

Editorial cartoonist loves job

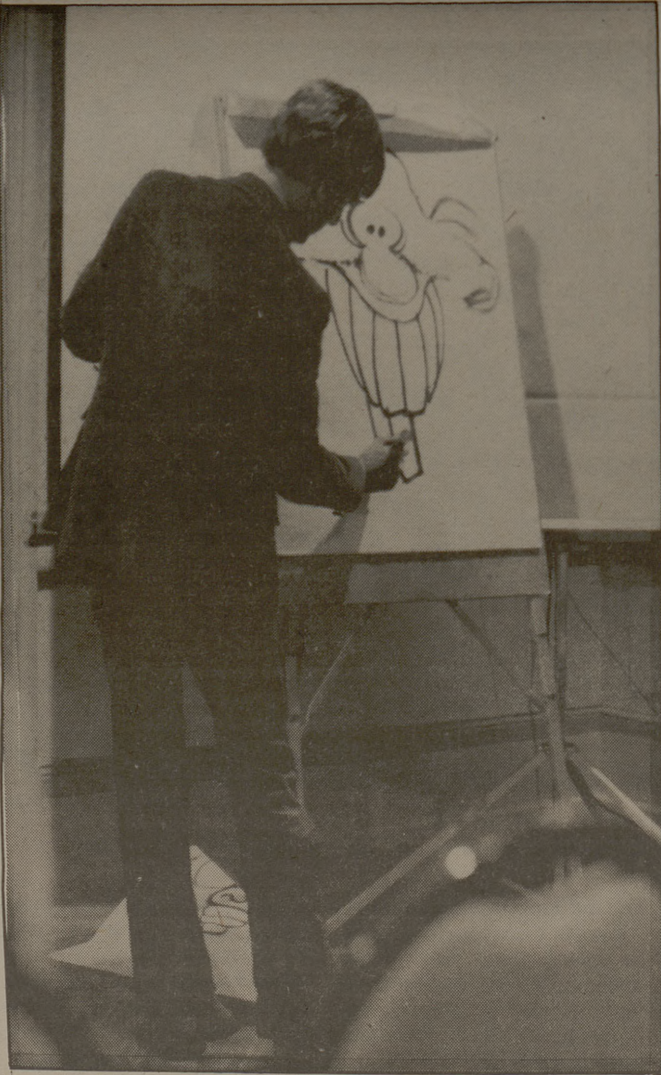


photo by Rebeca Zimmermann

Editorial cartoonist Mike Peters draws his well-known caricature of Jimmy Carter.

by Kim Schmidt and Rebeca Zimmermann

Special to The Battalion

Cartoonist. You may picture Charles Schulz drawing "Peanuts" or Jim Davis drawing "Garfield" — cartoonists drawing the traditional "funnies" for the Sunday morning paper.

But a different type of cartoonist is alive and well in newspapers today: the editorial cartoonist.

Editorial cartoonists often are wacky, off-the-wall people, but they're more than just humorous. They use humor and satire to make political statements.

Mike Peters, a syndicated editorial cartoonist based at the Dayton (Ohio) Daily News and a Pulitzer Prize winner, is a classic example of a wacky cartoonist who tries to make a political impact with his drawings.

Peters says cartoonists can't change a person's mind about political issues as editorial writers can.

"The strongest thing an editorial cartoonist can do is leave a lasting image on your mind that you won't easily forget," he says.

Peters keeps this idea in mind when he evaluates his cartoons.

"The gauge that I use is: Is somebody going to be affected physically? Does a person laugh or get mad? If so, then it is a good cartoon.

"I sit on a bus and watch people read my cartoons," he says. "If they read it and look away, that's a failure. I want people to

bump each other and go 'ah, look at that.'"

Feedback from the people he caricatures also is important.

"We would love to have those guys (government officials) get upset with us," he chortles. This is the ultimate reward for editorial cartoonists because it means the cartoons have struck a nerve, he says.

"You really want them to worry about what you're drawing today."

Sometimes, however, people's reactions aren't what cartoonists expect.

"When I'm really mad, I really want to put the guy down (with a cartoon)," he says. "It's really deflating when they call up and like the cartoon and want the original."

But Peters manages to have the last word when he sends an original to the cartoon's subject. For example, after Henry Kissinger requested the original of a cartoon, Peters sent it — but with a little note: "Keep up the good work in Chile."

Kissinger was a good sport about it. He sent Peters a note in return: "Thank you for the cartoon. It gave me cause to smile."

Peters also sent a cartoon to James Watt, former secretary of the interior. Peters wrote this note: "Since it's for sale, can I have Colorado?"

Commenting on or criticizing government officials' actions is the meat of an editorial cartoonist's job — a job Peters still finds exhilarating after 15 years.

Government officials aren't

Peters' only targets. In Dayton, local school board members aren't safe from Peters' satirical barbs either.

"Local guys are the ones who really can't take it," Peters says and cites an example. He did a cartoon about a local school board member. The man was so incensed that he waved the cartoon in the air — while being interviewed on television — and screamed "Look at this!"

"That's what my dream has always been," Peters says.

Peters dreams of cartooning began at an early age.

"I've been a cartoonist all my life, it's just nobody knew it," he says.

Because he spent much of his time drawing instead of studying, Peters' academic record in grade school and high school was poor.

"I stuttered, I was cross-eyed, everything. They thought that I was retarded. I didn't give them any reason to think I wasn't retarded."

But his mother, who hosted a television show in St. Louis, encouraged Peters to continue his drawing.

He did continue and eventually proved that academic records don't determine success in life — or who gets a Pulitzer Prize. Because of his portfolio of published cartoons, Peters was admitted to the Washington University School of Fine Arts.

His academic record didn't improve, however, until his junior year. At that time, a pro-

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Beer, food abound at Wurstfest

by Pat Allen

Battalion reporter

Where do 150,000 people eat 42 tons of wurst (sausage), 70,000 Trichter Kuchens (funnel cakes), 10,000 Putebeins (turkey legs), 42,000 kartoffel puffers (potato pancakes), 22,000 shish-kabobs and 19,000 ears of corn, all in a mere 10 days?

Only at the Wurstfest, an annual Texas-German celebration held in New Braunfels to celebrate the German heritage in Texas.

The 23rd birthday party for the Wurstfest began Nov. 4 through Sunday. It's a party you don't want to miss.

"The Wurstfest is all about dancing, music, eating, sports, history and heritage," Tom Purdum, executive secretary of Wurstfest said. "It's not a traditional German festival, it's a Texas-German party."

Over 70 entertainment groups are performing at Wurstfest '83. The festival's

featured entertainer is accordionist Myron Floren of the Lawrence Welk TV Show. Floren has been the featured entertainer at the fest since 1968.

"The cakes are my favorite thing at the fest next to this," she said as she tilted her beer. — Jo Ann Schlabach

The idea for what originally was to be a "typical small town festival" was conceived by Dr. Ed A. Grist, a practicing veterinarian in New Braunfels. With support from the Chamber of Commerce, Grist was able to get the first Sausage Festival cooking in 1961.

The first Wurstfest drew a crowd of over 2,000 hungry visitors and the event gained world-wide recognition. No one expected attendance to

rise over 30,000 within three years, and now over 150,000 in 1983.

Thirty-eight entrepreneurs and 28 civic organizations have booths at this year's festival. The booth's proceeds will be used to beautify the community and to help fund other community services. Money is given to the Texas Junior Miss Scholarship, hospitals, high school bands for uniforms, the city for recreational activities and other organizations.

Jo Ann Schlabach, a member of the Canyon Music Supporters, helps make the 7,000 funnel cakes sold each day of the fest. The cakes are made by funneling a "secret" mix into a bottomless round cake pan floating in a hot bowl of oil. The cakes fry for three minutes before being smothered in powdered sugar and cinnamon. Over 200 people have been counted waiting in line to experience a dessert even grandma would be proud of. It's worth the wait.

"We have 278 people helping us make the cakes this year," Schlabach said. "People just eat 'em up like crazy. The cakes are my favorite thing at the fest next to this,"

Tomorrow's schedule includes a tennis and bowling tournament, the Wurstfest Art Show and a display of the Budweiser Clydesdale horses.

she said as she tilted her beer.

Almost everyone at the Wurstfest likes the beer. Take your pick. Strohs, Budweiser, Coors, Lite, Schlitz, you name it, they've got it.

Of the many events at the festival, the most popular is the Wurstfest Dachshund, or Sausage-dog Fun Match. It includes prizes of links of sausage to the winning dog and its owner in such categories as

longest, fattest, oldest, best dressed and "Dachshund looking most like a sausage." A Hummel Figurine Look-Alike Contest and a Battle of the Accordions also are popular attractions at the fest.

Tomorrow's schedule includes a tennis and bowling tournament, the Wurstfest Art Show and a display of the Budweiser Clydesdale horses. On Sunday, the 50-member Teltschik Family Band will perform and there will be exhibits on beer making, rope making and sausage making. The Annual Wurstfest Yacht Regatta will be held on Canyon Lake tomorrow and Sunday.

The Comal River provides an appropriate, laid-back atmosphere for the festival. The attitudes of the festival goers are all so positive and easy-go-lucky that one can easily be swept away with the German traditions. Good food, good music, and good dancing all together make Wurstfest '83 a "good time."