

Nuts About Peanuts [B2]

Chi non ama i "Peanuts", la serie di fumetti con protagonisti Charlie Brown e Snoopy? Da veri appassionati, siamo andati al Charles M. Schulz Museum and Research Center a Santa Rosa, in California.

In 1950, Charles M. Schulz created Peanuts, one of the best-loved comic strips of all time. Schulz drew the comic strip for almost fifty years, basing the characters and their interactions on his own experiences. This year, fans around the world are celebrating the 75th anniversary of the iconic cartoon that began as a simple black-and-white [**four-panel strip**](#) and became a cultural [**touchstone**](#) that captivated generations.

FAMOUS FACES

The franchise and its memorable characters, including Charlie Brown, Peppermint Patty, and the lovable dog Snoopy, inspired dozens of Emmy award-winning TV specials, feature films and stage productions, as well as a [**thriving**](#) global business in merchandise. Peanuts made Schulz more than \$1 billion, and the animated films that followed are still popular today. He retired in 1999 and died a year later, the night before his final comic strip was published.

THE MUSEUM

To find out more, Speak Up contacted Benjamin L. Clark, curator at the Charles M. Schulz Museum and Research Center in Santa Rosa, California, fifty miles north of San Francisco. The museum, founded in 2002, [**upholds**](#) the legacy of Charles M. Schulz and explores the [**enduring**](#) appeal of the Peanuts universe. As Clark explained, Schulz introduced a form of sophisticated humour to the world of comic strips. However, his ability to [**understand**](#) and appeal both to adults and children was one of his most important legacies. **Benjamin L. Clark (American accent):** The creator of Peanuts, Charles Schulz, was someone who loved comics from a very young

age and he took them seriously. And he found in it the perfect way for him to express himself. And he brought a **depth** that hadn't really been seen until then into comics. He brought an emotional honesty that we just never had seen before. The humour comics of the day, they called them '**gag-a-day** comics', and he brought something just very different. It wasn't just a **punchline** of someone getting **whacked** over the head with a **frying pan**, you know, which is literally how some comics were back then.

COMIC EVOLUTION

We then asked Clark how the Peanuts comic strips evolved **over time**.

Benjamin L. Clark: We see quite a lot of evolution in Peanuts over that fifty years. We see it in the way it's drawn; those earliest strips beginning in 1950, we see much more complex drawing, we see complex backgrounds and **props** that the characters might use and things... Very detailed drawing. And so it becomes more simple **over time**. We also see the characters develop; the characters become more complex as the drawing becomes less complex.

CHANGING CHARACTERS

Schultz often described Charlie Brown as his alter ego. We asked Clark about this. **Benjamin L. Clark:** When he was first introduced, he's **sassy**. He's got a sarcastic quality, which he never entirely loses, but he's not the **wishy-washy, well-meaning**, very genuine character that we see later on. Charles Schultz, he would say that he was all of his characters. And I think that's even a better representation of how he was and who he was in the strip. Sure, Charlie Brown's anxieties were some of Charles Schulz's anxieties, but the ability to be a little sarcastic was from Lucy, that's also Charles Schulz. That intense artistic focus of Schroeder at his piano, that's also Charles Schulz at his **drawing board**. And Snoopy dreaming of these big, big dreams, that's also Charles Schulz, you know, wanting to be **club champion**, as he would often say.

UNIVERSAL APPEAL

The character of Snoopy is more famous in some countries than Charlie Brown himself. As Clark explains, the character has universal appeal.

Benjamin L. Clark: I think every reader who becomes familiar with Peanuts, they will see themselves in some of these characters, maybe not entirely one, maybe a mix of Charlie Brown and Linus or something like that. But Snoopy... Snoopy is who everyone wishes they were. We all wish we were more like Snoopy, able to do these fantastic things, but also to indulge that little selfish voice in our head sometimes. We all are Snoopy, we want to be Snoopy. In some countries the strip is called Snoopy instead of Peanuts. And so I think that also helps make him be more famous around the world.

THE SCHULZ LEGACY

Born in Minneapolis in 1922, Schulz moved to California with his family in 1958. The Charles M. Schulz Museum and Research Center was opened two years after his death with the mission to preserve, display and interpret his work. It shows original Peanuts comic strips and art and hosts a variety of permanent and temporary exhibitions throughout the year. We asked Clark to tell us more. **Benjamin L. Clark:** We have the largest collection of Peanuts original art in the world by far, and Mr. Schulz's personal effects and things like that. Peanuts is personal, it's these connections with our past and things that we're looking forward to in the future. People come in and they'll bring a baby and go, "I can't wait to share Peanuts with them," and get them a Snoopy plush to get that story beginning with that little kid. So it's very personal. I mean, I've seen people come in and just begin to cry just, you know, just injoy just to see it. And I think oftentimes that visitors are maybe a little surprised by their emotional response to seeing this so close and being able to see those drawings by Mr. Schultz, the original art. It's really a wonderful place. It's also in Santa Rosa, California, which is a beautiful place to be year round.

GOING GLOBAL

Peanuts was first published in seven newspapers in the US, including The Washington Post and the Chicago Tribune. Over the decades that followed, it appeared in more than 2,500 newspapers across seventy-five countries, reaching a readership of over 350 million. The strip continues to be published and to attract new generations of fans, as Clark explains:

Benjamin L. Clark: As the world moves away from newspapers and we have to begin to explain to small children, even here in the US, about what a comic strip in a newspaper was, the thing is Schulz's brilliant form it still translates into other things. Social media posts are perfect to still communicate a comic strip. It's still Mr. Schulz's art and his soul, honestly, that he poured into Peanuts that we are connecting with even on these different platforms as they evolve.

PEANUTS: 75 YEARS OF MEMORABLE CHARACTERS

"I think I've discovered the secret of life — you just hang around until you get used to it." Kind, thoughtful and a bit melancholic, Charlie Brown tries to remain optimistic despite the constant setbacks both in his athletic endeavour and in trying to get the attention of his crush, the Little Red-Haired Girl. "Happiness is a warm puppy." Strong-willed and opinionated, Lucy can be blunt in her brutal honesty, especially when she offers advice in her "psychiatric help" booth for 5 cents. "Sometimes I think I tore all the ligaments in my head." A tomboyish, sporty girl who's confident and outgoing but struggles in school. She's straightforward, loyal and often oblivious to social cues. "I love mankind... it's people I can't stand!" Charlie Brown's best friend and Lucy's younger brother, Linus is wise beyond his years and very sensitive, always holding his security blanket. "The joy is in the playing." A quiet, serious and sophisticated boy with a deep love for classical music. He plays a toy piano and often ignores the world around him, particularly Lucy's romantic advances. "My life has no purpose, no direction, no aim, no meaning, and yet I'm happy. I can't figure it out. What am I doing right?" Charlie Brown's beagle who lives in a rich fantasy world. He's confident, creative and both cool and eccentric.

www.schulzmuseum.org

Glossary

- **blunt** = brusca
- **outgoing** = estroversa
- **four-panel strip** = strisce a quattro vignette
- **thriving** = fiorente, prospero
- **upholds** = mantenere, accogliere
- **year round** = tutto l'anno
- **poured** = rovesciare, versare
- **Red-Haired** = dai capelli rossi
- **straightforward** = diretta
- **wise beyond his years** = più saggio della sua età
- **joy** = felicità
- **aim** = obiettivo
- **club champion** = campione in tutto
- **in joy** = per la gioia
- **tore** = strappare
- **and yet** = eppure
- **figure it out** = capire
- **depth** = profondità
- **drawing board** = tavolo da disegno
- **plush** = peluche
- **opinionated** = ostinata
- **social cues** = convenzioni sociali
- **enduring** = duraturo
- **well-meaning** = ben intenzionato
- **selfish** = egoista
- **display** = mostrare, esporre
- **moves away** = allontanarsi
- **endeavour** = sforzi, tentativi
- **blanket** = coperta
- **romantic advances** = avances romantiche
- **sassy** = sfacciato
- **indulge** = assecondare
- **hosts** = ospitare

- **hang around** = gironzolare, bighellonare
- **oblivious** = ignara
- **stand** = sopportare
- **props** = oggetti di scena
- **wishy-washy** = accondiscendente, privo di carattere
- **thoughtful** = riflessivo
- **mankind** = umanità
- **gag-a-day** = battuta, scenetta del giorno
- **whacked** = colpire
- **frying pan** = padella
- **setbacks** = contrattempi
- **crush** = cotta
- **Strong-willed** = determinata
- **touchstone** = punto di riferimento
- **punchline** = battuta
- **over time** = col tempo
- **booth** = stand, postazione
- **tomboyish** = da maschiaccio