27 AMAZING Facts About Comics - mental_floss on YouTube (Ep.49)

List Show
https://youtube.com/watch?v=6ysQ4DREIzg
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John Green: Hi, I'm John Green, welcome to my fancy new salon, including my totally real fireplace. This is mental_floss on YouTube, did you know that Gary Trudeau, who created Doonesbury, won a Pulitzer Prize in 1975? That was the first comic strip ever to win a Pulitzer or possibly Pulitzer, and that is the first of many facts about newspaper comic strips I'm going to share with you today.

(mental_floss intro plays)

2) In 1945, conservative Harold Grey used his comic to show just how much he despised FDR's New Deal policies. He killed off a star in his strip, *Little Orphan Annie*, Daddy Warbucks. Eventually, Warbucks came back to life, but only after FDR died. The character claimed, "Somehow, I feel that the climate here has changed since I went away."

3) The comic *Katzenjammer Kids* was the first to use speech bubbles. It's also the oldest comic strip ever. It started in 1897 and still puts out new comics today.

4) In 2008, a Tumblr by the name of Garfield Minus Garfield was getting 300,000 views a day--all the creator did was remove Garfield from Garfield comic strips, leaving a sad and slightly insane looking Jon.

Jim Davis, who makes *Garfield*, was really cool about it, actually. He claimed that some of the strips on the blog actually worked better than his originals. If I can make one recommendation, Internet, Spiderman without Spiderman.

5) And we'll stay here on the wall to discuss *Peanuts.* Charles Schulz originally called his comic strip *Lil' Folks*, but that had to be changed because there was already one titled *Little Folks*. Off-topic, I just want to say how grateful I am that there's no rapper named Little Wayne. Anyway, Schulz once admitted that he hated the name *Peanuts,* he said, "It's totally ridiculous, has no meaning, is simply confusing--and has no dignity. I think my humor has dignity." My humor has dignity, too, Charles Schulz, see my earlier Little Wayne joke.

6) And incidentally, Charlie Brown never did kick that football in the 50 years that *Peanuts* ran, which, by the way, was almost 18,000 strips from 1950-2000.

7) In a 1975 speech, Gerald Ford said there are only three major vehicles to keep us informed as to what is going on in Washington: the electronic media, the print media, and *Doonesbury,* not necessarily in that order.

8) One of Mindy Kaling's first forays into comedy was a comic strip for Dartmouth College's daily newspaper, titled *Badly Drawn Girl.*

9) In 2005, *Blondie's* 75th anniversary was celebrated in the comic strip with a huge party that featured tons of other comic strips characters, with months of buildup and lots of interaction. The characters in the comic *Pearls Before Swine* weren't invited to the party, but they still played out a story arc about their plans to crash it.

10) When Farley, the beloved sheepdog in *For Better or For Worse* died, creator Lynn Johnston received 2500 letters--some positive and some angry. The Ontario Veterinary Medical Association even named a charity after him--The Farley Foundation.

11) Seth MacFarlane also had a comic strip, but a little earlier in life. He was being paid to cartoon when he was nine years old. His strip was called *Walter Crouton,* and it ran weekly in his local newspaper.

12) There's a park in Monterey, California containing a statue of Dennis the Menace, but it isn't the original. In 2006, a bronze Dennis was stolen from the park--it was 3 feet tall, 125 lbs, and worth $30,000. It never turned back up, so it had to be replaced. So if you're looking for some Dennis the Menace style mischief and you also want $30,000, Monterey, California!

13) Though artist Mort Walker has since been given the army's highest civilian honor, declaration for distinguished civilian services, the army didn't always love the comic *Beetle Bailey*, in fact, the Pentagon had previously used Walker's comics as an army training guide for how not to act.

14) Scott Adams, the creator of *Dilbert*, decided to start a food company in the late 1990s, they produced frozen vegetarian burritos using his title character as the mascot. They were, of course, called Dilberritos.

15) *Calvin and Hobbes* creator Bill Waterson is famous for his refusal to let anyone adapt his comic to another medium--he's even turned down meetings with legends like Steven Spielberg and George Lucas.

16) One more fact about *Calvin and Hobbes*, because the internet loves *Calvin and Hobbes.* In 2008, students at Washington University in St. Louis organized a Calvinball club, which attracted 40 students. The one rule of Calvinball, of course, is that you can never play it the same way twice, and the club has honored this, using everything from hardhats to water balloons to footballs during Calvinball games.

17) In 1996, when the mom on *Family Circus*, best known as Mommy, got a drastic haircut, it was big news. And by that, I mean it was an actual literal news story, the LA Times went above and beyond with their coverage, getting quotes from famous stylists about the look.

18) The comic *The Wizard of Id* was a collaboration between Grant Parker and Johnny Heart. After getting the idea from a deck of cards, they spent three days in a hotel room working on it. They scheduled a meeting with hot shots from their syndicate, who showed up early. They were greeted by Parker, Heart, and a hotel room littered with food, booze, and scrap paper. The president of the comic syndicate reportedly told them, "We think you guys are disgusting, but we'll take *The Wizard of Id."*

19) Speaking of *The Wizard of Id,* it was one of Jim Henson's favorite comics. He even considered adapting it into a TV show, shooting a pilot in 1969. He ended up being too busy to pursue the project, but you can watch some of it if you click here.

20) Okay, if you're ever at Islands of Adventure and the line for everything at The Wizarding World of Harry Potter is super long, which spoiler alert, it will be, check out Toon Lagoon. I mean, you can eat the favorite food of comic characters, like a sandwich at Blondie's or Ice Cream at Cathy's.

21) Speaking of *Cathy*, when it was announced that *Cathy* would be ending in 2010, #WaysCathyShouldEnd was a trending topic on Twitter. By the way, I apologize for using the word 'hashtag' but at least I didn't follow it with YOLO.

22) But speaking of only living once, people often wonder why Bill Murray agreed to voice Garfield, given that he only has so much time on this earth. Well, he told GQ that he took the role because the film was written by Joel Cohen, and he'd already done a day of voice work before learning that this was not the Joel Cohen of the famous Cohen brothers, but rather a different Joel Cohen. Which is all fine and good, Bill Murray, but how do you explain Garfield 2: A

Tale of Two Kitties?

23) But it's not fair to throw Bill Murray under the bus when it comes to comic strip adaptations because the real villains of that story are Betty White and Don Rickles, who were in the straight-to-VHS Dennis the Menace sequel, which also starred Carrot Top.
24) In news of a slightly better movie, Owen Wilson, William H. Macy, Kiefer Sutherland, and tons of other esteemed actors voiced animals in the 2010 Marmaduke movie. George Lopez was also in it, but his career technically ended when did the movie Balls of Fury. Anyways, you can't blame any of these people for being in the Marmaduke movie, because 1) paycheck, and 2) the premiere was a beach party that featured actual surfing dogs.

25) Comic book character Zippy the Pinhead appeared in graffiti form on the Berlin Wall. When the wall was torn down, that piece sold for $10,000 in an auction.

26) According to *Rhymes with Orange* cartoonist Hilary Price, the word 'crap' is still considered inappropriate on the comics pages. In January 2014, she had to give newspaper editors an alternative strip to the one she designed that contained the word 'crap', just in case they'd rather use, you know, a G-rated strip. Well, I for one say that sucks. Apparently you can't use the word 'sucks' either, what is this, Maoist China, how does Garfield express his frustration when he can't have lasagna?

27) And lastly, I return to my fancy salon to tell you about the unlikely friendship between *Farside* creator Gary Larson and primatologist Jane Goodall. One of Larson's comics had one chimp asking another, "Are you conducting a little more research with that Jane Goodall tramp?" The Jane Goodall institute was outraged, but Jane herself stopped them from getting lawyers involved, because she thought the comic was funny. The chimps, perhaps, were not so amused. Gary Larson later visited one of Goodall's research locations, where a chimp named Frodo attacked him. Larson was only slightly injured.

Thanks for watching mental_floss here on YouTube, which is made with the help of all of these nice people. Every week, we endeavor to answer one of your mind-blowing questions. This week's question comes from Nick, who asks, "Where does Bill Clinton reside today?" Well, Nick, not that I'm recommending that you stalk the Clintons, but they live in Chapelboro, NY. If you have your own mind blowing question, please leave it in comments, we'll endeavor to answer as many as possible. Thank you again for watching mental_floss, and as we say in my hometown, don't forget to be awesome.