

INTRODUCTION

Long before the development of language or power tools, I imagine our ancestors squealed and grunted with delight as they squatted on the ground and etched silly little squiggles in the soil with their hairy, pointy fingers. But these squiggles eventually developed meaning, and cave dwellers everywhere eventually came to realize that a single picture was indeed worth a thousand words (especially since those words had not yet been invented and chipped into stone tablets for mass distribution by the lexicographers of the day). What better way to say "Today a bunch of us cavemen went hunting and cornered a great big hairy creature with 4 legs and a rack of horns on its head, and we threw long sharp sticks at it" than to draw a simple picture on the wall showing a group of stick figures sticking it to an antelope? That single picture says it all.

Cartooning is, and has always been, a visceral, universally understood, and profoundly powerful form of communication. That is the magic of the cartoon. A simple image can convey a tremendously powerful message, unambiguous in content and precise in emotional impact. No other medium has the power equal to that of a cartoon to both entertain and crucify. Today, cartoonists continue to "poke" fun at modern caveman, often "sticking it" to unfortunate political targets in the newspapers. A previously unknown but keen political cartoonist can quite literally kill a seasoned politician's career with a good caption and a few well drawn strokes of the pen.

Cartoons also poke fun at everyday, ordinary life, and this is what most syndicated cartoon strips do. I especially enjoy drawing these simple cartoons that poke fun at everyday life. I have drawn cartoons like this since I was old enough to walk, when I literally papered my bedroom wall with my primitive drawings. As I matured, so did my love of cartooning, and I began to develop my own characters and style. By the time I was in my early twenties, I was submitting polished cartoons for sale and publication. Now in my fifties, my work has been seen in various venues ranging from the tiniest one page newsletters, to T-shirts in retail stores, to professional and trade journals reaching tens of thousands of readers, and to magazines reaching millions of readers such as "Chess Life" magazine and the "Saturday Evening Post."

I still have not achieved that most coveted of goals for the cartoonist: newspaper syndication. That is not an easy egg to crack, but I will do it some day. The odds aren't good of course; in fact they are far worse than are my chances of becoming an Oscar winning movie star. That is not to say I stand any chance at all of becoming an Oscar winning movie star, of course, although I have given that prospect a thought, too. But my real love is cartooning in pen and ink, and I have practiced this craft my entire life, and will continue to do so. Indeed, the many panels that constitute the body of this book represent but a sampling of my efforts. Every drawing in this book is an exercise in the development of either style or characters that have the potential to coalesce into a successful syndicated newspaper strip someday, if only I develop them further.

In this book I have included panels from the four major strips that I have worked at developing for the syndicated newspaper market, including "Misery is...," "Hatch," "Drummer," and "Main Street"; numerous single panel cartoons that I drew specifically for magazine publication; and many pages from my sketchbook as seasoning to illustrate how a good concept is developed.

This is not a book on "How to Draw Cartoons" as much as it is a peek into the creative process of developing cartoons. I did not write this book as much as I drew it. You will not find an abundance of text in this book outside of the dialog balloons and gag lines that go with each of the cartoons I have drawn. Since a picture is worth a thousand words, I will let the cartoons speak for themselves. I cannot tell you how to draw a successful strip, but I can offer you advice and specific tips for developing your work and submitting it to publishers, and I will do that throughout this book. Everything outside of "My Sketchbook" is drawn to scale and according to good cartooning principles, so every panel gives you an appropriate example of sizing, lettering, and line techniques that you can simply emulate in your own creations. My Sketchbook is simply freeform doodling and drawing. If you can't think of anything to draw, simply flip through My Sketchbook and try to draw some of my own drawings. You will find hints there on how to draw eyes, mouths, noses, and many other anatomical attributes, in addition to many animals and inanimate objects. But in terms of how to draw, really, the best advice I can offer is contained within the cartoons themselves, and that advice is the simple suggestion to practice, practice, and practice some more. Don't worry about perfection. Remember, the only perfect stroke in a cartoon is the final stroke. Perfection will come with practice. Review My Sketchbook to witness firsthand how a cartoonist's pen never rests. Read "Misery Is..." and "Main Street" to get a glimpse into the process of developing a cartoon style. Check out "Hatch" and "Drummer" to see how I tackled the problem of good character development, and flip through the single panel cartoons if you just want a few good laughs.

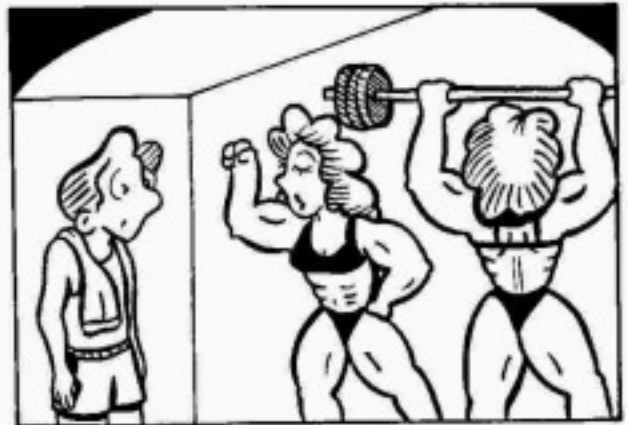
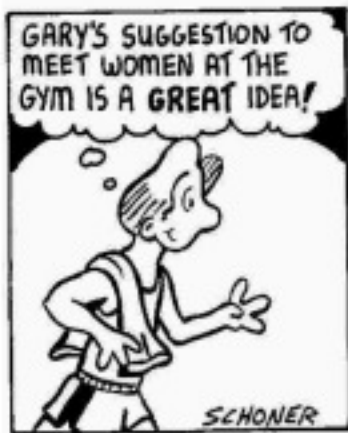
I know that after you have read this book, you will set it under your coffee table and refer to it often, for it has many stories to tell. These cartoons say more about my approach to character and style development than written words ever will, but they also say a lot about me personally, and also about you, and a lot about the contradictions in life that ought to present themselves to us in black and white, but rarely do. Remember, every picture is worth a thousand words, but a great cartoon says it all. This is my masterpiece, my cave painting, and I hope you will enjoy reading it and learning from it as much as I enjoyed creating it for you.



THOSE THINGS
WILL KILL YOU,
SON!









"AFTER 20 YEARS AT THE SAME DESK, AT THE SAME JOB, I JUST COULDN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE," HE SAYS. CLEARLY YET ANOTHER VICTIM OF A SENSELESS, IDLE LIFESTYLE.





ON SECOND THOUGHT,
BUILD IT HERE!



YOU ARE ARROGANT
CAVALIER, INSOLENT,
VAIN, AND DISDAIN-
FULLY AUDACIOUS!

PERHAPS THAT IS
TRUE, BUT AT LEAST
I DON'T LIVE IN A
PICKLE JAR!



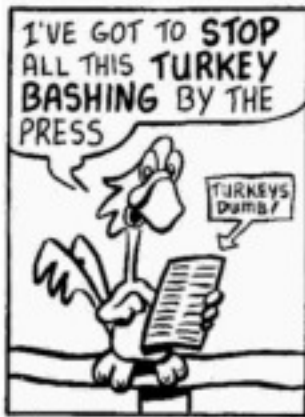
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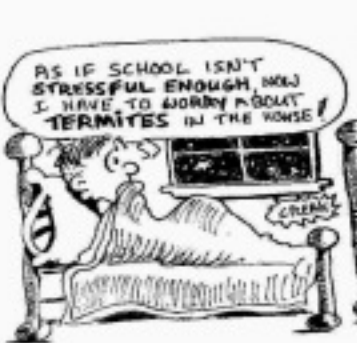
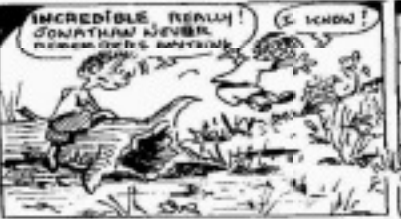
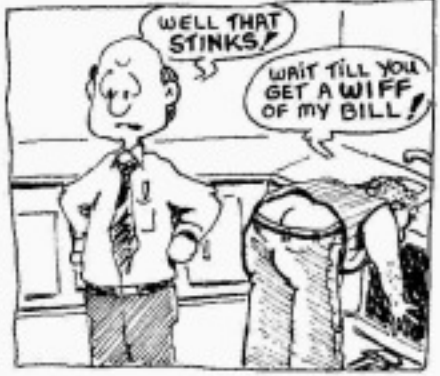
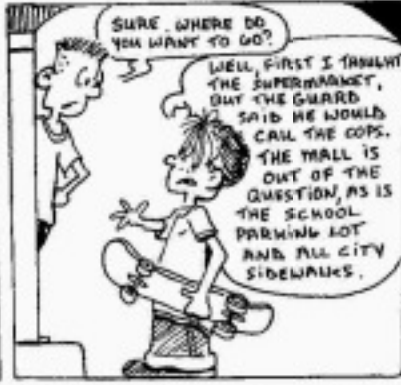
BETA FIGHTING
WORDS



AND TO THINK WE CAME ALL THE WAY TO CHINA FOR THE FOOD!







JAZZ AT
STARBUCKS
MAR 16, 2001

