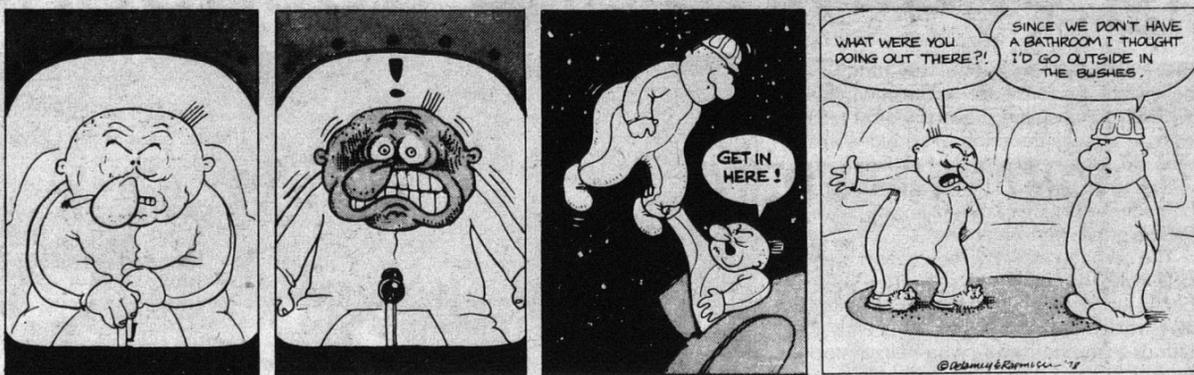
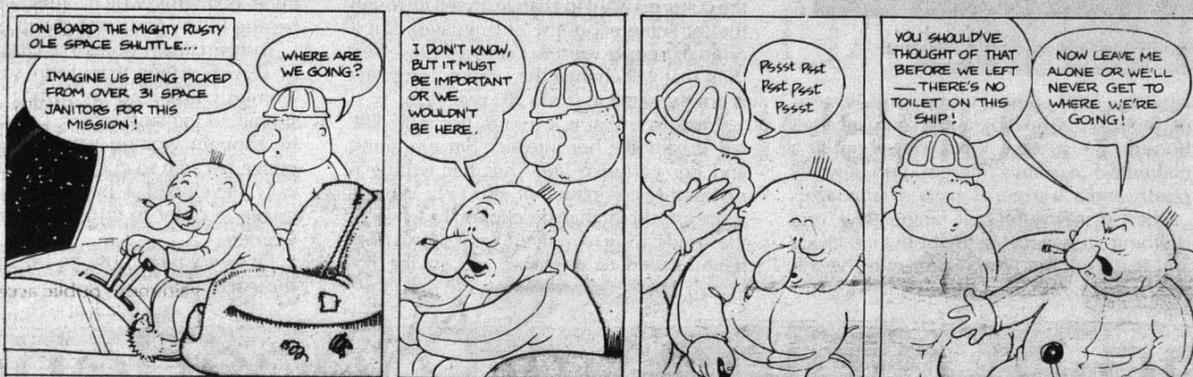


# hatted hero in a nutty town



Bub Slugs from Gateways gone by.

**forms?**

The experience I've had with people running syndicates is that they're just businessmen. They have no sense of humour, or art, or anything that makes up comics. The only things they look for, in terms of which strips are going to syndicate and which ones they want to market, are figures in terms of dollars and cents and what the computer spits out on the graph. If there are going to be any new changes in cartooning, it'll be in spite of these syndicates — they're essentially just leeches on the artists. They're just there to sell the strips around to newspapers and they

really don't add anything except that ability — a lot of artists are in the process of side-tepping them... we're trying to, anyway.

**It's great the Journal gave you that opportunity.**

That's true. The more I think about it, the more I have to hand it to them. We've got an opportunity right now in doing Bub Slub that a lot of cartoonists would give their right (hand) for... (pauses and laughs) if they drew with their left!

**A few months ago, letters of complaint poured into the Journal regarding your strip.**

**Apparently it was too violent, among other things. How did you and Gary react — were you surprised?**

Yes, we were surprised. Partly because of what you see on TV... it was quite a strange situation. It seemed everyone wanted the Saturday Comics to be pristine and pure when every other form of entertainment was going over the edge in all sorts of directions. I think a lot of that negative response wouldn't have happened if Bub Slug was a syndicated strip from somewhere else. But, because it

was from Edmonton, people got upset at seeing their own city 'defaced'.

**Did the Journal pressure you to change your storyline due to the letters of complaint?**

No, they didn't at all. Every now and then there have been little details which they've felt needed to be changed to avoid getting sued. The general direction of the story they left totally up to us... (laughing) I still can't figure out why.

**Why did you choose to make your hero a local waterfall maintenance man? It seems to limit your audience to Edmonton.**

When we started Bub Slug, part of the biggest problem was deciding what occupation he was going to take. It had to be uniquely Edmonton... the waterfall on the bridge sprang to mind. The interesting thing since we got into the hockey story (Bub joins the Oilers), Stan Fischler (freelance writer for Hockey News), from New York, phoned me up and did a whole big blurb about the strip. When they were interviewing me about that, they wanted to know something about our main character and I said, 'He's a waterfall maintenance man.' And this guy from New York (with heavy New York accent) says, 'He's a what!?'... 'Well, you see, out here we've got a bridge that's got a waterfall on it...' 'You've got a bridge that's got a waterfall on it!? The waterfall goes over the bridge?'... No, no — it flows over the side of the bridge.'... 'What?... and the cars get all wet!?'... 'No, no, you see, it's kind of like a sprinkler system', and as I'm trying to explain this bridge I say 'OK, look — it's the same effect as getting a hundred drunks standing at the side of the bridge and pissing into the river' and then he says, 'Oh, I get it!'. It makes it aware to the people outside that this is a nutty town — we've got the world's largest indoor rollercoaster, we've got a waterfall on our bridge (laughing)... it's crazy!

**Will Bub Slug ever be more than an Edmonton strip?**

We'd be lying if we didn't hope that it'd go national. If that happened then it would just be a question of taking the same format we've got and applying it to a larger audience. Although I do enjoy, right now, that it's about a particular place.

**Have you ever thought of doing an animation feature? Your characters have a certain 'fluid' drawing style which seems very much suited for movement.**

I've always been interested in animation. The principles of animation have always been really strong in my artwork. I enjoy depicting movement in a cartoon. Some form of animation would be nice... a rock video, who knows? Both Gary and I are in the planning stages on something of that nature.

**What's next for Bub and Betty? He's worked on the waterfall, he's won the lottery, and he's playing for the Stanley Cup champs — what else could he possibly do?**

You've got it in a nutshell. (laughing) Bub is becoming the ultimate Canadian hero — we hadn't really thought of making him that, but Canadians have been looking for somebody to represent them for so long.

**By 'Canadians', you mean Edmontonians?**

Ya (laughs)... We can get arrogant out here too. Let's be like Toronto for a bit.

**Since Bub has done everything a Canadian could ever dream of doing, is it getting harder to think of fresh ideas?**

No, we're not running out of ideas. Every strip that you see printed is an edited version of all the material that was there to pick from. Each time it's just a question of what we're going to leave out, that becomes hard.

**Now that he's a Canadian hero (in Edmonton), any plans for marketing Slug souvenirs?**

The Journal's approached us, but we haven't worked out a contract yet... They want to do some marketing — everything from T-shirts to hardhats with noses. (laughing) Hopefully, Slug-mugs... things like that.

**I don't know if you've heard about this, but the Plastic Surgeons Association of Alberta, in their 1985 year-end report, stated a sharp increase in nose bump operations. Do you and Gary take full responsibility?**

No... we just see the life around us and comment on it. We've been aware of this trend for quite some time. We're just making the public aware of it too. (long, dramatic pause) Nose bumps are here to stay!

**At least on Saturdays, we hope.**