Charlie Brown and the Great Exhibit

Interpretive Panels for the Museum of Science and Industry

Exhibit Intro

Is there anyone who doesn't adore Charles Schulz's Peanuts characters?

Thanks to his heartwarming and enduring comic strip, generations of children and adults have pondered eternal questions such as: Will Lucy ever let Charlie Brown kick the ball? How long will Linus keep his blanket? Will Pig-Pen ever take a bath?

Born as "Li'l Folks," Schulz's beloved characters later were dubbed "Peanuts." Schulz researched, wrote, designed, and drew each and every strip that appeared in newspapers every day for 50 years! Throughout the decades, we've watched the gang suffer unrequited love, wait for elusive pumpkins and valentines, and learn the true meaning of Christmas… and friendship. One feisty canine character even fought wars and landed on the moon!

When Schulz retired in 1999, Peanuts had appeared in more than 2,600 newspapers, in 75 countries, reaching more than 355 readers. They've graced books, calendars, the big and small screen, even off- Broadway. But, the most cherished spot these timeless characters dwell is deep in the hearts of millions of fans around the world.

Come along with us as we meet Charles Schulz, the genius behind Peanuts. Watch the gang evolve over time. Celebrate the holidays with them. Peek inside Schulz's studio and Snoopy's imagination. Glimpse original artwork and exercise your own creative genius.

The Museum of Science and Industry is pleased to welcome you to CHARLIE BROWN AND THE GREAT EXHIBIT!

Snoopy, Unleashed

Snoopy is "an existential hero in every sense of the term… strives, with dogged persistence and unyielding courage, to overcome what seems to be his fate—that he is a dog." He is "a bon vivant, he participates in history, he has an incredible imagination, he is witty, he expresses himself with virtuosity in any number of ways, and he is superb as mimic and dancer."

—Arthur Asa Berger in "Peanuts: The Americanization of Augustine"

Dog Days: Snoopy Throughout the Years

Snoopy made his Peanuts debut in October 1950, two days after the comic strip premiered. So, technically, he is 434 in dog years! Schulz chose the name Snoopy (derived from a Norwegian term of endearment) to honor his late mother. If the family ever welcomed a third dog, she wanted it named Snoopy.

He was born at Daisy Hill Puppy Farm, but was destined for greatness. Over the years, Snoopy learned to communicate via thought bubbles and to walk on his hind legs. As Schulz's drawing improved, "I was able to get him to do things that he couldn't do before. He'd be lying in peculiar positions – his head in his water dish or on a rock. I don't recall how he got on top of the doghouse."

Did you know that Snoopy had one owner prior to Charlie Brown? She was a girl named Lila who had to return him to the Daisy Hill Puppy Farm when her family moved into an apartment that banned dogs.

Ever wonder how Snoopy and Woodstock first met? Woodstock's mother left him in a nest on Snoopy's stomach.

Alter Beagle

Snoopy inhabits a colorful world of fantasy, action, and high adventure. The charismatic canine flies aircraft, plays hockey and baseball, is a gifted actor, prolific writer, and even lands on the moon! Snoopy proves that with creativity, tenacity (and a cozy spot atop a doghouse roof), we can achieve anything! A virtuoso, his most famous alter egos include World War I Flying Ace, Joe Cool, a World-Famous Writer, and astronaut, but during his free time, he also is a masterful musician, tennis star, Beagle Scout leader… even a World-Famous Grocery Checkout Clerk, roller derby star, and census taker!

The Beagle Has Landed

In the Peanuts comic strip, Snoopy was the first beagle to land on the moon. Life often imitates art, and in the real world, NASA adopted him as a mascot for aerospace safety. The Apollo 10 lunar module was named Snoopy. Astronaut Mike Massimino took his own toy Snoopy on a space mission. And, the Silver Snoopy award, originally designed by Charles Schulz in the 1960s, is a special NASA honor given to those who have greatly enhanced space flight safety and mission success.

Are you a World Famous Author like Snoopy? See if you have the "write" stuff.

It was a dark and stormy night…

The first time Snoopy ever wrote a story on top of his doghouse was in July 1965. And, Schulz's very last Peanuts comic strip on February 13, 2000, featured Snoopy atop his house with his iconic typewriter.

Like most great authors, Snoopy has a writing ritual. First, he types "Here's the World Famous Author writing…." And each story begins with the phrase, "It was a dark and stormy night."

Time and again, Snoopy faces disappointment from publishers, so much, in fact, that Woodstock makes a rejection-slip quilt for him! Maybe you can help Snoopy earn an acceptance letter this time! This story starts as always… It was a dark and stormy night. How would you finish it?
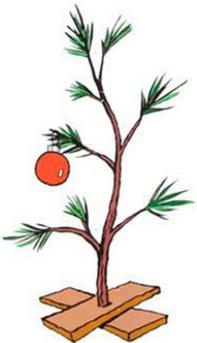
Holiday Panels

Peanuts: A Year of Celebrations

Who can forget Linus and Sally waiting eagerly for the Great Pumpkin to appear? Charlie Brown and Linus transforming a sad little stick of a tree into Christmas magic? Charlie Brown compulsively checking the mailbox for valentines? These Peanuts moments have transcended mere holiday entertainment. They have become part of our shared Americana: holiday treasures passed from one generation to the next.

Join us as we celebrate a year of Peanuts holidays!

Halloween

What inspired Charles Schulz to create the Great Pumpkin? "I know I was drawing some Halloween strips about Linus, who is bright but very innocent," explained Schulz, "and he was confusing Halloween with Christmas… Linus gives the Great Pumpkin those qualities Santa is supposed to have."

The Great Pumpkin first appeared… well, was first mentioned, in any case… in a 1959 multi-day story, and quickly became a favorite. The televised version, It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown, premiered on CBS, October 27, 1966, animated by Bill Melendez.

Thanksgiving

Can Charlie Brown and Linus, with help from Snoopy and Woodstock, save Thanksgiving? Charles Schulz's Thanksgiving comic first appeared November 23, 1967.

The Emmy-award-winning A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving debuted on CBS, November 20, 1973.

Christmas

Charles Schulz reveals not only his artistic genius, but his genuine understanding of children – their deepest wishes, disappointments, and joys – in his Christmas comic strips. He shares with us the simple gifts of the season – an unexpected present, an unadorned and forlorn little tree, decorations, a Christmas pageant, and spending time with friends.

A Charlie Brown Christmas was the first prime-time TV special based upon a Peanuts comic. Animated by Bill Melendez (who also was the voice of Snoopy), the show first aired in 1965, and was awarded with both a Peabody and Emmy.

Happy New Year!

What better way to ring in the New Year than with tankards of root beer and the company of good friends?

Happy New Year, Charlie Brown first aired on CBS, January 1, 1986. Characteristically, Charlie Brown misses out on the festivities: the ball dropping in Times Square and his friends singing Auld Lang Syne.

Valentine's Day

"I don't know why there's so much unrequited love in my strip," says Charles Schulz. Charlie Brown adores the Little Red-Haired Girl; Linus pines for his teacher, Miss Othmar. Valentine's Day is bittersweet for Peanuts characters as they experience the despair of one-sided love along with the comfort of true friendship.

Be My Valentine, Charlie Brown debuted on CBS, January 28, 1975. After the show aired, hundreds of children sympathizing with Charlie Brown on his lonely Valentine's Day sent him cards of their own. The sequel, A Charlie Brown Valentine, premiered on ABC in 2002.