A boy and his tiger

'Calvin and Hobbes' creator Bill Watterson ended the strip almost four years ago, but his strip remains popular among grown-up '6-year-olds'

By Anne Hoar
The Battalion

On New Year's Day 1997, a 6-year-old boy named Calvin and his stuffed tiger, Hobbes, were missing from their home. Their family included any Generation Xer or Yer who ever dreamed of rebelling against the baby sitter, exploring outer space or dancing with the dinosaurs. Their home was the comics section of newspapers around the world.

Bill Watterson's "Calvin and Hobbes" comic strip appeared in more than 2,400 newspapers during its run between 1985 and 1996. When Watterson retired, he left millions of devoted readers wondering how they will live without the poetic insights of Watterson's 6-year-old philosopher.

Lee Salem, an editor for Universal Press Syndicate, which distributes "Calvin and Hobbes," was Watterson's editor for 10 years.

"At the beginning of the strip, we would go over material together to get a sense of the characters and how they would react in different situations," Salem said. "We worked together, and I made suggestions, but the strip was 99.9 percent his. Watterson totally created the strip and the characters."

Salem said his favorite part about working with Watterson was the imaginative characters that he created for the strip.

Watterson said on his Website that Calvin's character was fun to write because it was the opposite of his own childhood. He said that, despite the fact that the humor is based on childhood adventures, it still appeals to adults.

"I suspect that inside every adult is a bratty kid who wants everything his own way," Watterson said.

Salem said that Watterson stopped doing "Calvin and Hobbes" due to the constant stress of doing a daily comic.

"The constant strain of deadlines really affected him," he said. "He thought that if he went much longer, the content of the strip would be diminished. Bill wanted to leave while 'Calvin and Hobbes' was at the top."

Salem said that Watterson and the syndicate has some disagreements toward the end of the series.

"We disagreed about how to develop 'Calvin and Hobbes,' as far as licensing goes," he said. "We have the rights to the characters, but in the end, we respected his wishes."

Salem said the relationship was amicable. Now that Watterson has retired, Salem said, he is probably doing as little as possible.

"I bet he's probably painting and enjoying not meeting deadlines," Salem said.

Alicia Michalak, assistant manager of Barnes and Noble on Texas Avenue, said the "Calvin and Hobbes" books are still the best-selling comic-book series at the store.

"The sales are steadily good throughout the year and increase during Christmas," she said. "The best sellers are the treasuries, especially *The Indispensible Calvin and Hobbes* and *The Authoritative Calvin and Hobbes*, which combine several books."

The book that sells the greatest amount is *Homicidal Psycho Jungle Cat*.

" 'Garfield' is probably in second place," Michalak said. "But nothing compares to 'Calvin and Hobbes.' "

> ***"The constant strain of deadlines really affected him. He though that if he went on much longer, the content of the strip would be diminished. Bill wanted to leave while 'Calvin and Hobbes' was at the top."***
>
> — Lee Salem
> Watterson's former editor

Michalak said the people reading the books are mainly teen-agers and young adults.

David Konderla, a priest at St. Mary's Church, said that he is a long-time "Calvin and Hobbes" fan.

"I began seeing 'Calvin and Hobbes' in the paper and loved it immediately," Konderla said. "The humor is very adult, especially the punch lines. I think that adults can really appreciate the subtlety of it."

Konderla said the strip reminds him of his childhood.

"I was the second of 12 kids, so we grew up in a really rough-and-tumble environment. A lot of the things in the strip really resonate with me."

Konderla's favorite themes in the "Calvin and Hobbes" strip include the dinosaur episodes and the baby-sitter episodes.

"The philosophic discussions about life really interest me, too," he said.

Despite the influence of electronic entertainment for children, Konderla said, he hopes that today's children can still find joy in comics.

"The medium impacts us in a better way than an animated show because you put your own humor in it," he said. "I hope today's children don't miss the fun of comics."

David Ming, a junior finance major, said that he began reading the books when he was 10 years old.

"I was at summer camp, and all of my friends had the books, and I started reading them," Ming said.

After he returned from camp, he bought some of the books.

"My favorite one was *Something Under the Bed is Drooling*," he said. "I liked all the strips that had Calvin confronting things, from baby sitters to monsters."

Ming said he still reads the strip when it is in the paper.

"Even though there are no new strips, 'Calvin and Hobbes' still continues because they rerun old strips," Ming said. "I think that 'Calvin and Hobbes' will be around forever."

RUBEN DELUNA/The Battalion

On Sale Saturday!

ROBERT EARL KEEN
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 23
SOUTHWEST AIRLINES
Houston Chronicle www.houstonchronicle.com
Las Vegas
Preferred seating available to Gold Card and Platinum Card® members 713-625-AMEX
Aerial Theater
www.aerialtheater.com
Aerial Theater Box Office 520 Texas Ave. 713-230-1600
A Great Venue for Private Parties, Banquets, Galas, and Meetings. Good Dates Still Available for Holiday Parties.
get tickets at sfx.com
Tickets also available at 713-629-3700, from ticketmaster outlets, or from the Aerial Theater box office. All dates, act(s), and ticket prices are subject to change without notice. A service charge is added to each ticket price. Brought to you by SFX.

R X X V TAMC

"Soldier, Statesman, Knightly Gentleman"

Miguel Aguilar	Brian Haegelin	Patrick McKinney
Eric Alarid	Jeremy Hall	Johnathan Nicolas
Richard Alvarado III	Justin Hall	William Oliver
Nathan Anderson	Lee Hamm	Drew Ondrey
Benjamin Arcuni	Jordan Hans	Justin Perkins
Beau Bell	Kenneth Hull	Bryan Phillips
Brian Berlakovich	Johnathan Hults	John Reid
Joshua Betty	Barclay Imle	John Richie
Lavell Bradshaw III	James Jeffress	Jake Roberts
Mark Buck	Ross Johnson	James Rowland
Nicholas Cantrell	Michael Jones	Alexander Scogin
Benjamin Channels	Scott Keller	Sam Seidel
Zachary Coventry	Clifton Kennedy	William Sullivan
Aaron Davis	Richard King	Joseph Trevino
Joe Dickerson	William Krueger	Regan Turner
Grady Dieckert	William Kyle	Casey Utterback
Donald Dominy III	John Leonard	Trevor Voelkel
Diana Estrada	Daniel Lilly	John P. Wanja
David Feith	Rafael Manias	Charles Wenmohs
Chase Franks	Dale Marrou	Peter Wetterauer
Richard Fryer	Herman Mauch III	Ryan Wills
Seth Gibson	Johnathan May	Adam Withers
Jose Gonzalez	Matthew McCarty	Mathew Wood
Kevin Graham	Shawn McGregor	Preston Young

Congratulations to the newly elected Class of 2002 Ross Volunteers

Congratulations Graduating Seniors!
Bring this ad in for a free gift when you order announcements or purchase a cap & gown.
ROTHER'S BOOKSTORES

Are you lost without glasses?

We can help you discover a whole new world

Marr Eye Center proudly announces the arrival of its new VISX excimer laser. Now high-tech laser vision correction can be performed right here in Bryan.

See what you've been missing.

Marr Eye Center
William H. Marr, M.D., P.A.
2801 East 29th Street, Suite 101
Bryan, Tx 77802
(979) 776-7564 or 1-800-338-7864