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AMERICAN ARTIST PHIL YEH  
TO PAINT A MURAL PROMOTING LITERACY, CREATIVITY, AND THE ARTS  
IN HAIFA, ISRAEL DECEMBER 26 & 27, 2011



Phil Yeh, founder of Cartoonists Across America & the World, has been invited to Israel as the Guest of Honor at the 2nd annual Haifa Comics Festival. The California based artist and arts activist will paint a colorful mural with children and other artists celebrating the slogan, "**Building a World of Readers, Artists & Dreamers**". The mural will be in Hebrew, Arabic and English; and will take place on Monday, December 26 and Tuesday, December 27, 2011. The family-friendly event is open to everyone and admission is free. It will be held in the Panorama Center, which is hosting the Haifa Comics Festival. Yeh will also be speaking, and signing copies of his positive, educational books. The mural and Yeh's visit is sponsored by the Public Affairs Office in the U.S. Embassy in Tel-Aviv, The Panorama Center, and the Haifa Comics Festival. The finished work of art will be on display at the center for one month and then will be donated to a local children's hospital. Yeh, as well as Israeli cartoonist Uri Fink and two other artists, will judge the winner of the "FestiComics Cup", which is a competition for comic works submitted by children.

Yeh is also scheduled to create a smaller mural on December 25th with the children in the Ramban Medical Center Oncology Department in Haifa. On the 28th of December, Yeh will speak at the Israeli Cartoon Museum in Holon with translation help from Israeli cartoonist Lee Blum. The two artists met at the book fair in Frankfurt, Germany when Yeh was a special guest there in 2009.

Yeh founded Cartoonists Across America in 1985, after interviewing Wally Amos about the tremendous literacy problem in the United States of America. At that time, it was estimated that more than 27 million American adults could not read or write. Sadly, when Yeh spoke in Chicago at a national conference on adult education in March, 2010, he was told that after all these years

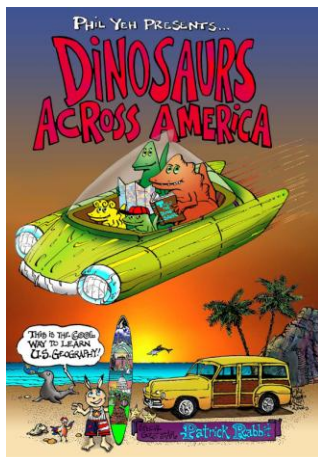
on the road, the U.S. now has more than 60 million American adults without basic literacy skills and another 100 million who never read a single book in a year!

Cartoonists Across America added the words "& The World" to their banner in 1990, when Yeh was invited to the First Hungarian International Cartoon Festival in Budapest. He was there with artists from more than 40 nations, including Israeli cartoonist Mik Jago. Many of these artists joined Yeh in creating a mural on one of Budapest's main squares. Hungary later honored Yeh by picking his reading dinosaurs for a postage stamp for the United Nations Year of Literacy.



Cartoonists across America & the World has painted more than 1800 murals in 49 U.S. states and 14 countries with the help of noted advocates for literacy, world famous artists, and thousands of kids of all ages! The upcoming murals in Israel mark the 15<sup>th</sup> country that Yeh has painted in, and we hope to do many more in Israel and throughout the world in future years. What makes these murals unique is that everyone can lend a hand and add their own personal brushstrokes to these works of art created in a day.

Yeh has often used his reading dinosaurs to promote various issues from recycling to learning about geography. He is often called "The Godfather of the American Graphic Novel" because of his work in pioneering this art form since the 1970s. Yeh has often addressed various issues with lots of humor. His 1991 book, *Theo the Dinosaur*, featured introductions by former First Lady Barbara Bush and Earth Day International's Nigel Seale. He has followed up that book with a



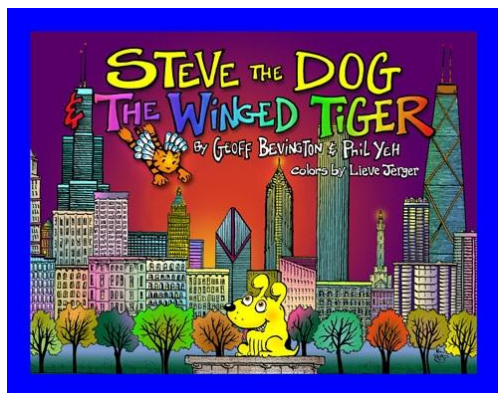
number of other titles teaching history and geography; including his bestselling *Dinosaurs Across America*, which is the fun way to learn all about the United States. The full color hardcover edition was chosen as one of the best graphic novels of 2008 by the editor of *Library Media Journal*.

An even greater honor was being chosen for Children's Choice 2008 compiled by The International Reading Association and The Children's Book Council. Each year 12,500 school children from different regions of the United States read and vote on newly published children's and

young adult trade books to make up the Children's Choice list. *Dinosaurs Across America* is truly a book for the entire family and is a fun way to learn a little about the country's history and places to visit.

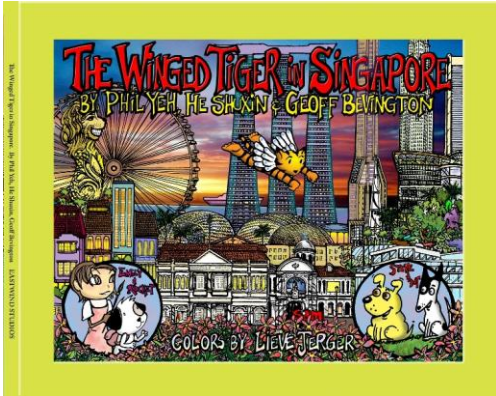
Yeh has written more than 90 books in his 40-year professional career, many taking place all over the world. He was born on the Southside of Chicago in 1954 to a Chinese father and an Anglo mother. He was then raised near the Watts Towers in Los Angeles, California, and has spent his entire life trying to find ways to use humor and cartoons to educate all people. His books are filled with diversity and an understanding of cultures from all over the world.

Yeh has been a guest speaker around the world, including at the third annual China Cartoon and Animation Festival in his father's hometown of Hangzhou, China. More than 400,000 fans came



out for the event and showed their interest in the cartoon art form, especially as it applies to education. Yeh was also invited by the National Book Development Council to speak at one of Singapore's libraries in February, 2010. He painted one of his pro-literacy and arts murals at SCAPE, the national youth center in Singapore on that same trip. When his wife showed an advance copy of Yeh's 90th book, *Steve the Dog & the Winged Tiger*, to

Andrew Wong, the director of SCAPE; Wong suggested that Yeh create a sequel set in Singapore. The basic story behind *Steve the Dog & the Winged Tiger* (co-created by Geoff Bevington) is how a couch potato dog (Steve) gets inspired by his friend Dot, a well-dressed Chicago Bull, and a little flying tiger, to see and experience the world outside his apartment. This book addresses both the education crisis in the United States and also the rising childhood obesity rate and alarming rise in juvenile diabetes. Yeh agreed to do the sequel project with Singaporean cartoonist He Shuxin. This story shows how these two American dogs come to visit Singapore, where they meet Rocket; who goes from being a couch potato dog to a renaissance dog. The entire series is all about creating a balance in your life; and more artists from around the world are now in talks with Yeh about future titles. A bilingual book called *The Winged Tiger in Mexico* with artist Gaby Maya from Mexico City will be published in the spring of 2013.



*The Winged Tiger in Singapore* made its debut at the Singapore Toy Games & Comic Convention in December, 2010. Yeh also spoke to a number of colleges and painted some murals during his two visits to the region, both in Singapore and in the neighboring country of Malaysia.

Yeh was featured in the 2007 book, *Hometown Heroes* (HarperCollins) by *American Profile*, as one of 50 Americans from small towns who are changing the world.

He is on the 26th year of his 30 year long world tour promoting literacy and the arts with humor and cartoons.

The Cartoonists Across America & The World tour ends in 2015 when Yeh plans to finish his feature length documentary about his 30 year 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 in all fields from 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](http://www.wingedtiger.com)

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