

# Why I Enjoy Li'l Abner

Don Franz

Every day millions of American people pick up a newspaper and turn to the comic page. In this popular section of the paper they daily follow the adventures of a twenty-year-old hillbilly and his family and friends. One may ask what millions of people, regardless of age, race, creed, religion, or social status, should find of interest in the ridiculous antics of a twenty-year-old hillbilly who is all brawn and little brain. Lil Abner, the red-blooded American youth, lives with his parents, Mammy and Pappy Yokum, in fictitious Dogpatch, Kentucky. This town is a typical Kentucky settlement, having as its citizens many weird and nondescript characters, dreamed up by the creator of this delightful comic strip, Al Capp.

These millions of daily readers enjoy Lil Abner for several good reasons. Although most of our hero's adventures are utterly fantastic, there is a definite human and humorous interest story woven into every incident.

The content of each story is different from that of any preceding story. Only two subjects recur. One is the constant hypocritical indifference of Lil Abner toward Daisy Mae, a lovely, young mountain girl who loves him and would marry him at a moment's notice. This catastrophe has almost happened many times, but our hero is always saved in the nick of time from the clutches of matrimony. However, he is never saved twice in the same way. This narrow escape usually happens on the annual Sadie Hawkins Day which presents a new set of co-stars each year. On this particular day in November all eligible bachelors are chased by all fair maidens of all shapes and sizes, no holds barred. If caught, these hapless fellows must marry their captors on the spot. This method may seem a bit primitive, but it is nevertheless effective.

The characterization in this strip is unequalled in the comics. Capp's unique characters range from suave, big city millionaires to crude, penniless hillbillies lacking shoes and brains, and from the most beautiful specimens of human anatomy to hordes of grotesque creatures capable of anything human and super-human. One set of recently created creatures, the idealistic "shmoos," could solve all human needs, doing away with the unpopular word, "work", entirely. Another abstract creation was that of the "Kigmies", who loved to be kicked. These peculiar animals supposedly would solve all domestic and international problems because people would take their anger or disgust out on a Kigmy, who loved the punishment. Millions

of dollars were made on the Shmoos which began to pour out of the factories as balloons, banks, toys, puzzles, and hundreds of similar articles resembling those creatures in Al Capp's comic strip.

Unlike many other cartoon creations, Lil Abner's fellow characters seldom fade into nonexistence but may reappear several years later in another adventure. Lil Abner himself is absolutely indestructable, for he is constantly being thrown off high buildings, covered by an avalanche of boulders, or hit by a speedy freight train. He has swum the ocean several times, tugging barges, boats, and rafts; he has acted as ambassador to Lower Slobovia on many occasions; and he has traveled about the country in flying saucers, jet planes, and rocket ships. These incredibilities give the cartoonist a large span of diverse ideas for his work, which is always amazing and full of surprises.

Capp's use of current events also goes a long way to increase public interest. This point may be illustrated by the recent comical portrayal of the flying saucers which "any sane persons knows doesn't exist," according to Lil Abner. The statement of the pilot of these unique "interplanetary vehicles" that the earth is still in the "idiot era" is not entirely without justification.

After analyzing the preceding points, I am sure you will agree that "Lil Abner" will continue to live as an American favorite until Al Capp meets his mortal end. I don't believe that his seat at the drawing board could be filled satisfactorily.

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## Adventures With A Card Catalogue

Thomas Abrams

**I**t was the last day of final examinations, and my head was glutted to the ears with a thousand and one facts. I had one more test to take, and then I was finished for the semester. My mind reeling, I descended the steps to the library stacks in hopes of securing a few moments of rest and quiet in that murky lair of learning. The library was empty, and I had little trouble enlisting the solace of a solitary table located in a shadowy corner. Secluded behind massive metal shelves, I cradled my head in my arms and slept.

"What in the name of fury is this?"

"What a singular looking creature."

In a state of semi-consciousness I detected the faint rumble of voices.