

ShopTalk



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Editor, Lisa O'Donnell Connors, x4-6803

Breathed and Opus Come Home

The beloved penguin Opus and his Pulitzer-prize winning creator are returning to the Sunday comics pages in The Post and newspapers across the country on November 23. The Post Writers Group announced last week that syndicated cartoonist Berkeley Breathed will be creating the strip "Opus." Opus was a central character that appeared in Breathed's two previous comic strips, "Bloom County" and "Outland."

When asked why he decided to bring his most popular character back now, the artist said, "Unfinished business. It's been said education and sex are wasted on the young. I'd add cartooning."

According to Writers Group General Manager and Editorial Director **ALAN SHEARER**, the return of Berkeley is great news for The Post and for Sunday newspapers. "The reader popularity of his two other strips was enormous. Breathed is one of the top cartoonists of this generation, that's why this is such big news."

"We still get letters from readers about 'Bloom County'," said **SHIRLEY CARSWELL**, assistant managing editor for planning and administration. "The strip resonated with a lot of people."



Rumors of Breathed's return to the comics pages began at the National Cartoon Society's convention held in May in San Francisco when he made a remark about a return. "There was an audible gasp in the audience," recalls Writers Group Comics Editor **SUZANNE WHELTON**, who was at the conven-

tion. "He said it was really hard to sit through the war and not have a public voice."

"It's a coup that he wanted to come back to us," explained Whelton. "Every syndicate at the convention heard him say he wanted to

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Readers Air Feelings for Sunday Source

A television advertising campaign featuring real Post readers emoting their positive feelings about the Sunday Source section will begin airing during the Emmy Awards broadcast on Sunday, Sept. 21. The campaign illustrates the enthusiasm that readers have had for the section that debuted in April.

“We’ve gotten a really positive response from readers,” noted Sunday Source Editor **SANDY FERNANDEZ**. “We get a lot of

questions about the sections and the readers are obviously very engaged.”

According to **JERI FLOOD**, director of marketing, the Sunday Source testimonial campaign will run for five weeks this fall and may run again in the winter.

“We were interested in real people giving real reactions. The campaign demonstrates how the Sunday Source reaches people with a variety of interests,” explained Flood. “The readers talk in

poignant terms about how the Source has made a difference in their lives.”

Working with the advertising agency Arnold Worldwide, the Marketing Department began efforts in June to seek readers who could speak well on camera as they gave their reactions to the Sunday Source. Fliers were handed out at Metro stations and at local clubs. Calls were also made to readers who had sent positive comments to Fernandez and her staff.

The agency initially interviewed 150 readers and called back 35 of them to talk about their experiences with the Sunday Source. The agency then presented 18 readers who they thought would present themselves well on television to the Marketing staff. The staff trimmed down the group to 10 readers who were filmed in spots around the D.C. area talking about their personal connections to the Sunday Source. Of the 10, three of the readers will appear in one of the campaign’s ads, chosen for how they express themselves and their comments about the Sunday Source.

SUSAN HEYMAN, Marketing, also worked on the campaign. Flood noted that the Sunday Source testimonial campaign is running in concert with The Post’s reduced price offer campaign [featured in the Sept. 11 issue of ShopTalk] to provide more exposure of the paper to potential home delivery subscribers. ■



This could be you on Monday, Sept. 22. The Marketing Department is encouraging employees to wear their Sunday Source T-shirt to work to help launch the new advertising campaign. (Check with your supervisor for permission.)

come back to the comics. We've stayed in touch over the years and he considers us family."

Breathed has a relationship with The Post that dates back to December 1980 when the recent University of Texas graduate joined the Writers Group and went on to become its most successful syndicated comic strip artist. According to an article that ran in the Dec. 11, 1980 issue of ShopTalk, Breathed had enjoyed success as the creator of a comic strip called "The Academia Waltz," that was published in his college newspaper. After graduating in 1979, he sought to be picked up by a major comics syndicate, with disheartening results. His luck soon changed when a friend of former Post employee Sharon

Isch told her about Breathed and she passed on the information to former Writers Group staffer Al Leeds. "The next thing I knew, Al is on a plane to Austin to see this vaunted artist," Isch was quoted in the article.

"Here I was mailing all this stuff out to the syndicates and then I found out that somebody from The Washington Post has been calling my paper asking about this guy who is doing a comic strip," said Berkeley in the ShopTalk article. "Things aren't supposed to work that way!"

In 1987, Breathed joined Garry Trudeau as one of only two comic strip artists to win the Pulitzer Prize, for "Bloom County." The popular strip was syndicated to 1,300 newspapers when Breathed pulled the plug on it in 1989. Breathed then moved many of the "Bloom County" charac-

ters to his Sunday-only comic strip "Outland" that ran until 1995. During his almost decade-long absence from creating comic strips, Breathed, has written a number of children's books and sold the rights to a movie about Opus that he will write.

According to Shearer, the Writers Group staff has been visiting editors across the country with a limited number of "Opus" strips. "We're not making copies of the strips to send out to newspapers, because we didn't want someone to copy the strip and put it up on the Internet. We want to build anticipation among readers and let them know that the only way to see 'Opus' is to buy the newspaper," he said.

"This has been in the works since July," explained Whelton. "Berkeley really wants newspapers to have the

benefit of the strip and understands what is driving readers to the paper."

Due to its half page format, the return of Opus to The Post's Sunday comics will create some changes, according to Carswell. "Right now we're planning on reducing the size of some comics, not necessarily to drop any, although it's too early to say. The unique space demand [of 'Opus'] does complicate space issues, but we think it will be worth it."

Since "Opus" is still under wraps, here's a reprint of an "Outland" strip to acquaint Post staff with Opus. For more information about Breathed and Opus, go to the *IntraNED* home page for a link to Berkeley Breathed's web site. ■



Post Wins Graphics and Design Awards

The Post received 24 awards for graphics and design on Saturday, Sept. 6 at the 25th Annual Convention of the Society for News Design, held in the District. The Post received a silver award for coverage of the 2002 sniper attacks. The other 23 awards were in a number of categories including news design for local pages, feature design for opinion pages, breaking news topics and illustration. The international design competition drew 12,760 entries from 351 newspapers in 37 countries.



Employees Invited to Music & Dance Awards

The Post's Second Annual Music & Dance Scholarship awards will take place on Saturday, Sept. 27 at 7 p.m. at the Warner Theatre in the Dis-

trict. Employees are invited to purchase tickets to attend this night of entertainment that recognizes the artistic and academic abilities of high school seniors in the metro area. Tickets are available through TicketMaster® at (202) 432-SEAT, or at the Warner Theatre Box Office (202) 628-1818. Tickets will also be sold at the door, if the event is not sold out. Balcony

seating is \$18.50 and orchestra seating is \$26.50. All proceeds benefit The Washington Post Educational Foundation and Urban

Nation, Inc., a nonprofit organization serving at-risk youth. For more information contact **DAVID JONES**, Public Relations, x4-4917.

President's Exceptional Service Awards

The President's Exceptional Service Awards began in 1991



PHOTO - CHARLES PFEFFERLE

Officer Nurur Rahman Recipient of Award

On Tuesday, Aug. 26 Guardsmark Facility Manager Scott Hotaling and Post Security Manager **GARY CORSO** presented Guardsmark officer Nurur Rahman with the prestigious Guardsmark "World Class Service Leadership Award" honoring his initiative and leadership while assisting an injured Washington Post employee earlier this year.

and are awarded twice a year to Post employees from the following departments: Accounting, Administration, Human Resources, Purchasing, Public Relations, Information Technology, Operating Services and Building Services. Managers, Supervisors and Directors are not eligible for the award.

All staff are eligible to nominate an employee from one of the departments noted above. For future nominations, easels with information regarding the process, deadlines, and blank forms, will be set up at the end of this month in different locations in the Northwest Building. The next awards are scheduled to be presented in December.

The nomination forms are available on *IntraNed*. Click on online forms under tools on the left side of the home page. Nominations may be made at any time during the year and submitted to **ELAINE GOODEN-BOOKER**, Director, Administration Systems. For more information, click on the home page of *IntraNed*, or contact Gooden-Booker at x4-7246 or **LUCI CHAFFIER** at x4-5878.

Marketplace

VACATION RENTAL: One-bedroom townhouse/condo available for midweek getaway Oct. 6-10. Nicely decorated, with full kitchen, living room, dining room, fireplace, balcony, jacuzzi, VCR, etc. One mile from Williamsburg, Va. historic area. \$50 per night. Call Scott at x4-6761 or (301) 309-0983.

FOR SALE: 1998 Toyota Celica GT Convertible. Black w/gray interior. Fabric seats. Automatic, A/C, CD/Cassette/Radio, Cruise Control. 37,000 miles. In excellent condition. Garage kept. \$13,500. Call Bonnie Warner on x4-4537 or (301) 776-0596.

FOR SALE: 1 carat total weight round Magic Glo diamond anniversary band, selling for \$350. 1/2 carat total weight round diamond engagement ring, size 7, selling for \$200. Call Tammy at home (202) 635-0490, or x4-7894. Leave name and phone number on voicemail.

FOR FREE: Gorgeous pure bred male German Rottweiler. He is between 1-2 yrs. old, 85 lbs. and neutered. Has all shots, except he needs to finish up the heartworm shots. He is a big sweetheart and needs a nice yard and someone to walk with during the day. He also comes with a crate, leashes and a tie-out. Please call Christie at x4-5970 for inquiries.

FOR RENT: Chevy Chase, D.C. house, 3 BR, 2 BA, A/C, dining room, fireplace, deck, on quiet street, good schools, \$2,500. Call Bob at x4-7479 or (202) 244-3380.

FOR SALE: Toyota pick-up truck bedliner (over-the-rail), fits late-model double-cab (short bed). Perfect condition, less than a year old. These retail for \$200-\$250. Make me an offer. Call Eddie at (202) 237-5364.

FOR SALE: Assorted Revereware pots and pans in good condition, range of sizes, \$25 for set. Vintage Art Deco armoire with original bakelite handles/modified to be used as entertainment center, \$200/OBO. Call Jessica at x4-5650 or (301) 270-4714.

FOR SALE: Sleigh bed/day bed, cherry finish, 2 mattresses, \$195; 2 basic bookcases 72" high x 30" wide, \$30 each. Glass showcase, table size for display, \$50; Persian rug, 8' X 10', all wool, blue/apricot border, center medallion surrounded by ivory, fair condition, best offer. Call L. Smith at (301) 654-1171.

FOR SALE: Single hardwood artisan's loft bed, in solid birch wood w/ ladder, guardrails and bedside shelf. 44" wide x 80" long and 6' high. Futon included. Asking \$300/OBO. Call Eric at x4-6466

FOR SALE: 1999 Toyota Tacoma SR5 Xtra cab pickup truck. 4 cylinder, 2-wheel drive, 5-speed manual. Dark red/maroon. 41,000 miles. Standard bed, with liner. CD, cruise, tinted windows. Two-door, with split bench seat in front, 2 seats in back. \$9,299. Call John at (703) 242-0848.

FOR SALE: Knabe baby grand piano. 1956, in excellent condition with flawless ivory keys, mahogany finish, professionally appraised, \$4,500. Call Belle at x4-6401 or (202) 244 3087.

MARKETPLACE DEADLINE: Noon Fridays. Please include your name, extension and home phone number. Ads are for Post Employees only. Send ads to Shop Talk, 7th floor, or call x4-6803. To send ads via fax dial x4-4963; via e-mail send to shoptalk. Ads run two issues unless otherwise requested. One ad per employee, please.