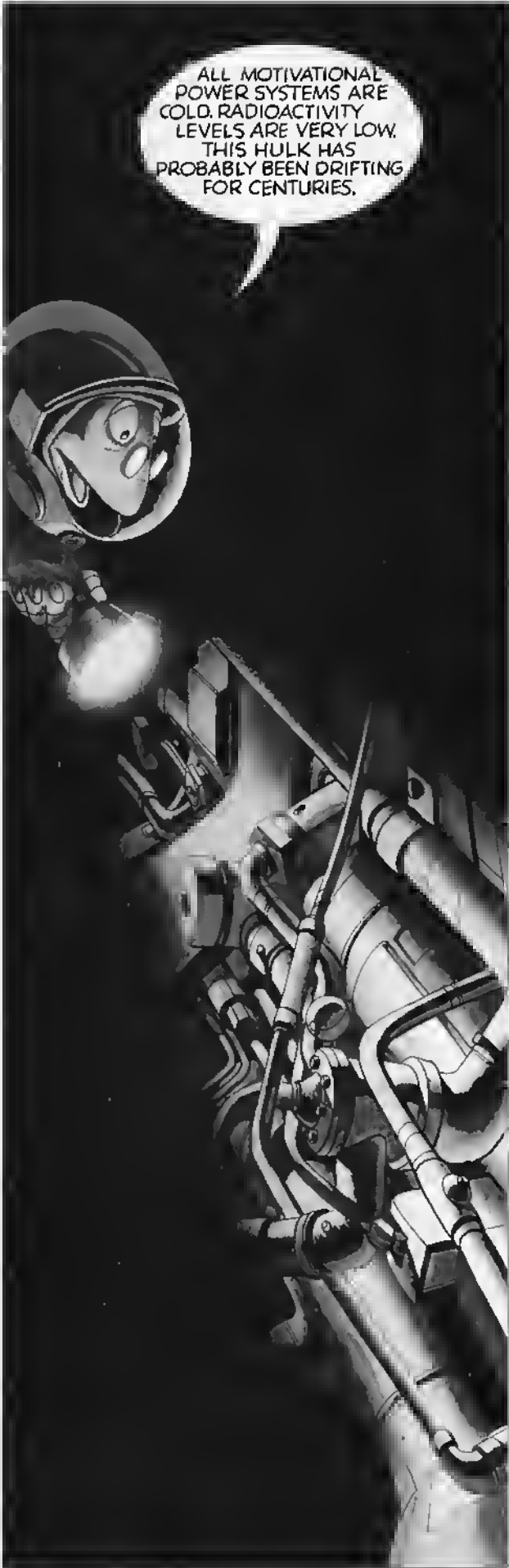
WE'RE ALMOST THROUGH THE BULKHEAD, PROFESSOR!




THERE YOU ARE, LAD, OUR FIRST LOOK INTO AN ABANDONED ALIEN SPACECRAFT!

GOSH, IT LOOKS PRETTY PRIMITIVE FOR AN INTERPLANETARY SHIP. SECOND LEVEL ATOMIC TECHNOLOGY, AT BEST.

Story and Art by KEN MACKLIN  
Lettering by L. LOIS BUHALIS




ALL MOTIVATIONAL  
POWER SYSTEMS ARE  
COLD. RADIOACTIVITY  
LEVELS ARE VERY LOW.  
THIS HULK HAS  
PROBABLY BEEN DRIFTING  
FOR CENTURIES.




THE DESIGN  
IS EXTREMELY  
ANTIQUATED. THESE  
GUIDANCE SYSTEMS  
DON'T EVEN HAVE  
GRAVITATIONAL  
FIELD COMPEN-  
SATORS!

IT'S HARD TO  
BELIEVE THIS THING  
EVER GOT ANYWHERE.  
SOME OF THE STEERING  
THRUSTER LINKAGES  
ARE ACTUALLY  
MECHANICAL!



AND THESE NAVIGATIONAL CONTROLS ARE INCREDIBLY CUMBERSOME AND PRONE TO ERROR. HARD TO BELIEVE ANCIENT BEINGS MANEUVERED BETWEEN PLANETS WITH THESE DISPLAYS!

THIS DOES HAVE SOME XENOARCHEOLOGICAL VALUE, HOWEVER. IT IS A FASCINATING ARTIFACT.



WHAT LUCK THAT OUR SHIP COLLIDED WITH IT!

End



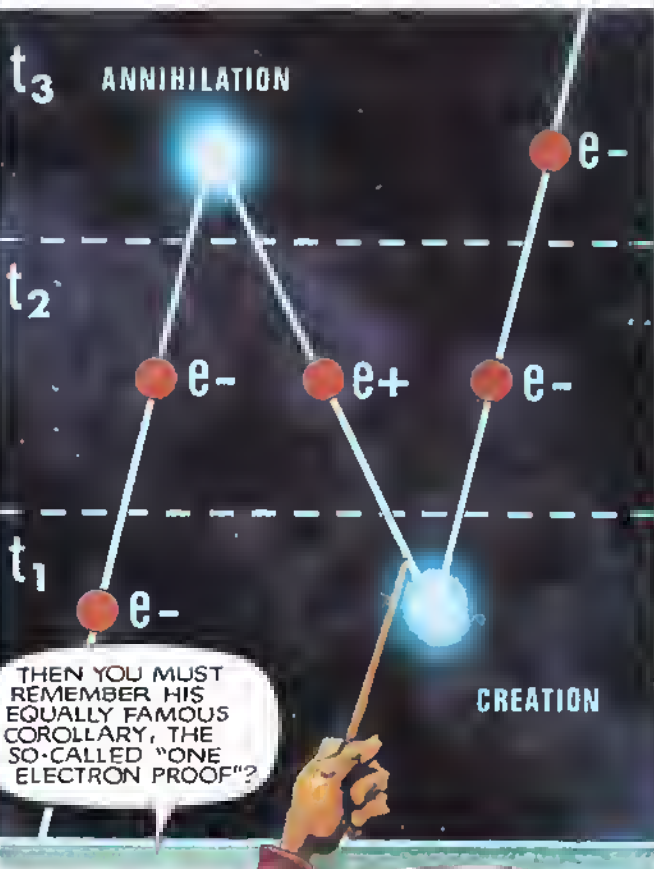
# Dr. Watchstop



## IN "THE SINGLE ELECTRON PROOF"

YOU ARE, OF COURSE, ACQUAINTED WITH THE NAME OF Dr. MARTIN BROCK?

CERTAINLY, PROFESSOR! HIS ELEGANT PROOF THAT ANTI-MATTER IS MERELY "NORMAL" MATTER MOVING BACKWARDS IN TIME RANKS WITH THE HAWKING UNIFIED FIELD THEORY AS A MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENT IN PHYSICS!




THEN YOU MUST REMEMBER HIS EQUALLY FAMOUS COROLLARY, THE SO-CALLED "ONE ELECTRON PROOF"?

CREATION


NATURALLY!

LET US REVIEW IT WITH THE AID OF THIS SIMPLE GRAPH. THE VERTICAL AXIS REPRESENTS TIME, THE HORIZONTAL, SPACE. AS YOU SEE, DURING THIS INSTANT OF TIME ( $t_1$ ), WE OBSERVE A SINGLE ELECTRON, AND THE CREATION OF AN ELECTRON ( $e^-$ )/POSITRON ( $e^+$ ) PAIR. REACHING INSTANT 2, WE FIND TWO  $e^-$ , AND A SINGLE  $e^+$ ... AND AT INSTANT 3, ONE OF THE ELECTRONS CONTINUES OFF INTO SPACE, WHILST THE OTHER IS "DESTROYED" IN A COLLISION WITH THE POSITRON.




HOWEVER, CONSIDERING THE GRAPH AS A WHOLE, THERE NEED ONLY BE A SINGLE ELECTRON, MOVING FORWARD IN TIME TO ITS "ANNIHILATION", BEING CHANGED TO A POSITRON, TRAVELING BACKWARDS TO ITS "CREATION", CHANGING BACK TO AN ELECTRON AND SO FORTH!

EVENTUALLY, IT COULD COVER THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE!



PRECISELY!  
Dr. BROCK ASSERTS THAT ONLY AT THE CREATION OF THE UNIVERSE WOULD ENOUGH CREATION / CONVERSIONS OCCUR, AND ONLY AT THE END, SUFFICIENT ANNIHILATION / CONVERSIONS -- AND ALL TIME AND SPACE WOULD POSE NO BARRIER WHATSOEVER.



THEN CONCEIVABLY, A SINGLE ELECTRON COULD BIND TOGETHER ALL MATTER IN THE UNIVERSE!

QUITE SO! HOWEVER, WHILE SCRUTINIZING Dr. BROCK'S EQUATIONS, I UNCOVERED AN ERROR! AT LAST, WITH THE AID OF THIS MACHINE, I SHALL DISPROVE HIS ERRONEOUS CONCLUSIONS. ITS FUNCTION IS TO UTTERLY DESTROY AN ELECTRON WITHOUT CHANGING IT TO A POSITRON!

BUT IF Dr. BROCK IS RIGHT, THE UNIVERSE MIGHT CEASE TO EXIST!

NO NEED TO WORRY!  
IT'S RIGHT ON PAGE 87,311  
OF THE CRC FORMULAE  
MANUAL! Dr. BROCK HAS

$Yt = 3nx \sqrt[1/6]{\sqrt{2r^2}}$   
WHEN HE SHOULD HAVE

$Yt = 3nx \sqrt[1/6]{\sqrt{2r^x}}$  !!  
I'VE DISCOVERED THE  
FLAW IN THE ONE-  
ELECTRON PROOF!  
OBSERVE!

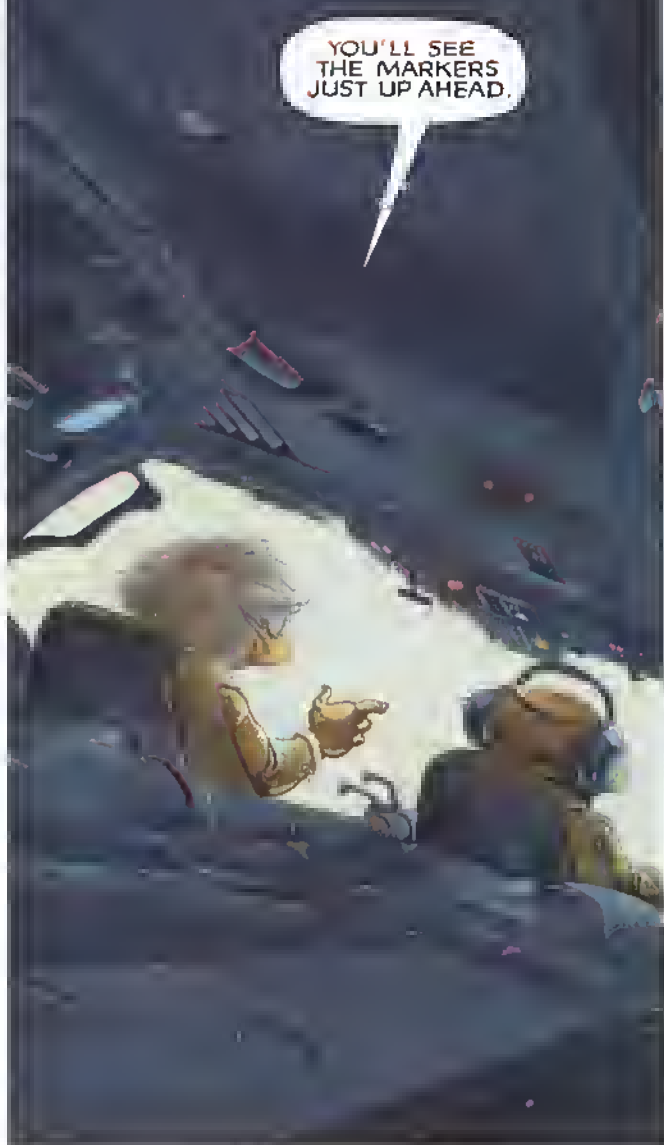
OF COURSE,  
IT COULD  
HAVE BEEN A  
TYPOGRAPHICAL  
ERROR ...

END

# DR. WATCHSTOP

“IN SEARCH OF ANCIENT MYTHS”

YOU'LL SEE THE MARKERS JUST UP AHEAD.



YOU MEAN THOSE? THOSE BLOCKS DOWN THERE?

YES, INDEED! HUNDREDS OF THEM, ALL LESS THAN ONE METER HIGH, YET VERY PROMINENT ON THIS FLAT, BARREN PLAIN.








SEE THERE...  
NOTICE THE  
PATTERNS IN WHICH  
THEY'RE ARRANGED!  
IT ONLY BECOMES  
CLEAR FROM  
THIS HEIGHT!

FOOTBALL  
FIELDS OF  
THE GODS?




SERIOUSLY, NOW! THERE  
IS NO NATURAL EXPLANATION  
FOR THE CONFIGURATIONS OF  
THESE BLOCKS... ONLY THE  
INTERVENTION OF ANIMATE,  
INTELLIGENT LIFE COULD  
BE RESPONSIBLE!

BUT, PROFESSOR,  
THERE'S NO  
EVIDENCE OF  
SAPIENT LIFE ON  
THIS PLANET!  
WHO MIGHT HAVE  
DONE IT? OTHER  
VISITORS FROM  
THE STARS?



PERHAPS... BUT  
WE'LL NEED TO  
COLLECT MORE  
INFORMATION, AND  
RIGHT NOW WE'RE  
LOW ON FUEL!

I'LL HEAD BACK TO  
THE STATION, PROFESSOR.  
GOSH, WHAT A MYSTERY!  
MAYBE THEY WERE ONCE  
PLACED TO GUIDE  
LANDING SPACESHIPS!

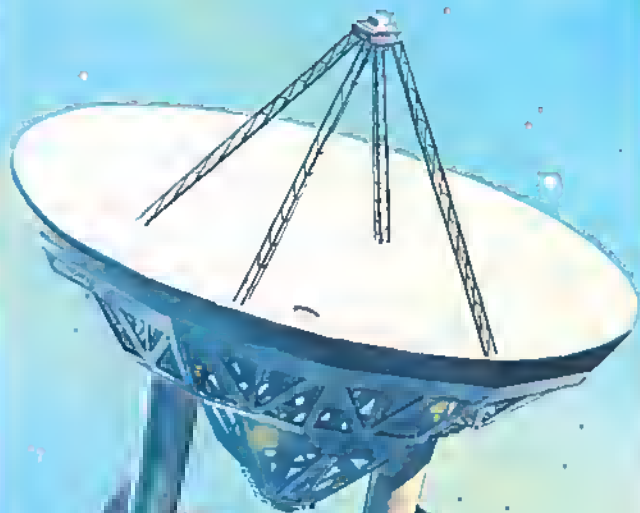


HEY DAD...  
LITTLE BROTHER  
KEEPS GETTING  
OUT OF LINE!

END

# DR. Watchstop

IN  
"REACHING OUT"



THEN IT'S TRUE,  
PROFESSOR...  
YOU'VE RECEIVED  
COHERENT SIGNALS  
FROM THE SIRIAN  
STAR SYSTEM!

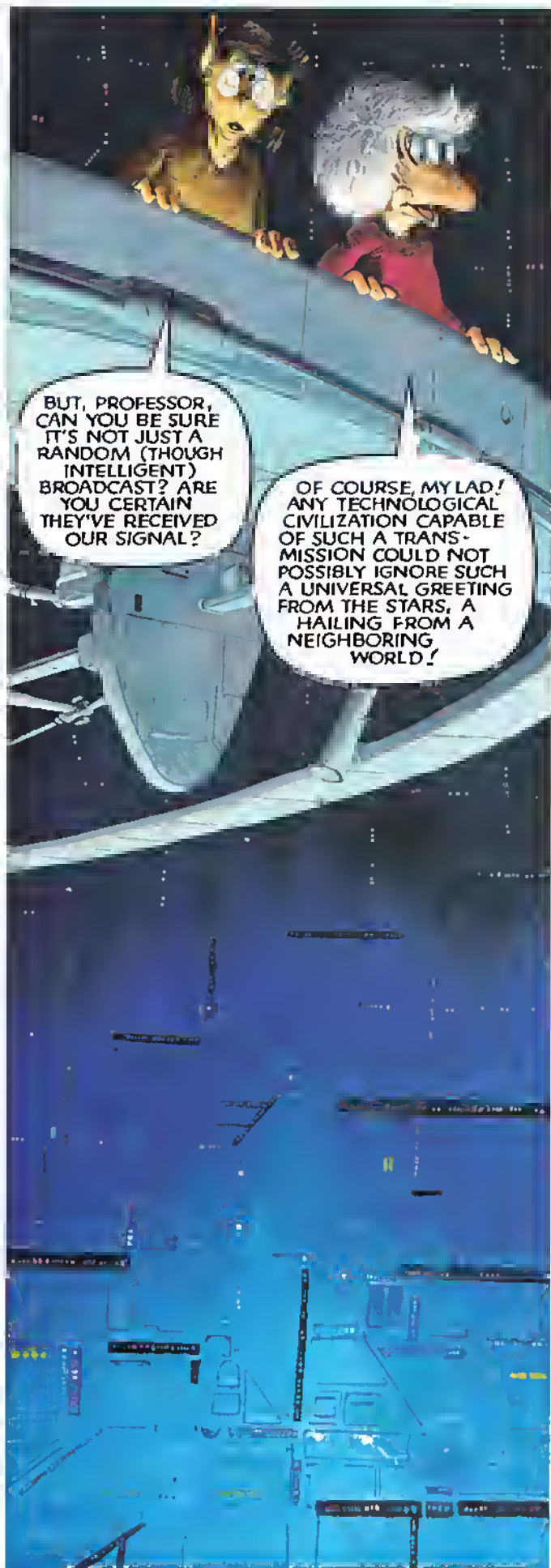
MORE THAN JUST  
COHERENT SIGNALS!  
THE TIME AND DIRECTION  
CAN BE NO COINCIDENCE!  
I'M CERTAIN IT'S A REPLY  
TO OUR TRANSMISSIONS  
SEEKING ANOTHER  
INTELLIGENT RACE!

AT LAST--  
WE HAVE CRIED  
HELLO TO THE  
STARS AND THEY ARE  
ANSWERING!



OF COURSE, THE  
SIGNAL IS IN BINARY  
CODE. I'VE FINISHED  
PROGRAMMING THE  
DATA INTO THE  
COMPUTER AND WE  
SHOULD HAVE THE  
MESSAGE  
PROMPTLY!






BUT, PROFESSOR, CAN YOU BE SURE IT'S NOT JUST A RANDOM (THOUGH INTELLIGENT) BROADCAST? ARE YOU CERTAIN THEY'VE RECEIVED OUR SIGNAL?

OF COURSE, MY LAD! ANY TECHNOLOGICAL CIVILIZATION CAPABLE OF SUCH A TRANSMISSION COULD NOT POSSIBLY IGNORE SUCH A UNIVERSAL GREETING FROM THE STARS, A HAILING FROM A NEIGHBORING WORLD!



SUCH A CIVILIZATION MIGHT INDEED HAVE VAST AND COMPLEX COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS -- SO ADVANCED THAT OUR OWN TELECOMMUNICATIONS NETWORKS WOULD BE BUT TWO TIN CANS CONNECTED BY STRING IN COMPARISON!





SUCH ADVANCED BEINGS COULD NOT FAIL TO RECEIVE SO SIMPLE AND BASIC A MESSAGE AS OURS!!

PROFESSOR! WE'RE GETTING A TRANSLATION FROM OUR COMPUTER!

WHAT DOES IT SAY?!



"WE'RE SORRY, BUT YOUR CALL CANNOT BE COMPLETED AS DIALED... PLEASE CHECK YOUR LOCAL DIRECTORY."

END

# DR. WatchSTOP

## IN "BEATING THE HEAT"

BRING THE REST OF THE EQUIPMENT!



HURRY! THE PLANET'S SUN IS RISING AND WE MUST GET SET UP BEFORE THE HEAT BECOMES TOO MUCH FOR OUR COOLING SYSTEMS!

NO SIGN OF LIFE HERE, DOCTOR.

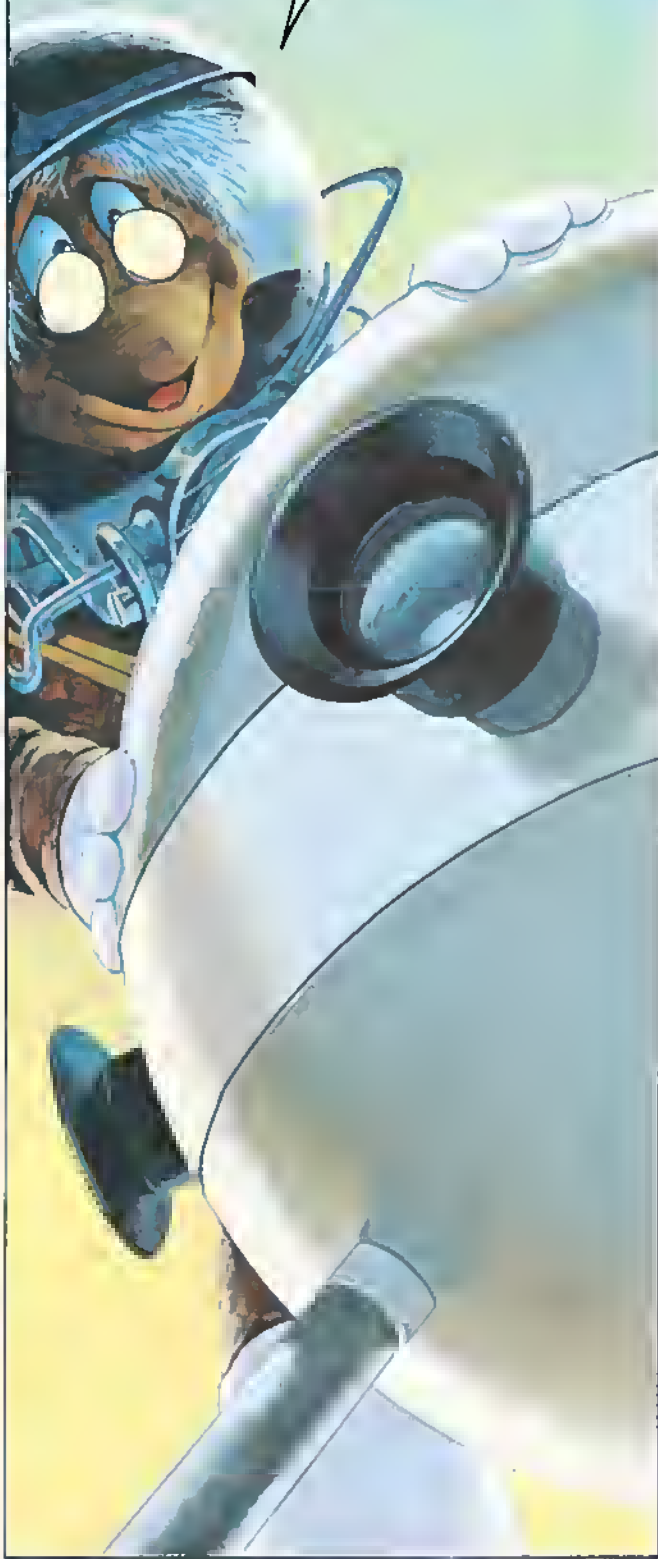


IN SPITE OF THE HIGH HEAT HERE, I'M CONVINCED THAT A RARE BURROWING LIFE FORM CAN AND DOES EMERGE DURING THE DAYLIGHT!

WE CAN'T STICK AROUND TO FIND OUT, DOCTOR, THE TEMPERATURE IS ALREADY 321° KELVIN AND CLIMBING!



NO, WE CAN'T STAY, BUT THIS SPECIAL CAMERA POD CAN! ITS LENSES ARE MOUNTED ON A TURRET THAT SCANS THE HORIZON FOR 360°! IF ANYTHING MOVES IN ITS FIELD OF VIEW, IT'LL RECORD IT ON FILM!





WE'LL COME  
BACK FOR THE  
FILM AFTER  
NIGHTFALL!



WHEW! SURE  
IS A SCORCHER  
TODAY! THANK  
GOODNESS  
FOR SOME  
SHADE!

END





WELL, PROFESSOR, IT CERTAINLY LOOKS ALIEN!

YES. IT'S AN ARTIFACT FROM ERIDANI III. NO ONE HAS ANY IDEA EXACTLY WHAT IT DOES.



HOW DID YOU GET IT?

IT'S ON LOAN FROM THE INTERSTELLAR ARCHEOLOGIC AGENCY. THEY DIDN'T QUITE KNOW WHAT TO MAKE OF IT. THERE ARE NO INTERFACES TO SUGGEST THAT IT'S PART OF A LARGER DEVICE OF A SINGULAR FUNCTION, THOUGH IT COULD BE PART OF A LARGER SYSTEM.



THESE DISPLAYS INDICATE A CHRONOLOGICAL FUNCTION. IT COULD DEAL WITH A MODULATION OF TIME... I'M NOT CERTAIN.

WHERE DO YOU PLUG IT IN?

IF IT CONVERTS ENERGY IN ANY WAY, THERE'S NO CLUE AS TO HOW. THOUGH IT'S ASSEMBLED FROM SUB-COMPONENTS, THERE ARE NO MOVING PARTS... EXCEPT FOR ONE CYLINDRICAL PROJECTION.



MUST GET GREAT GAS MILEAGE, HAVE YOU TRIED MANIPULATING THE PROJECTION?

DON'T TOUCH TH...!



TRANSMISSION  
CONFIRMED.  
FORWARD TO  
HOME WORLD.



DO YOU  
HAVE THE  
REPORT,  
KLAXOR?

YES SIR, THE  
LOST PHASILATOR  
HAS BEEN ACTIVATED  
NEAR THE EDGE OF  
THE SPIRAL GALAXY.  
IT'S STILL IN  
INPUT MODE.





THANK GOODNESS!  
WELL, TAKE IT OFF-  
LINE AND ROLL BACK  
THE LOCAL EFFECT  
FIVE MINUTES. WE  
CAN'T HAVE THE SIMPLE  
BEINGS MUCKING UP  
THE TIME CONTINUUM,  
NOW CAN WE?



WELL,  
PROFESSOR, IT  
CERTAINLY LOOKS  
ALIEN!

YES, IT'S  
AN ARTIFACT  
FROM  
ERIDANI III.  
NO ONE HAS  
ANY IDEA  
EXACTLY  
WHAT IT  
DOES.

END



# Dr. Watchdog

## IN "GONE FISHING"

I THOUGHT PERHAPS YOU COULD HELP ME...

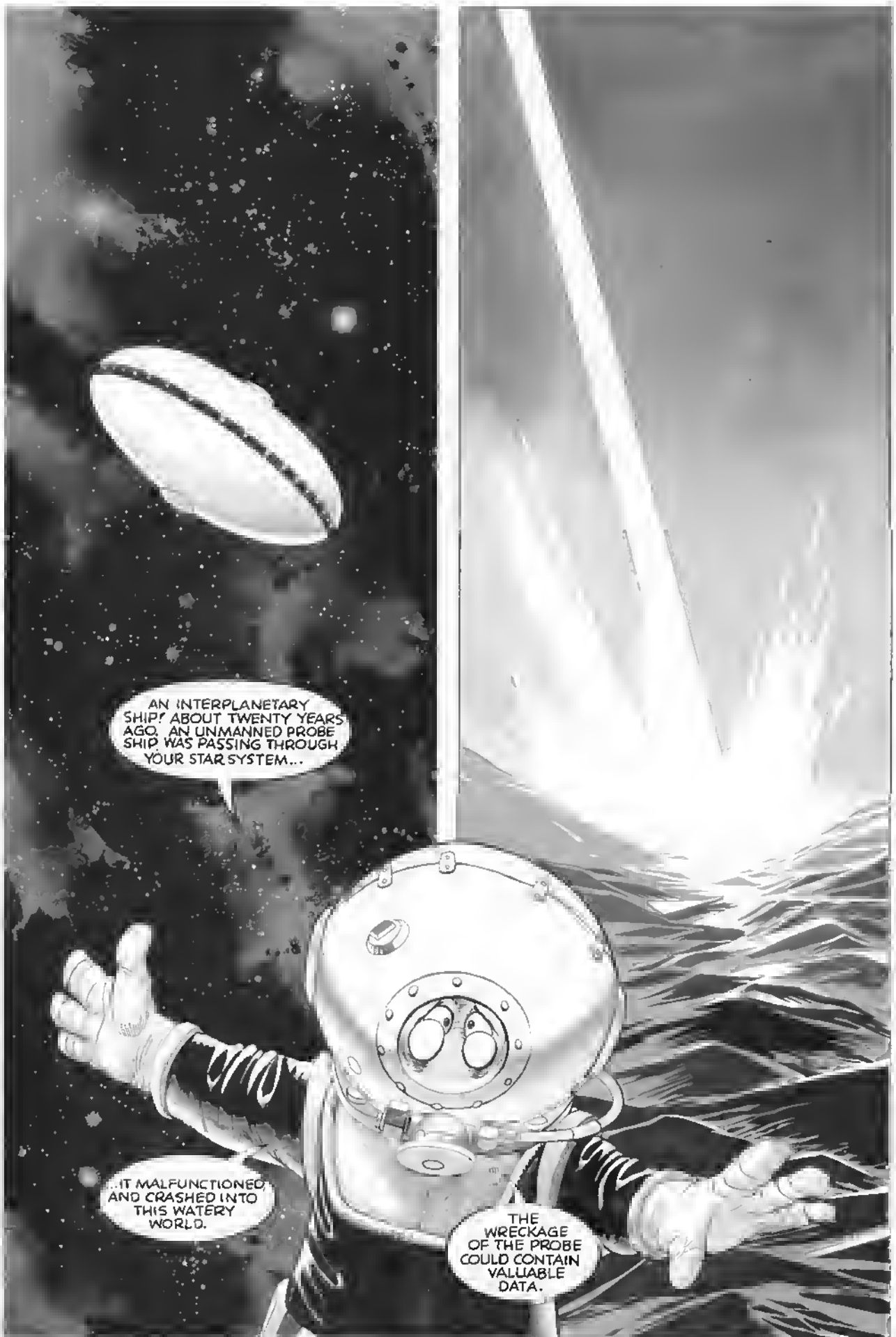


ART & STORY BY  
KEN MACKLIN  
LETTERING BY  
L. LOIS BUHALIS

I'M LOOKING FOR A SHIPWRECK.



WHAT SORT OF SHIP?



AN INTERPLANETARY SHIP? ABOUT TWENTY YEARS AGO, AN UNMANNED PROBE SHIP WAS PASSING THROUGH YOUR STAR SYSTEM...

...IT MALFUNCTIONED AND CRASHED INTO THIS WATERY WORLD.

THE WRECKAGE OF THE PROBE COULD CONTAIN VALUABLE DATA.



WAS IT SORT OF METALLIC AND SHINY?

WHY, YES IT WAS!



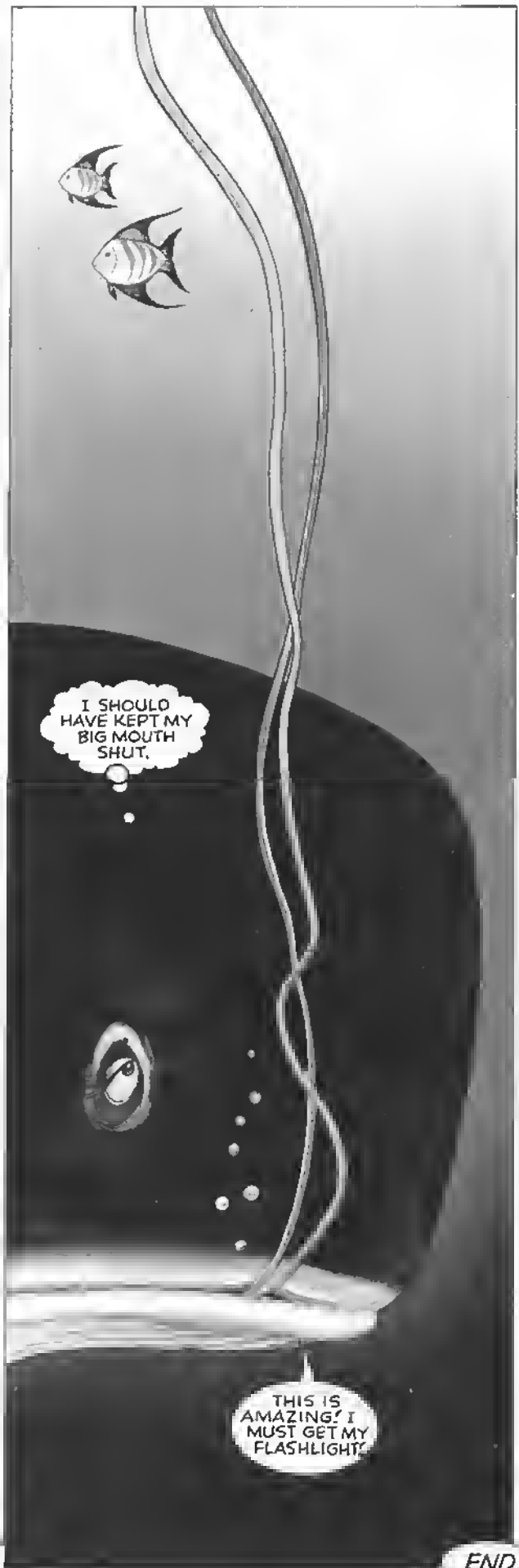
IT WAS SHAPED LIKE A ROUNDED DISC.

AND WAS THERE A DARK BAND AROUND THE MIDDLE OF IT?



WHY, YES!  
THAT'S IT,  
EXACTLY! HAVE  
YOU SEEN  
IT?!

I  
ATE  
IT.



I SHOULD  
HAVE KEPT MY  
BIG MOUTH  
SHUT.

THIS IS  
AMAZING! I  
MUST GET MY  
FLASHLIGHT

END



# Dr. Watchstop

IN

## XLBERG'S FOSSIL EMPORIUM

I DISCOUNT  
IT JUST FOR  
YOU!



IT LOOKS  
LIKE A  
CHICKEN  
BONE...

IS RARE  
ARCTURIAN CHICKEN...  
EXTINCT FOR DECADES  
ON MANY PLANETS!




MAYBE  
IN A FEW  
EONS...

WAIT! WAIT!  
I'VE SOMETHING  
SPECIAL, NOT  
JUST FOR  
ANYONE...



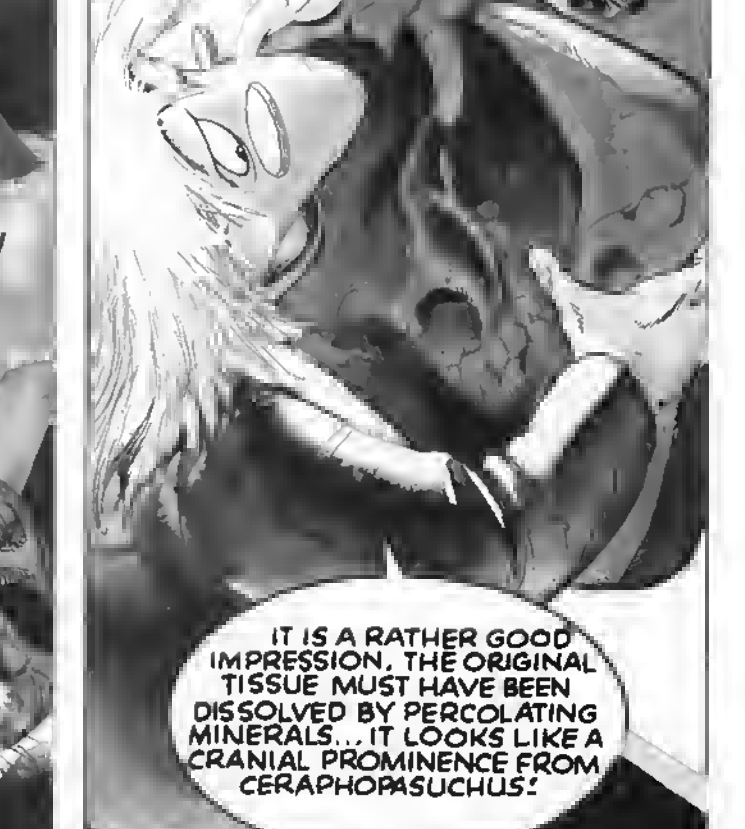
...BUT FOR  
MOST  
DISCRIMINATING  
PROFESSOR...



...IS FOSSIL IMPRESSION  
IN ANCIENT SEABED...BIG  
HORNED LIZARD...  
YOU SEE...?



IS  
GOOD,  
YES?



IT IS A RATHER GOOD  
IMPRESSION, THE ORIGINAL  
TISSUE MUST HAVE BEEN  
DISSOLVED BY PERCOLATING  
MINERALS... IT LOOKS LIKE A  
CRANIAL PROMINENCE FROM  
CERAPHOPASUCHUS!

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!  
CERAPHOPASUCHUS HAS  
BEEN EXTINCT FOR  
MILLIONS OF YEARS AND  
ONLY SIX FOSSILS ARE  
KNOWN TO EXIST!



DO I HAVE TO  
STICK MY HEAD IN THE  
MUD AGAIN?



OKAY, OKAY,  
THIS TIME I GIVE  
YOU TWO EXTRA  
CABBAGES FOR  
SUPPER!

END





DUE TO CIRCUMSTANCES BEYOND HIS CONTROL, THE CREATOR OF THIS STRIP WAS UNABLE TO COMPLETE THIS MONTH'S INSTALLMENT OF "Dr. WATCHSTOP."

IT'S A LIE!



SEEKING TO AVERT DISASTER, THE ADMINISTRATIVE POWERS OF THIS CULTURALLY UPLIFTING PERIODICAL CALLED UPON THE "WEASEL PATROL" TO FILL IN.

I THOUGHT IT WUZ CALLED A COMIC BOOK.

STORY & ART - LELA DOWLING & KEN MACKLIN LETTERING - L. LOIS BUHALIS  
EDITOR - LETITIA GLOZER CONCEPTUAL EDITOR - LEX NAKASHIMA KIBBITZER - GORDON GARB



OKAY,  
ROLL  
'EM!

Ah, THE  
YOUNG MAN FROM  
THE ACADEMY!  
YOUR ARRIVAL IS  
MOST  
FORTUITOUS!

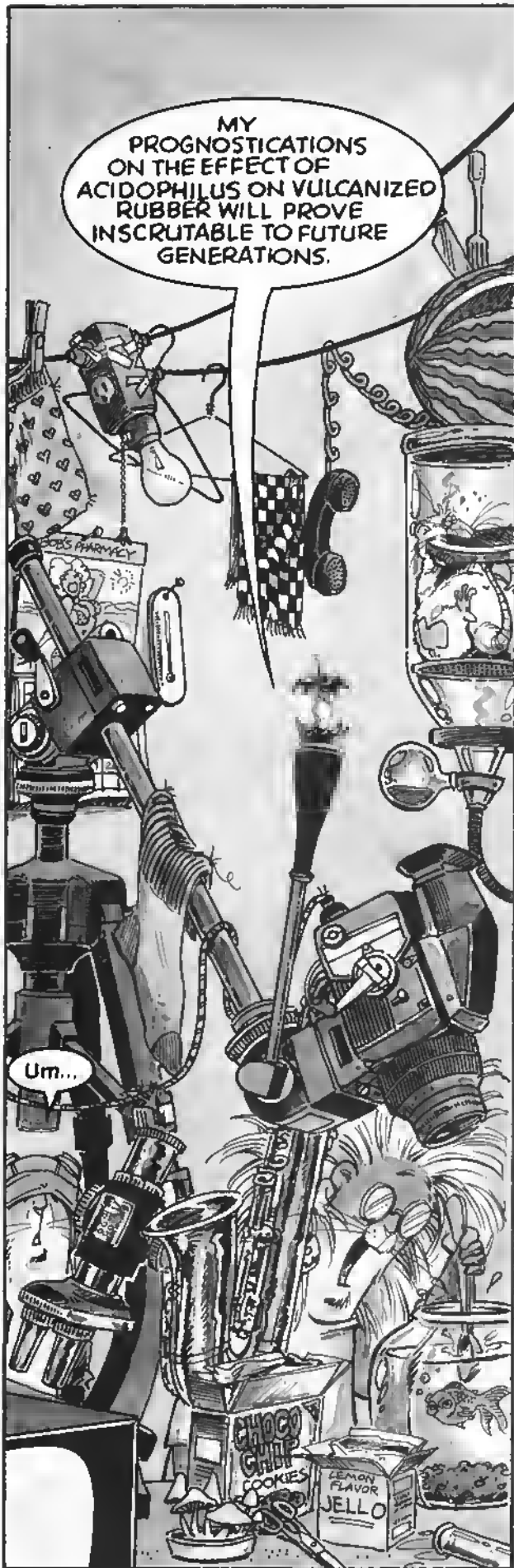
Uhh...

DR. WAT  
TAKE  
ONE



AS YOU CAN SEE,  
I'VE NEARLY REACHED  
THE CULMINATION OF A  
UNIQUE AND FAR RANGING  
EXPERIMENT... (BE SURE  
TO WIPE YOUR  
FEET.)

GOSH,  
BUT...

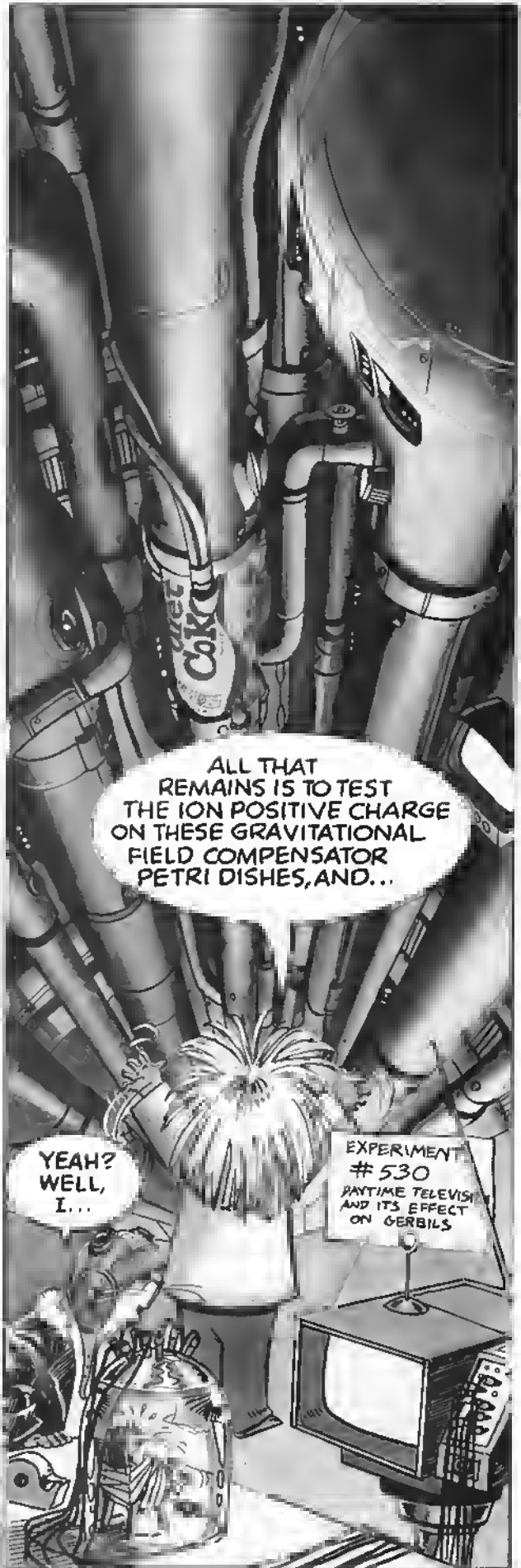


MY  
PROGNOSTICATIONS  
ON THE EFFECT OF  
ACIDOPHILUS ON VULCANIZED  
RUBBER WILL PROVE  
INSCRUTABLE TO FUTURE  
GENERATIONS.

Um...

CHOCO  
GUILT  
COOKIES

LEMON  
FLAVOR  
JELLO



ALL THAT  
REMAINS IS TO TEST  
THE ION POSITIVE CHARGE  
ON THESE GRAVITATIONAL  
FIELD COMPENSATOR  
PETRI DISHES, AND...

YEAH?  
WELL,  
I...

EXPERIMENT  
#530  
DAYTIME TELEVISION  
AND ITS EFFECT  
ON GERBILS



...BLAST!  
I'VE FORGOTTEN  
MY LINES. WHERE'S  
THE SCRIPT...

HEY, I'M JUST  
HERE TO DELIVER A  
PIZZA. DID YOU ORDER  
A DOUBLE SARDINE  
WITH PINEAPPLE?



GEE, I ALWAYS  
THOUGHT THESE  
BACKGROUNDS WERE  
REAL... THEY'RE JUST  
PAINTED  
BACKDROPS!

GET  
AWAY FROM  
THERE!





FLAPPITA  
FLAPPITA  
FLAP

HEY, I ALWAYS WONDERED WHERE THE BACKGROUND MUSIC CAME FROM!

CUT THE SCENE!  
CUT THE SCENE!

CHUCK UP CHEESE PIZZA



CUT! CUT!  
EVERYONE  
BREAK FOR  
LUNCH!

AIEEE!

SPLANG

ACK!

RUN AWAY!

CHUCK UP CHEESE PIZZA



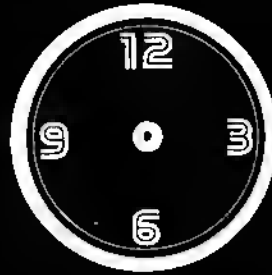
END

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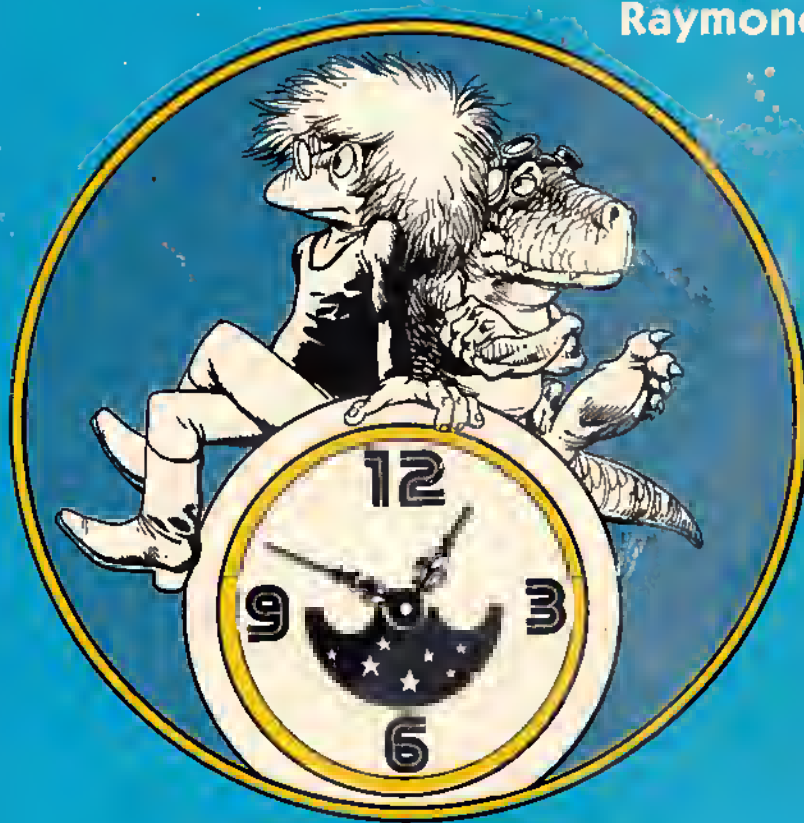
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Dr. Watchstop  
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**KEN MACKLIN** has always been interested in art and cartooning. His first graphic story appeared in *Quack* in 1977 and in 1979, while on his way to a degree in business management, he dropped out of college when he found himself able to make a living from his creative pursuits. Since then Ken's stories and art have been published by Marvel, Fantagraphics, Thoughts and Images, and Eclipse. His paintings have won numerous awards at West Coast science fiction and fantasy art shows, where he has gained a reputation for humor, whimsy, and a rich use of color. In addition to his commercial art and comics, Ken produces computer graphics and illustrations for the computer games and animation division of Lucasfilm.

**DR. WATCHSTOP** appeared in *Marvel's Epic Illustrated* from 1981 to 1985. The series found a new home in 1986 when Lx, Ltd. and Eclipse Comics approached Ken to provide a short feature for their new science fiction comic, *Fusion*. This volume collects all of the Dr. Watchstop stories together for the first time.

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