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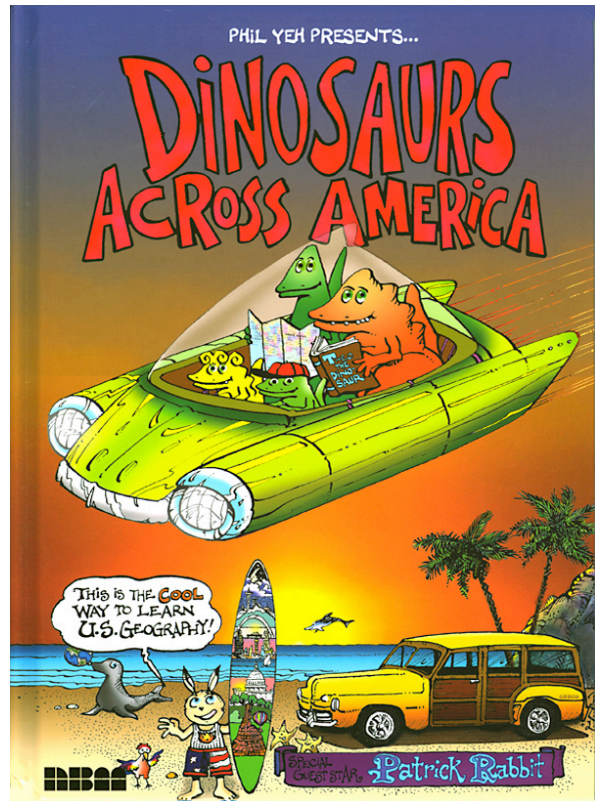
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GODFATHER OF THE AMERICAN GRAPHIC NOVEL PHIL YEH TEAMS UP WITH SIMPSONS CARTOONIST PHIL ORTIZ TO CREATE NEW MURAL AT SAN DIEGO COMIC-CON INTERNATIONAL JULY 24-27, 2008

Phil Yeh, often called the Godfather of the modern American Graphic Novel, will paint a new mural promoting literacy and the arts at the annual Comic-Con International from July 24-27, 2008 at the San Diego Convention Center. Yeh, who founded *Cartoonists Across America & The World* in 1985, is on the 23rd year of his 25 year long world tour promoting literacy and the arts with humor and cartoons. Sponsors of the mural include Comic-Con International and La Costa Resorts.

Yeh's partner on the new "Two Phils Tour" is five time Emmy award-winning cartoonist Phil Ortiz who joined the *Cartoonists Across America* tour in the summer of 2006 at a big library mural painting event in San Bernardino, California. Ortiz designed more than 150 characters for *The Simpsons*, the longest running comedy series in television history, during the first two seasons of the show. He then went on to draw *The Simpsons* for various comic book titles published by Bongo Comics to the present day. The two artists have appeared throughout the world since they first teamed up, including being guests of the third annual Chinese animation festival In Hangzhou, China in the spring of 2007. Both Yeh and Ortiz will be in booth number 5355 during the San Diego comic convention signing their books and drawings.

Yeh's best-selling comic book *Dinosaurs Across America* was published last fall by NBM



publishing in New York City and was named one of 25 outstanding graphic novels by *School Library Journal* in their March 2008 cover story on graphic novels. *Dinosaurs Across America* is a full color hardcover graphic novel suitable for all ages and is perfect for home, school, and public libraries. Yeh's colorist and longtime art director Lieve Jerger spent many weeks making sure that the colors in this new edition are perfect. *Dinosaurs Across America* has been reprinted eight times as a black and white comic book with over 180,000 copies sold throughout the country since 1990. In 2006, The Cleveland Museum of Natural History had a five-month exhibition of Yeh's oil paintings from his classic children's book *Theo the Dinosaur* and commissioned him to create a special Cleveland edition of *Dinosaurs Across America* for the show. That led to this new full color NBM edition in 2007.

Yeh will also showcase new limited edition fine-art prints being produced by his partner Geoff Bevington's company, The Checkered Giant, in Illinois. The first showing of these new fine art prints was at the Artistic Edge Gallery in Long Beach, which ran from May 31 to July 19. The subject of these fine art prints include images from Yeh's *Winged Tiger in China* cartoons currently running in *Little Star* magazine in Beijing and Shanghai and *Steve the Dog and the Winged Tiger*, a book featuring art by Yeh, Bevington and Jerger. *Steve the Dog and The Winged Tiger* is set in Yeh's birthplace of Chicago and will debut in spring of 2009. Bevington created the character of Steve the Dog and even though he was born in Los Angeles, he has made his home in the Chicago area for most of his life. This is a fun story for all ages about how a couch potato dog was transformed into a renaissance dog.

Also on display in the *Cartoonists Across America* booth this year are two custom guitars signed by many notable creators, musicians, and artists from all fields in support of the band's ongoing tour for literacy and the arts. These guitars were handcrafted by Patrick Bubien of Guitarification in Fallbrook, California. Patrick's instruments have since been signed with artwork and signatures including; Ray Bradbury, Cheech and Chong, Alan Alda, Marilu Henner, Gary Owens, Donovan's drummer Candy John, *The Joker's* creator Jerry Robinson, both *Ninja Turtles* co-creators Eastman and Laird, *Mutts'* Patrick McDonnell, *Dinotopia's* James Gurney, *Hellboy's* Mike Mignola, Groo creator Sergio Aragones, *Bone's* Jeff Smith, *Road to Perdition* and *Dick Tracy* author Max Allan Collins, *Foxtrot's* Bill Amend, *Luann's* Greg Evans, *For Better or For Worse* creator Lynn Johnston, *Aquaman* artist Ramona Fradon, *Bat Lash* artist Nick Cardy, *Mulan's* Alex Nino, *Fantastic Four's* Joe Sinnott, *Flaming Carrot's* Bob Burden, *One Bad Rat* artist and writer Brian Talbot, *Close to Home's* John



McPherson, *Dragons of Hawaii* creator Jon J. Murakami, *Family Circus* artist Jeff Keane, *Ziggy's* Tom Wilson, Tony Hawk artist Matt Lorentz, *Cheech Wizard's* Mark Bode, *Elephantman's* Moritat, *Archie* writer and the creator of *Sabrina the Teenage Witch* George Gladir, *Star Wars'* artist Steve Leialoha, *Superman* artist Murphy Anderson, *Flash* artist Carmine Infantino, *Nick Fury* and *Indiana Jones* artist Jim Steranko, editorial cartoonists Pat Oliphant and many others.

"The whole idea of this guitar project is to call attention to the people who create so many of our pop culture icons but who often do not have the name recognition among the general audience. Our entire campaign has been to put a spotlight on the creative people who actually write and draw so many of the creations that are later made into film and TV series," said Yeh from his Running Springs studio in the mountains near Lake Arrowhead.

Yeh will also introduce a limited edition full-color preview of his forthcoming graphic novel, *Cazco; What a Long Strange Trip It's Been* which covers the struggles of his half Tibetan, half Irish cartoonist character as he tries to find a publisher for the last 35 years. 2007 marked the 30th anniversary of Yeh's 1977 landmark graphic album, *Even Cazco Gets the Blues*, which was one of the very first all new material modern American graphic novels.

NBM had previously reprinted material from Europe and is one of the leaders in the graphic novel field in the United States. Yeh pioneered the graphic novel form in the U.S. and encouraged his fellow artists in North America to embrace the new format and consider the bookstore and library market well before the majority of publishers in his field. *Even Cazco Gets The Blues* featured introductions by *MAD* magazine cartoonist Sergio Aragones and the late Golden Age comic book creator Don Rico and was a real departure from the normal superhero story in the comic book field. Cazco made his debut in Yeh's college newspaper at California State University Long Beach in the fall of 1972 as a daily comic strip. What makes this character appeal to all generations is the universal story told of a struggling artist against all odds. Cazco travels all around the world and often touches on the lives of real people that Yeh has met personally in his own artistic journey from the creator of the Beats, Herbert Huncke, to noted people around the world such as Ray Bradbury, Jean "Moebius" Giraud, Rick Griffin, Flavia, Charles Schulz, Steven Spielberg, and hundreds of others.

Cazco; What a Long Strange Trip It's Been will cover the period of 1972 to 2007 and shows the last 35 years in context to the times that we live, and hopefully, helps explain the world a bit better for both Yeh's baby boomer generation and the current generation which include Yeh's own three sons now in their 20s. The full 200-plus page graphic novel will be published in 2009. It is designed to be a G-rated version of the last 35 years so that it can easily reach all ages and cultures as Yeh continues his 25 year campaign to promote literacy and the arts all around the world. The tour ends in 2010 when Yeh plans to finish his feature length documentary about his quarter century journey trying to get people to see the importance of the written word and especially the comic art form. The film is called *Planet Literacy: The Cartoonists Across America Story* and features artists from all fields as Yeh and his band of artists have painted more than 1700 murals around the world. For more information about Cartoonists Across America & The World's ongoing campaign to promote literacy please check out our website at: www.wingedtiger.com

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