



**Universal Press
Syndicate**

LSalem@UEXpress.com

August 29, 2000

Lee Salem
Vice President and Editorial Director

Mr. Ron Wheeler
9818 Summit
Kansas City, MO 64114

Dear Ron:

Nice to hear from you again! And thank you for the look at Overtones. Your idea is an intriguing one, and you've done a good job on it, though I think Natalie needs to be rounder as a character.

At this point, I think the self-referential nature of Overtones would not play in the market, but I've kept a copy of the submission so I can review it later.

Best personal regards.

Sincerely,

Lee Salem

SL:lj

RE: your comments

Wed, Nov 22, 2000 11:18 PM

From: LSalem@uexpress.com
To: ron@cartoonworks.com
Cc: LJordan@uexpress.com
Date: Thu, Nov 9, 2000, 2:52 PM
Subject: RE: your comments

ron, this keeps getting further down on the list. if you have the time, perhaps you could just come in here and we could talk through your questions.

if so, my assistant, laura jordan (816/932-6641) has my schedule.

best,

lee

> -----Original Message-----

> From: Ron Wheeler [mailto:ron@cartoonworks.com]

> Sent: Thursday, August 31, 2000 11:43 AM

> To: lsalem@uexpress.com

> Subject: your comments

>

>

> Dear Mr. Salem,

>

> I thank you once again for taking the time to evaluate my

> work. I got my strips back yesterday.

>

> I'm glad you think my concept is intriguing. I do have a few

> questions regarding your comments if you don't mind.

>

> 1) What do you mean that Natalie needs to be rounder? Do you

> mean more multidimensional as a character? If so, I agree.

> It's hard to express all facets of a character in only a

> couple of dozen strips. I love for example of how Calvin of

> "Calvin and Hobbes" could be reflective as well as ornery.

> That reflective aspect made him personable, and the ornery

> aspect made him fun. They played well off of each other.

>

> 2) What do you mean by "self-referential"? Do you mean the

> somewhat inside jokes I was throwing at you regarding the

> interplay between the cartoonist and the newspaper

> syndicates? If so, I agree. I just did that for your sake
> ... taking a little humor at your expense. If you mean
> including my name in the strip, that's easily dealt with. If
> you mean the whole interplay between the cartoonist and the
> Natalie character, then that is something else. To me, that
> is the point of the whole strip. Obviously all the strips
> and story lines cannot focus directly on this interplay, but
> just as it is a metaphor for people of faith, so also this
> interplay becomes an underlayment to every facet of life.
> I've bounced the concept of the strip (a precocious little
> girl who is the only person who knows she is drawn by a
> sovereign cartoonist) off of several people of faith and all
> seemed eager for a strip like this to represent them in the
> newspapers.
>
> 3) I am also intrigued that you would keep a copy of my
> strips for further review later. Would you like me to create
> some more strips on this subject? As you know, I've been
> doing this stuff for over 20 years now. I know it is rare
> that a concept gets fully nailed first time out. If you have
> a genuine interest in the concept and are interested helping
> me pursue the development of this, I would be willing to
> create more material for you (mostly in just rough sketch
> stage for awhile now) to flesh this out. Of course I would
> have not expectation of any future commitments on your part.
>
> I appreciate your response to these matters.
>
> Blessings,
>
> Ron Wheeler
> <http://www.cartoonworks.com>
>



Universal Press
Syndicate

November 14, 2000

Lee Salem
Executive Vice President and Editor

Ms. Becky Blair
Focus on the Family
8605 Explorer Drive
Colorado Springs, CO 80920

Dear Becky:

Ron Wheeler and I have crossed paths several times over the past 25 years. Recently I saw him again and it occurred to me his talents might meld with some of the needs of Focus on the Family. I believe he's had some discussions with your video people, but he has great talent in traditional print cartooning.

I think he'd fit in well with your organization.

Best personal regards.

Sincerely,

Lee Salem

LS:lj



Johnny Hart

creator of B.C. and the WIZARD of ID

9.1.2K

Dear Ron,

OVERTONES is great! and so
are the tracts.

I sent it on to Rick Newcombe
without your permission - I didn't
think you'd mind.

Enclosed is my letter (copy) to him.

I hope he has the good sense
to snap-it-up and go with it.

LOVE and GOD BLESS.

Johnny



Johnny Hart

creator of *B.C.* and the *WIZARD of ID*

9.1.2K

Dear Rick,

My instinctive reaction to the enclosed strip, is that it is ingenious. One little girl who knows that she is a pen and ink creation, created by a sovereign cartoonist --- pitted against the rest of the cast, who are convinced she is nuts.

Although it is 'inside' in the sense that the artist becomes one of the players, (albeit unseen) — it is one of the cleverest metaphors for reaching unbelievers, I have ever seen.

The parallels are boldly subliminal, and Ron Wheeler walks the line nicely.

Ron is a dedicated Christian with multitudinous tracts to prove it. (I'm enclosing a few here.) Mainly, I am enclosing Rons' "Overtones" for possible syndication. Note that many strips refer to a newspaper syndicate, which later would be directed to an interplay with the readers. I got a special kick out of the one that includes your name.

I am sending this on to you with my recommendation without asking Ron first—so you can communicate directly with him.

I will copy him with this letter and a personal note.

Love and God Bless,

Johnny

ENCL:

1. Ron Wheelers' comic strip "Overtones"
2. Several tracts
3. His cover letter and final note
4. A copy of my previous response to his body of work



**Universal Press
Syndicate**

June 14, 2002

Lee Salem
Executive Vice President and Editor

Mr. Ron Wheeler
9818 Summit
Kansas City, MO 64114

Dear Ron:

You've displayed the patience of Job regarding your material on "Overtones." We've gone around (and around) on the strip and have finally concluded that we're going to decline. It was not an easy decision as the concept is both good and unique. Given some other projects we've committed to, however, I know it will be awhile before we can revisit your work and I did not want to keep you on tenterhooks.

I have kept a set of photocopies in case the situation here changes, and I do encourage you to check with other syndicates. "Overtones" should attract another editor's attention.

Best personal regards.

Sincerely,

Lee Salem

LS:lj



February 14, 2003

Mr. Ron Wheeler
9818 Summit
Kansas City, MO 64114

RE: Overtones

Dear Ron,

I'm terribly sorry and embarrassed that it has taken us so long to follow up on our thoughts about the "Overtones" series. In no way does this extraordinary delay mean that we are hesitant or reluctant about the project. Quite the opposite; we're delighted by your creative work! We've just been swimming in a whirlpool of issues recently – not the least of which was a ministry-wide financial crisis and structural downsizing. Please forgive us for not responding sooner. It's not our normal practice.

That said, we are pleased to provide you with a proposal for Focus on the Family to publish and distribute the *Overtones* strip. We've tried to structure our proposal so that we will not unnecessarily encumber your ability to syndicate *Overtones* to a newspaper group. We all trust that will happen some day, and hopefully our plans will assist that effort.

Here's our proposal:


- **Focus on the Family will release the *Overtones* strip on its website (family.org) home page each day, and archive past strips in a special *Overtones* section of the site.** This is the only daily medium we have that is a good fit for a daily strip like *Overtones*. But, this site reaches more than 70,000 people every day, so it may be a terrific way to introduce people to the strip. We will not be able to compensate you for this use, since family.org is a non-commercial site.
- **Focus on the Family will publish and distribute at least one compilation book of *Overtones* strips.** This book would most likely release in 2005. We will offer you an advance of \$5,000 for this book against royalties of 12% of our net sales. This royalty will increase to 14% at 35,000 units sold, and to a maximum of 16% at 50,000 copies. We wish we could make a more aggressive offer to you, but books of this nature – particularly for an "unknown" strip – are highly speculative in our market. We have tried to make a fair offer for both sides. I trust you understand.
- **Focus on the Family will offer the strip for syndication** through our own internal syndication program, managed by Briargate Media. If commercial placement of the strip is made, we will share in the proceeds of any revenue generated at mutually-agreed-to terms. Focus will make no binding commitments to any party without your prior consent.

- **Focus on the Family will reserve exclusive distribution rights to the *Overtones* content in the "religious" market, but will hold no exclusive claims in the general market. You will be free to negotiate independent syndication or licensing agreements with other parties that do not conflict with our exclusive rights. Focus will also be free to pursue general market distribution opportunities, in the hopes that "two are better than one." Perhaps our combined efforts will eventually yield some good fruit. But in the meantime, while the general market is stalled, we can at least get this wonderful content out to a Christian audience.**

If you're in agreement with these fundamental terms, we can have a formal contract drawn up quickly and proceed with development. Again, we're delighted by the opportunity to work with you, and would be privileged to be your partner in bringing *Overtones* to market.

Please contact me if you have additional questions.

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Clark R. Miller', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Clark R. Miller
Vice President

Cc: Mark Maddox