

# **Cartooning**

## **Sixteen Most Asked Questions by Students and Teachers**

**By Ken Alvine**

## **CARTOONIST PARTICIPANTS:**

**EDITORIAL CARTOONIST:** Paul Fell. Editorial cartoonist for the Lincoln Journal Star and Nebraska Press Association.

**GREETING CARD CARTOONIST:** Oliver Christianson. Currently a Hallmark greeting card Master Humor Artist.

**COMIC PANEL CARTOONIST:** Jerry Van Amerongen. Syndicated newspaper panel “Ballard Street.”

**COMIC STRIP CARTOONIST:** Patrick McDonnell. Syndicated strip “Mutts.”

**COMIC STRIP CARTOONIST:** *Rick Kirkman. Syndicated strip “Baby Blues.”*

**GAG CARTOONIST:** Dave Carpenter – full time gag cartoonist.

**COMIC BOOK CARTOONIST:** Stan Goldberg. Archie Comics.

**ADVERTISING CARTOONIST:** David C. Phipps. Freelance cartoonist, illustrator and writer; owner Phipps Creative Designs in St. Cloud, Minnesota.

**HUMOROUS BOOK ILLUSTRATOR:** Sandy Boynton.

**HUMOROUS ILLUSTRATION CARTOONIST:** Buck Jones. Buck Jones - Illustrator, Inc. Full-time freelance humorous illustrator/ cartoonist.

**HUMOROUS ILLUSTRATION CARTOONIST:** *Tom Richmond. Freelance humorous illustrator.*

**ANIMATION CARTOONIST:** Ed Baker. Storyboard artist; Cartoon Network Studios.

## Questions to cartoonist:

### 1. What type of education do I need for this career? Why? Trade or Art School? College?

**EDITORIAL CARTOONIST:** Paul Fell. Most Editorial Cartoonists come to the profession with a college degree. If you choose to go to art school or a trade school and study commercial art, that's okay, too. The point is, there really isn't any college that trains you to be an editorial cartoonist. However, the education and experience gained in college will help prepare you for your editorial cartooning career. This simply is not a profession you can enter straight out of high school.

**GREETING CARD CARTOONIST:** Oliver Christianson. Getting hired by a card company is hard because of the amount of competition. They hire writers and artists rather than cartoonists who do both. Hiring is done on the basis of portfolio and a degree is expected.

**COMIC PANEL CARTOONIST:** Jerry Van Amerongen. I spent 3 years pursuing a college liberal art degree before switching to a 2-year graphic arts program. I believe in a balance between technical art training and a general college education. I believe it's important to know how to draw – but it's also important to know how to think.

**COMIC STRIP CARTOONIST:** Patrick McDonnell. You don't officially need any formal education or degrees, but the more you know in all subjects, the better cartoonist you'll be. Art and writing classes being the most productive.

**COMIC STRIP CARTOONIST:** *Rick Kirkman. There's no required education for a career as a comic strip/panel creator. A good general education helps. The best attribute is an ability to communicate well. Why? Since communication is the main part of the job, any education that enhances that helps. It also helps to have a pretty broad education so your world from which you generate gags is broad. Trade or Art School? That could help, especially in the art area. College? That could be an asset as well since that's a good way to broaden your education and learn to communicate well.*

**GAG CARTOONIST:** Dave Carpenter. High school or preferably college. Gag cartooning is basically writing humor using a small drawing to help tell the humor story – so the more knowledge you learn, the more material you'll have to work with in your writing.

**COMIC BOOK CARTOONIST:** Stan Goldberg. A good education never hurts in whatever field of art you get into.

**ADVERTISING CARTOONIST:** David C. Phipps . A two-year art or technical school degree is good; a four-year college degree is best. Teaching art is an opportunity many cartoonists get, so an advanced degree might give you a chance to teach at a college level.

**HUMOROUS BOOK ILLUSTRATOR:** Sandy Boynton. The main education you need is WAY too much time spent drawing. General art courses, such as drawing from life, or technique

classes, such as watercoloring, seem to me a better idea than targeted art courses, such as “Intermediate Drawing In a Funny Manner”. College is always a good idea in general (except when it isn’t).

**HUMOROUS ILLUSTRATION CARTOONIST:** Buck Jones. A good liberal arts degree is going to get you a good, well-rounded basis for your career in Humorous Illustration. Of course, picking up various illustration classes will help in teaching you different techniques in illustration. My belief is that any type of education will be beneficial and that most of your cartooning will be self-taught.

**HUMOROUS ILLUSTRATION CARTOONIST:** *Tom Richmond. Some form of education is always beneficial. Be it college or art school, just be sure you get the opportunity to experiment with different mediums and techniques.*

**ANIMATION CARTOONIST:** Ed Baker. Animation cartoonists have a variety of education backgrounds. Many have a secondary degree in some artistic field. I have a degree in graphic design. Other artists have degrees from actual animation programs or art schools. Some may have a background in film. There is not one specific track a person needs to take.

## 2. Do I always have to have a funny idea?

**EDITORIAL CARTOONIST:** Paul Fell. There are a fair number of funny editorial cartoons seen every day, but if they ARE funny, that is only secondary to the point the cartoon is making. The editorial cartoon is the equivalent to a column on the editorial page. Most of the subjects we work with are not inherently funny. If you can use humor to make your point with your cartoon opinion, fine, but humor cartoons belong on the comics page, not the editorial page.

**GREETING CARD CARTOONIST:** Oliver Christianson. A funny idea isn’t always essential, but your idea should be something that one person would want to say to another. There has to be a reason for someone to buy the card.

**COMIC PANEL CARTOONIST:** Jerry Van Amerongen. I don’t know how to answer this question. Some of my gags produce smiles and some are aimed at the big surprise laugh... a few might even be thought-provoking. Once you have the idea, you can plan the drawing (who the characters are, their environment, etc.) to push the idea toward the big laugh or a smile.

**COMIC STRIP OR PANEL CARTOONIST:** Patrick McDonnell. Yes, every time a strip is due.

**COMIC STRIP OR PANEL CARTOONIST:** *Rick Kirkman. Since it’s a comic, it helps. Sometimes strips/panels are more poignant than funny, but that’s okay, depending on what you’re trying to say.*

**GAG CARTOONIST:** Dave Carpenter. Yes! Editors buy only the funniest material that comes across their desk.

**COMIC BOOK CARTOONIST:** Stan Goldberg. No. There are lots of serious comic books.

**ADVERTISING CARTOONIST:** David C. Phipps. Most cartoonists use humor in their work depending on their style.

**HUMOROUS BOOK ILLUSTRATOR:** Sandy Boynton. I think an inborn peculiar sensibility is most essential.

**HUMOROUS ILLUSTRATION CARTOONIST:** Buck Jones. No ... but it helps.

**HUMOROUS ILLUSTRATION CARTOONIST:** *Tom Richmond. You always need at least three funny ideas!*

**ANIMATION CARTOONIST:** Ed Baker. Most artists in animation work on somebody else's funny idea.

**3. What courses are the most important for me to take for this career? Why? Art, Drawing, English, Government, Creative Writing?**

**EDITORIAL CARTOONIST:** Paul Fell. I think that all of the courses listed are vital to your development as an editorial cartoonist. Of course, drawing comes first, but if you don't really have anything to say in our cartoon, all the great drawing in the world won't make it successful. First off, I'd say take every art course available to you. They will all have a positive effect on your cartooning. Next, you need English classes and the ability to write. The older I get, the more important I discover writing is to the success of the cartoon. Finally, you certainly need to study government. That, of course, is the main subject of your daily cartoon. You need to know how government works in order to be able to point out the absurd things that our elected officials are fond of doing.

**GREETING CARD CARTOONIST:** Oliver Christianson. For what I do, drawing and creative writing have been the most useful. Government? Not so much. You're better off not knowing about that stuff; it'll just upset you.

**COMIC STRIP OR PANEL CARTOONIST:** Patrick McDonnell. See answer 1.

**COMIC STRIP OR PANEL CARTOONIST:** *Rick Kirkman. They're all important, and all will help, but all aren't necessary. Much depends on your inherent ability to communicate, and your inherent art ability, and your chosen area of cartooning. Government may be more important if you plan to do editorial cartoons or a comic that will involve political subjects*

**GAG CARTOONIST:** Dave Carpenter. All of the above – especially English and creative writing. Gag cartooning is 95% writing and 5% drawing – the joke is much more important than the drawing – though you do need some drawing skills.

**COMIC BOOK CARTOONIST:** Stan Goldberg. All of the above. They are all very important. And ... keep drawing all the time!

**ADVERTISING CARTOONIST:** David C. Phipps. All of these would be good majors in college. Don't forget journalism, graphic design and fine arts degrees. Also advertising and marketing, emphasizing communications are good.

**HUMOROUS BOOK ILLUSTRATOR:** Sandy Boynton. Take what you love. But remember to do stealth caricatures of your teachers in your notebook.

**HUMOROUS ILLUSTRATION CARTOONIST:** Buck Jones. All areas of study are helpful in the realm of cartooning. The more knowledge you have on a number of different topics, the better as each may be applied in cartooning whether it be in developing gag ideas, strip ideas, commercial representation, etc. etc. Stress the writing and drawing.

**HUMOROUS ILLUSTRATION CARTOONIST:** *Tom Richmond. Art, drawing and creative writing. Art and drawing are obvious; the writing is to help with your communication skills. Cartooning is about communicating.*

**ANIMATION CARTOONIST:** Ed Baker. All of these areas work together to make a good artist. I am a storyboard artist. To tell any story, I need to understand language, how society works, numbers, literature, it goes on and on. I would absolutely recommend classes in film, history, and theory.

#### **4. What are some other things I should do to prepare myself for this career? Study other cartoonists' work, etc?**

**EDITORIAL CARTOONIST:** Paul Fell. In order to be able to land a position as an editorial cartoonist, you've got to have a portfolio to show editors. You should begin now drawing editorial cartoons to get an idea of how they work and what makes a successful cartoon. Studying the work of other cartoonists is just as important as drawing. This is how your style develops, through the influence of the work of other cartoonists. These days it is especially easy to see the work of dozens of cartoonists every day, thanks to the internet.

**GREETING CARD CARTOONIST:** Oliver Christianson. Studying the field helps. Go to the card racks of all the different companies and study all the different kinds of captions.

**COMIC PANEL CARTOONIST:** Jerry Van Amerongen. I think it's very important to study the work of other cartoonists – study a great range of work in various different forms (newspaper strips, magazine gag panels, comic books, graphic novels, animation). I first learned to draw by copying line for line individual panels out of certain comic books. This taught me how the artist constructed a figure or some other object – I learned lighting and reflections. I learned to draw.

**COMIC STRIP CARTOONIST:** Patrick McDonnell. Read great books and study all the masters of our medium – Herriman, Schulz, Segar, McRay ...

**COMIC STRIP CARTOONIST:** *Rick Kirkman. Studying other cartoonists' work is a great way to prepare. You'll be able to build upon what those cartoonists have learned and their unique contributions to the field. It's also good to try copying various styles to get a feel for the kind of drawing you're comfortable with. But you should only use that as a springboard to uncover/discover your own style. Reading is the other essential. I usually tell aspiring cartoonists to read a lot. Reading not only exposes you to more ideas, but various styles of communicating ideas. As you expand your knowledge base, you also expand your gag base.*

**GAG CARTOONIST:** Dave Carpenter. Studying other cartoonists' work and copying their work is one of the best educations you can give yourself. Also, study their writing.

**COMIC BOOK CARTOONIST:** Stan Goldberg. Always look at other artists' work. Learn from them ... but don't copy them.

**ADVERTISING CARTOONIST:** David C. Phipps. Studying other artists, not just cartoonists. Most cartoonists have been equally inspired by painters, sculptors, and illustrators. Also, just keep your eyes open to the world around you. Most important: Get computer skills and get knowledge of aft software, especially Adobe Photoshop.

**HUMOROUS BOOK ILLUSTRATOR:** Sandy Boynton. Copying a variety of art you admire is a great way to learn. In time, your own distinctive style will emerge.

**HUMOROUS ILLUSTRATION CARTOONIST:** Buck Jones. Practice, practice, practice. Read the work of those you admire. Research the business side of things.

**HUMOROUS ILLUSTRATION CARTOONIST:** *Tom Richmond. Definitely look at the work of other cartoonists and the kind of cartooning you are interested in (strips, gags, magazine, editorial, etc.)*

**ANIMATION CARTOONIST:** Ed Baker. Watch films with an eye on how the stories are told. What does the filmmaker do to lead you along the storyline? What does he/she do to bring out your emotions? Watch films from different directors. Watch films you think you won't like. Pay attention to how scenes are composed. Look how color is used, scoring, lighting, makeup, set dressings. Everything in a film is there for a reason. It all works together to tell the story.

**5. What are some daily things I should do to make me a good cartoonist? Read paper, watch TV, etc?**

**EDITORIAL CARTOONIST:** Paul Fell. A good editorial cartoonist is a news junkie. He/she reads at least a couple of daily newspapers every day, and also listens to radio and television news. I'm not keen on getting my news from the TV, but I do suggest that if you can, subscribe to a couple of papers so that you can get different points of view on the news and form your own opinions based on that information.

**GREETING CARD CARTOONIST:** Oliver Christianson. People watching is essential. The more you know about psychology and how and why people do what they do, the better your writing will be.

**COMIC PANEL CARTOONIST:** Jerry Van Amerongen. Beyond absorbing information from all of the above, cultivate a lifelong love for reading “good literature.” Read the great writers – not summer beach novels. You’ll learn important ideas, character motivation, how to spell and expand your vocabulary.

**COMIC STRIP CARTOONIST:** Patrick McDonnell. Read, Read, Read. Draw, Draw, Draw. Write, Write, Write. Draw some more.

**COMIC STRIP CARTOONIST:** *Rick Kirkman. Read. Read. Read. Okay, you can watch a little TV. And draw, draw, draw.*

**GAG CARTOONIST:** Dave Carpenter. Try to write three cartoons a day. This will train your mind to think in a humor vein. Also, read newspapers and watch the news. The best cartoons relate to what is going on around us today.

**COMIC BOOK CARTOONIST:** Stan Goldberg. Again ... all of these things work!

**ADVERTISING CARTOONIST:** David C. Phipps. Read, write and read some more. Books that interest you – any genre. Read more than one newspaper. Ignore TV. Draw every day.

**HUMOROUS BOOK ILLUSTRATOR:** Sandy Boynton. Well, there’s always drawing. Beyond that, I don’t know. Except don’t watch TV.

**HUMOROUS ILLUSTRATION CARTOONIST:** Buck Jones. Read papers, watch TV, be aware of the world around you (personal and worldwide) and practice.

**HUMOROUS ILLUSTRATION CARTOONIST:** *Tom Richmond. Read about current events and listen to people’s opinions about subjects. Get familiar with current pop culture.*

**ANIMATION CARTOONIST:** Ed Baker. Reading the paper is good. Understanding current popular things as well as really knowing history is very important. Keep up on what is going on in the world. You will draw on everything you know and experience as an artist. The films you see, the books you read, the places you go, all become the resource you draw from.

## **6. What are some things expected from a good cartoonist?**

**EDITORIAL CARTOONIST:** Paul Fell. A good editorial cartoonist has the ability to get his position on an issue across to the reader in a clear, easy to understand fashion. If the reader has to struggle to figure out what you’re trying to say with your cartoon, he won’t take the time to do



that. Studies show that the average reader spends about 7-12 seconds looking at the editorial cartoon. That's how much time you have to communicate with that reader.

**GREETING CARD CARTOONIST:** Oliver Christianson. Knowing how to say the things that people want to say to one another.

**COMIC PANEL CARTOONIST:** Jerry Van Amerongen. You need to be dependable and consistent. Remember you're always going to have a deadline, and somebody somewhere will expect you to deliver.

**COMIC STRIP CARTOONIST:** Patrick McDonnell. A quality comic strip delivered on time.

**COMIC STRIP CARTOONIST:** *Rick Kirkman. Keeping it funny. Consistency is the main attribute needed for a successful career in cartooning, but even more necessary in syndicated cartooning if you want to acquire and retain clients.*

**GAG CARTOONIST:** Dave Carpenter. Be topical and professional when submitting your work.

**COMIC BOOK CARTOONIST:** Stan Goldberg. Don't have a big ego! Try to learn from other writers and artists. Never be late on a job ... get your work in on time!

**ADVERTISING CARTOONIST:** David C. Phipps. 1) Professional, high-quality work done for clients should be done on time and on budget. 2) Conduct yourself professionally with all clients and vendors. 3) Ideas – about half the time the client will want you to come up with the idea for the concept.

**HUMOROUS BOOK ILLUSTRATOR:** Sandy Boynton. Um...book illustrations of a humorous nature.

**HUMOROUS ILLUSTRATION CARTOONIST:** Buck Jones. To have a distinctive style and bring a unique humorous solution (approach) to your assignment.

**HUMOROUS ILLUSTRATION CARTOONIST:** *Tom Richmond. Clients want you to send whatever message they want to convey and add some humor to it. So they expect you to bring some ideas to the table and be able to bring theirs to life.*

**ANIMATION CARTOONIST:** Ed Baker. Meet your deadlines. Do good work. Don't cut corners. Understand you are part of a team in animation. Always be able to work positively with other people.

## **7. What type of samples should I have in my portfolio to show for a job in cartooning?**

**EDITORIAL CARTOONIST:** Paul Fell. The editor is not going to be interested in anything but editorial cartoons because that's the job he's trying to fill. Be sure that you do some cartoons

about local politics to show him with your national and international samples. Most editors are aware that local cartoons have far more impact and generate more reader reaction than anything else.

**GREETING CARD CARTOONIST:** Oliver Christianson. Birthday, friendship and all the various seasons.

**COMIC PANEL CARTOONIST:** Jerry Van Amerongen. Have a month's worth of comic strips or panels (if you're looking for syndication – you'll need to show your consistency, and give the cartoon editor a chance to understand your concept). If you're looking for cartoon illustration work, collect your best samples and try for a range of techniques in black and white and color.

**COMIC STRIP CARTOONIST:** Patrick McDonnell. For comic strips, five weeks worth.

**COMIC STRIP CARTOONIST:** *Rick Kirkman. For a job as a syndicated comic strip/panel cartoonist, your portfolio should be several weeks worth of strips/panels. Enough to show you've got an idea with some "legs," and a consistent style and quality of work. Your sketchbooks and paintings and freelance work are irrelevant to a syndicate.*

**GAG CARTOONIST:** Dave Carpenter. Submit a batch of cartoons (usually 10 cartoons) to the magazine's cartoon editor (your best work) and always enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope to have your material returned.

**COMIC BOOK CARTOONIST:** Stan Goldberg. What you think is your best work!

**ADVERTISING CARTOONIST:** David C. Phipps. Put in your best work. If you know a client is looking for a particular piece (ad, greeting card design, illustration), make sure you have a sample.

**HUMOROUS BOOK ILLUSTRATOR:** Sandy Boynton. Whatever you think is your best work. If you can write as well as draw, a full book dummy might make sense.

**HUMOROUS ILLUSTRATION CARTOONIST:** Buck Jones. Samples that cover a broad range of assignments. You'll want to have samples of b/w illustration and full color illustration.

**HUMOROUS ILLUSTRATION CARTOONIST:** *Tom Richmond. Include samples that demonstrate a consistent style. Don't have wildly different looks to the work you present. Tailor your portfolio for the client ... if they buy sports cartoons, put more sports cartoons in.*

**ANIMATION CARTOONIST:** Ed Baker. Include drawings that show you know how to construct a figure. Producers in animation want to see the under drawing, too. A nice finished ink drawing is fine, but in animation they need to know you understand construction. Most animation drawings are quick sketches. Remember that your animation drawing needs to do your "acting" for you. Show emotion, action, and attitude. Include pieces that show you understand perspective and composition.

## 8. Who uses cartoons?

**EDITORIAL CARTOONIST:** Paul Fell. Primarily newspapers that have an editorial page.

**GREETING CARD CARTOONIST:** Oliver Christianson. Hallmark, American Greetings, Noble Works, Recycled Paper, etc.

**COMIC PANEL CARTOONIST:** Jerry Van Amerongen. Beyond newspapers, there's magazines and certain advertising applications. Book publishers, perhaps.

**COMIC STRIP CARTOONIST:** Patrick McDonnell. Newspapers, magazines, internet.

**COMIC STRIP CARTOONIST:** *Rick Kirkman. Mostly newspapers, daily or weekly. Some magazines use comics or panels on a regular basis, although that is less frequent than it used to be. There is now syndication on the Internet as well.*

**GAG CARTOONIST:** Dave Carpenter. Unfortunately, not near as many magazines as in the past. But publications like Barron's, The Wall Street Journal, Harvard Business Review, Woman's World, The Saturday Evening Post still use cartoons.

**COMIC BOOK CARTOONIST:** Stan Goldberg. Go to comic book conventions ... you'll get some good ideas who the publishers are and see some professional artist who will look at your work and give you some advice.

**ADVERTISING CARTOONIST:** David C. Phipps. Advertising agencies, PR firms, businesses big and small, websites, any organization that puts out a visual message. Newspapers hire artists, although that seems to be changing.

**HUMOROUS BOOK ILLUSTRATOR:** Sandy Boynton. Spend a day in a bookstore to see what's out there. And buy something; bookstores are having a tough time. (Maybe buy Artist's & Graphic Designer's Market 200\_; it has the most comprehensive information on publishers, submissions, etc.)

**HUMOROUS ILLUSTRATION CARTOONIST:** Buck Jones. Everyone. Advertising Agencies, Greeting Card Companies, Magazines, Books, etc.

**HUMOROUS ILLUSTRATION CARTOONIST:** *Tom Richmond. Magazines to accompany feature articles, ad agencies for print ads and product packaging, corporate clients for in-house publications, product manufacturers for merchandise.*

**ANIMATION CARTOONIST:** Ed Baker. Animation is on TV, in feature films, commercials, web pages, advertisements, short films and lots of others.

## 9. Is it possible to get a job as a cartoonist right out of school?

**EDITORIAL CARTOONIST:** Paul Fell. While there are a few young cartoonists who landed their first editorial job right out of college, it seems that the majority come to editorial cartooning later in life after having worked at other art-related jobs.

**GREETING CARD CARTOONIST:** Oliver Christianson. Yes.

**COMIC PANEL CARTOONIST:** Jerry Van Amerongen. Depends entirely on the individual and the job situation.

**COMIC STRIP CARTOONIST:** Patrick McDonnell. If you're qualified.

**COMIC STRIP CARTOONIST:** *Rick Kirkman. Yes, but not very common.*

**GAG CARTOONIST:** Dave Carpenter. Yes, but it takes time. It's not that hard to sell a cartoon – but it's much tougher to sell enough to make a living at it.

**COMIC BOOK CARTOONIST:** Stan Goldberg. Anything is possible ... but very unlikely. But don't give up ... it's a great life drawing comics!

**ADVERTISING CARTOONIST:** David C. Phipps. Very doubtful. That's why an aspiring cartoonist should think about a college major that will land him/her a job. If you major in advertising, marketing or graphic design, then you might have a chance to use your cartooning skills on an actual job. Great way to start!

**HUMOROUS BOOK ILLUSTRATOR:** Sandy Boynton. Yes.

**HUMOROUS ILLUSTRATION CARTOONIST:** Buck Jones. Yes (Greeting Card Artist/Writer).

**HUMOROUS ILLUSTRATION CARTOONIST:** *Tom Richmond. That would be tough. Most humorous illustrators are freelance, and art directors value experience as much or more than the art skills.*

**ANIMATION CARTOONIST:** Ed Baker. If you are motivated and are willing to go where the work is, there are jobs available right out of school.

## 10. Can I work part time or freelance in cartooning?

**EDITORIAL CARTOONIST:** Paul Fell. With the dwindling number of full-time staff cartoonist jobs out there, freelancing and part-time work as an editorial cartoonist is becoming more common all the time.

**GREETING CARD CARTOONIST:** Oliver Christianson. Yes. My wife works part time and most of the work that people get nowadays in cards is free-lance.

**COMIC PANEL CARTOONIST:** *Jerry Van Amerongen. Yes.*

**COMIC STRIP CARTOONIST:** Patrick McDonnell. I suppose.

**COMIC STRIP CARTOONIST:** *Rick Kirkman. I'm not so sure about part-time, but freelance, yes. There are some opportunities that come along for a freelance cartoonist in comic strip/panel work, usually as an assistant or ghost.*

**GAG CARTOONIST:** Dave Carpenter. Yes! Many cartoonists are part-time gag cartoonists.

**COMIC BOOK CARTOONIST:** Stan Goldberg. You can do both. I worked on staff for the first 10 years of my career; since then I've been freelancing.

**ADVERTISING CARTOONIST:** David C. Phipps. Absolutely. This is a realistic way to begin or even sustain a long-term cartooning career.

**HUMOROUS BOOK ILLUSTRATOR:** Sandy Boynton. Yes.

**HUMOROUS ILLUSTRATION CARTOONIST:** Buck Jones. Yes.

**HUMOROUS ILLUSTRATION CARTOONIST:** *Tom Richmond. Absolutely. It's a great idea to slowly build up clients for experience while another job pays the bills.*

**ANIMATION CARTOONIST:** Ed Baker. Sure.

## **11. Can I work from anywhere in the US and have a career in cartooning?**

**EDITORIAL CARTOONIST:** Paul Fell. Sure. With computers and the internet, you can work from anywhere you have an internet hookup or are near someplace like a Kinko's that does. All of my cartoons are transferred electronically to my clients, even the ones that I draw for my local paper.

**GREETING CARD CARTOONIST:** Oliver Christianson. Yes, you can work anywhere and do free-lance; however, only the full-tie staff jobs have decent benefits.

**COMIC PANEL CARTOONIST:** Jerry Van Amerongen. I always figured if I saw a UPS or Fed Ex truck going by, I could work and live there. Now with internet graphics, I suppose one can live anywhere.

**COMIC STRIP CARTOONIST:** Patrick McDonnell. Yes.

**COMIC STRIP CARTOONIST:** *Rick Kirkman. You can pretty much work from anywhere in the world...anywhere there is a method available for you to deliver your work to your clients, whether that is mail, express delivery or over the Internet.*

**GAG CARTOONIST:** Dave Carpenter. Yes – with mail, e-mail and overnight mail, you can live anywhere in the country and operate a cartoon business.

**COMIC BOOK CARTOONIST:** Stan Goldberg. Yes. If you can work it out ... do it! Take your drawing board and travel all over the world! It'll make you a better artist.

**ADVERTISING CARTOONIST:** David C. Phipps. Although the internet allows cartoonists to work from anywhere, living on the East or West Coast would increase one's chances of success. Living in or near any major metropolitan city is a plus.

**HUMOROUS BOOK ILLUSTRATOR:** Sandy Boynton. Anywhere except South Esmington, Delaware and Zurbliit, Idaho.

**HUMOROUS ILLUSTRATION CARTOONIST:** Buck Jones. Yes.

***HUMOROUS ILLUSTRATION CARTOONIST:** Tom Richmond. Yes! Between Fed Ex and e-mail, you can work in the deep woods of Arkansas and do as well as an artist living in NYC.*

**ANIMATION CARTOONIST:** Ed Baker. You can live wherever you want to; however, I think if you really want to make a run at a career in animation, you need to consider a big city.

## **12. How are cartoons sent to the papers? E-mail, post office, etc?**

**EDITORIAL CARTOONIST:** Paul Fell. Not that many years ago, cartoons were sent to papers via US mail or one of the express companies like Federal Express. These days it's faster, easier, and cheaper to send your cartoons via email.

**GREETING CARD CARTOONIST:** Oliver Christianson. When first submitting, photocopies preferred by mail. Once established, e-mail.

**COMIC PANEL CARTOONIST:** Jerry Van Amerongen. Any way to get your pictures to the publisher works! At first meet with your editor when you are finished with your job.

**COMIC STRIP CARTOONIST:** Patrick McDonnell.  
E-mail, post office, and Fed Ex.

**COMIC STRIP CARTOONIST:** *Rick Kirkman. Usually by mail. I don't believe newspaper syndicates make a practice of accepting submissions via computer yet.*

**GAG CARTOONIST:** Dave Carpenter. Gag cartoons are usually submitted in 9x12 envelopes – mailed to the magazines cartoon editors!

**COMIC BOOK CARTOONIST:** Stan Goldberg. Any way to get your pictures to the publisher works! At first meet with your editor when you are finished with your job.

**ADVERTISING CARTOONIST:** David C. Phipps. 99% of all projects I work are delivered via e-mail.

**HUMOROUS BOOK ILLUSTRATOR:** Sandy Boynton. It varies. See AGDM (which you purchased at the embattled bookstore, after reading answer 8.)

**HUMOROUS ILLUSTRATION CARTOONIST:** Buck Jones. Through the mail and submitted via e-mail.

**HUMOROUS ILLUSTRATION CARTOONIST:** *Tom Richmond. More and more clients want a digital file. You can e-mail for FTP those easily. For traditional boards, you can overnight then via Fed Ex or UPS.*

**ANIMATION CARTOONIST:** Ed Baker. Most studios have specific procedures for artists submissions through their HR departments. Contact the studio for its requirements.

### **13. How are cartoonists paid?**

**EDITORIAL CARTOONIST:** Paul Fell. That ranges all the way from \$20 for a cartoon from a local freelancer all the way to salaries of \$40,000-\$60,000 yearly for full-time staff cartoonists.

**GREETING CARD CARTOONIST:** Oliver Christianson. Not sure for free lance. On salary, I get paid once a month.

**COMIC PANEL CARTOONIST:** Jerry Van Amerongen. If you're syndicated, you're paid monthly. If you have other sources like royalties from books or greeting cards, you're paid on a quarterly basis.

**COMIC STRIP CARTOONIST:** Patrick McDonnell. By their syndicate (a percentage of the sales).

**COMIC STRIP CARTOONIST:** *Rick Kirkman. Comic strip/panel cartoonists in the newspaper business are paid a percentage of what each newspaper that carries the feature pays to the syndicate. That percentage may vary depending on the age of the strip and how long the client has been carrying the feature. The starting percentage is usually 50%. The price the newspaper pays the syndicate for the feature is usually based on the circulation of the newspaper and the length of time the feature has appeared in that newspaper. The syndicate keeps a record of these payments from client newspapers and pays the cartoonist his/her percentage once a month. Those payments may have deductions from the syndicate for various services they render, depending on the cartoonist's contract with the syndicate.*

**GAG CARTOONIST:** Dave Carpenter. All the magazines have a set rate – and after they notify you that they want to buy a cartoon, they request that you send them an invoice.

**COMIC BOOK CARTOONIST:** Stan Goldberg. If you are a young artist that's just starting out ... try to get some money up front. Never wait till the job is finished to get your money. (Sometimes you'll get paid by the page, or by the whole book.)

**ADVERTISING CARTOONIST:** David C. Phipps. Most of the time, I am paid per project after the project is completed. However, if the project is for an individual (not a company), I ask for cash on delivery. Some larger projects are paid in stages. Some projects include transfer of rights. Some clients pay reprint rights.

**HUMOROUS BOOK ILLUSTRATOR:** Sandy Boynton. It varies. See AGDM (which you purchased at the embattled bookstore, after reading answer 8.)

**HUMOROUS ILLUSTRATION CARTOONIST:** Buck Jones. If you work a full-time job, such as a staff artist with a Greeting Card company, then you get paid a salary. If free lancing, you get paid per job (it can either be by the hour or a flat fee per project.)

**HUMOROUS ILLUSTRATION CARTOONIST:** *Tom Richmond. By the job. You quote a price, the clients accepts (or not), and you do the job. Most clients take up to 30 days to pay.*

**ANIMATION CARTOONIST:** Ed Baker. I get paid with a check every two weeks. Animation cartoonists may get paid by the drawing, by the foot of completed animation, by the storyboard page, or in one payment at the end of an assignment. It varies greatly from job to job.

**14. Would you share the positives and negatives in a career in cartooning? Ideas, deadline, pressure, recognition, etc.**

**EDITORIAL CARTOONIST:** Paul Fell. I can't be too specific here, because individual editorial cartoonists enjoy their work for a variety of reasons. I don't think any of us are bothered particularly by pressure, the need to come up with good ideas, or deadlines. Those are all part of the job, and we deal with it in our own ways. I would say that we get the most satisfaction from being able to get reader reaction and to have an impact on our respective towns and political systems.

**GREETING CARD CARTOONIST:** Oliver Christianson. I've been very fortunate, but I wouldn't recommend cards as a career if you can possibly do anything else. As a free-lancer, doing cards can be a part of what you do, but it's never a good idea to rely on just one area.

**COMIC PANEL CARTOONIST:** Jerry Van Amerongen. Positives: You're your own boss/work at home/work in your pajamas. You may even gain some recognition from your fellow human beings. Negatives: You're your own boss/working alone can often feel very isolating/deadline pressures, of course.

**COMIC STRIP CARTOONIST:** Patrick McDonnell. Negative – deadlines that don't stop. Positive – you get paid to draw funny pictures; you make people happy.



**COMIC STRIP CARTOONIST:** *Rick Kirkman. Pros: 1) Not having a boss. 2) Freedom to work for yourself doing something of your own creation...your creative expression. 3) Freedom to live and work just about anywhere. 4) Joy of seeing your work viewed by a wide audience. 5) The money can be good if you become somewhat successful. Cons: 1) Not having a boss. 2) The freedom. The unstructured life of a cartoonist can become difficult if one doesn't maintain system of managing his/her time, and that can adversely affect deadlines. 3) Deadlines. They can be what keeps you going, but also your worst nightmare. Deadlines are unrelenting in the syndication business. 4) Pressure from deadlines, pressure to keep up the quality and consistency of the work, pressure to please editors, reader, yourself. 5) If you're successful, sometimes recognition can be an additional burden. Cartoonists generally aren't recognized by face, but recognition in the form of your feature may bring requests that are a burden on your time to fulfill or to just read.*

**GAG CARTOONIST:** Dave Carpenter. The negative part of freelance cartooning is no regular income. And fierce competition for those few cartoon slots in magazines, but the positive side is – being your own boss and the pleasure of seeing your work in print.

**COMIC BOOK CARTOONIST:** Stan Goldberg. There are no negatives in drawing comic books. It's a fun job. (Lot's of hard work ... go for it!)

**ADVERTISING CARTOONIST:** David C. Phipps. Cartooning (or art period) is not for the faint hearted or those who easily give up when their work is rejected or ignored. However, there is no greater thrill than someone saying they saw your art in a magazine and liked it. Getting paid for drawing funny pictures is also a thrill!

**HUMOROUS BOOK ILLUSTRATOR:** Sandy Boynton. It's been mostly great.

**HUMOROUS ILLUSTRATION CARTOONIST:** Buck Jones. The positive side is that you're doing something you love. The negative side of free lancing is that you have no guaranteed salary, no benefits, an isolated working environment and never having a steady flow of work.

**HUMOROUS ILLUSTRATION CARTOONIST:** *Tom Richmond. Positives: Being your own boss; doing something creative and fun for a living; seeing your work in print. Negatives: Inconsistent work; usually working under deadlines; sometimes putting in very long hours or all-nighters to finish something on time.*

**ANIMATION CARTOONIST:** Ed Baker. There is a lot of pressure in my particular part of animation to meet deadlines. Studios want things done faster and faster. Recognition is found in the occasional screen credit. Animation is a team thing, and I guess I don't get too caught up in the recognition part. It is very competitive as well. There is a good deal of satisfaction in doing a good job and completing a big storyboard that has made a cartoon better.

**15. What does the future look like for a person interested in working in the field of cartooning?**

**EDITORIAL CARTOONIST:** Paul Fell. Not good, I'm afraid. Back in the 1980's there were something like 200+ full-time editorial cartooning positions in the US. Now there are only something like 85. Newspapers are eliminating that position or not filling it once a cartoonist leaves. They say it for economic reasons because they can buy a whole week's worth of syndicated cartoons and it costs a lot more to have a cartoonist on staff. Unfortunately, these short-sighted editors and publishers have lost sight of the impact that a local cartoonist has on their readership, both from a standpoint of readers actually getting involved with their newspaper, and the fact that readers really like to see that local editorial cartoon every day.

**GREETING CARD CARTOONIST:** Oliver Christianson. That's unclear. The internet appears to have potential, but nobody's making any money there.

**COMIC PANEL CARTOONIST:** Jerry Van Amerongen. I can only hope that the promise of the internet fully blossoms (I think it will) and that the comic novel and books find larger audiences. Newspapers, I'm sad to say, have been poor stewards of an original art form (reducing to near nothing the types of humor possible and squashing size so good artwork is discouraged).

**COMIC STRIP CARTOONIST:** Patrick McDonnell. It's tough, but it always has been.

**COMIC STRIP CARTOONIST:** *Rick Kirkman. The field has been a shrinking one for decades. The number of newspapers that use comics has dwindled, newspapers are literally reducing the sizes of their newspapers, and in turn reducing the images of the features that run in them. Newspapers and comics are fighting ever-difficult competition against other media for the attention of viewers. This wide choice of media fragments the audience, possibly to the point where some media may not have large enough fragments to stay in business. Twenty years from now, the syndication business may be very different, with larger portions of the cartoonist's income coming from sources other than newspaper syndication, and the features themselves may rely on different technologies for delivery, and they may no longer be restricted to the formats they are required to stay within today. That also leaves what could be great opportunities for those willing and able to make those leaps from conventional formats to new formats.*

**GAG CARTOONIST:** Dave Carpenter. Unfortunately, the gag cartooning field is not what it used to be. But there are other areas one can work like greeting cards, and advertisement work to help supplement your income.

**COMIC BOOK CARTOONIST:** Stan Goldberg. It's very hard to predict; can't help you there.

**ADVERTISING CARTOONIST:** David C. Phipps. Cartooning in every field is more and more challenging and competitive. That's why getting a degree and a job to pay the bills is key while you chase your cartoon dreams. The internet could be the biggest opportunity for future cartoonists.

**HUMOROUS BOOK ILLUSTRATOR:** Sandy Boynton. Ask again later. (Okay, I used a Magic 8 Ball.)

**HUMOROUS ILLUSTRATION CARTOONIST:** Buck Jones. That depends on the person and their desire to be successful as a humorous illustrator. It seems the markets are continually shrinking, but at the same time new markets are always opening up.

**HUMOROUS ILLUSTRATION CARTOONIST:** *Tom Richmond. Digital work is the future. You must be able to do or deliver your work digitally to compete in the future.*

**ANIMATION CARTOONIST:** Ed Baker. Get to know how to use computers. Keep up to speed with current tools and software. That is where the industry is. Animation is no longer headed there, that's where it is. The field is consistently growing.

**16. What are some other thoughts or comments you can share about a cartooning career?**

**EDITORIAL CARTOONIST:** Paul Fell. I have been an editorial cartoonist since the 1970's. It was always something I had hoped to be able to do professionally, and I still enjoy it every day. Another benefit is that over the years I have gotten to know many others in my profession. In spite of our varied political views, we share a special friendship. Another benefit is that I now get paid for doing the very thing that used to get me in so much trouble when I was in high school.

**GREETING CARD CARTOONIST:** Oliver Christianson. Don't.

**COMIC STRIP CARTOONIST:** Patrick McDonnell. Love what you do and do it.

**COMIC STRIP CARTOONIST:** *Rick Kirkman. Creating a comic strip has been a rewarding experience. It has brought a lot of experiences my way that I otherwise wouldn't have had. It's provided me with not only a pretty decent income, favorable working conditions, and the feeling that the work has touched a number of people in a positive way, but somewhat of a legacy. Not too bad for just sitting around drawing funny pictures.*

**GAG CARTOONIST:** Dave Carpenter. Even though gag cartooning is a tough business – it is very rewarding to write and draw up a piece of humor and eventually see it published in a magazine – and to know that millions of people are enjoying what you've created.

**COMIC BOOK CARTOONIST:** Stan Goldberg. If you love writing and drawing comics, stay with it ... I think it's the best job in the world!

**HUMOROUS BOOK ILLUSTRATOR:** Sandy Boynton. Keep smiling. Regard computers with awe, gratitude, and suspicion.

**HUMOROUS ILLUSTRATION CARTOONIST:** Buck Jones. I would recommend to anyone starting out to first get a full-time job, whether it is as an illustrator of just something related to the field. Gain as much experience on the job as possible. Test out the freelance waters before committing full time, to be sure you have what it takes to be successful. Although you'll be doing something you love (humorous illustration), it is an incredibly inconsistent way to make a living and can be very stressful just for that fact. Be prepared for lean times. Freelancing is all about Peaks and Valleys.

**HUMOROUS ILLUSTRATION CARTOONIST:** *Tom Richmond. Never be satisfied with where you are with your work. Always aim higher and growth will be a constant companion.*

**ANIMATION CARTOONIST:** Ed Baker. Animation is really fun. The studios are cool and it can offer a full-time opportunity for a cartoonist. I would suggest to a student to learn how to be part of a team. Take direction without the traditional artist attitude. Understand that if you work for a big studio, your drawings are done for the studio. That signature you spent a month getting just right – the one with the clever swish thingy – leave it at home. If you can do that, animation can be great.