

# 'Peanuts' cartoonist talks comic strip's lasting cultural impact

BY PAXTON MEDIA GROUP

While American pop culture has undergone dramatic shifts throughout its history, one staple remains relatively unchanged: Charles Schulz's "Peanuts" comic strip. The property celebrates its 75th anniversary this year — and the joy it has created for millions across many media.

Robert Pope — a cartoonist with an impressive pedigree who currently works on the "Peanuts" franchise — discussed with the Crossroads Suncast the enduring and universal appeal of Charlie Brown, Snoopy and the rest of the gang.

Putting pencil to paper daily for its licensed characters, Pope closely understands "Peanuts" in his role with Charles M. Schulz Creative Associates out of Santa Rosa, California. He strives to preserve the "magical" quality of Schulz's creations, who was also known by the nickname "Sparky."

"Typically, what I do is children's books, graphic novels, illustrations for development deals, things that go in theme parks like Cedar Fair, which just recently merged with Six Flags," Pope said. "Instead of trying to build something from the ground up, we're extrapolating a lot of things that either were created and written while Sparky was alive, or things that were in process later in his life."

Pope said at the heart of the "Peanuts" franchise are the singular sensibilities of Schulz. Schulz Creative Associates, Sparky's family and many of his living collaborators ensure the original vision is unaltered.

Conversely, Pope said other longstanding properties he's worked on, such as Bugs Bunny, Scooby-Doo and Batman, have had "many fathers over many years of development."

"You've had lots of hands on those characters. Those teams allow people to feel very comfortable trying to put their own stamp on those," Pope said. "It would just be a very foolhardy thing to try to take it upon yourself to elaborate on 'Peanuts.'"

Pope said the responsibility of maintaining Schulz's legacy can be "petrifying," especially considering how renowned Schulz is among other artists.

"Most of the cartooning community has a great deal of reverence and respect for the body of work that this man did for half a century, actually more," Pope said. "It's the sort of thing that is approached extremely carefully and thoughtfully."

Pope said the goal of Schulz's designs is balancing a natural exuberance with the fine details of the drawing. He said the craft is highly involved yet must appear effortless — all of which originated in the newspaper medium.

Pope elaborated that Schulz incorporated fundamental artistic tenets — Picasso-esque aspects, cubing logic, proportioning, staging, negative space — in a subtle but



Frank Franklin | Associated Press

**Beagle Scout Snoopy floats down Central Park West during the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade on Thursday in New York.**

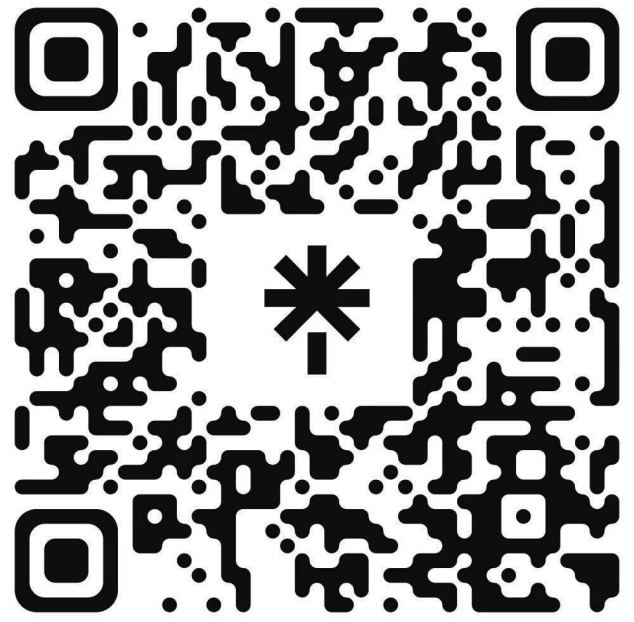


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paper issue that were consistently fresh — and even groundbreaking.

"Those characters have many dimensions. They can be at times extremely loving, extremely kind, but also, they have their own motivations," Pope said. "When Snoopy stopped sleeping in the doghouse and climbed up on top of the doghouse, most of Schulz's peers had no idea how to react to this. Sparky did some of these things in a way that was very unconscious and sometimes very conscious."

"People who look at a 'Peanuts' collection or watch a 'Peanuts' special have no idea how revelatory these characters were when they cracked the code," Pope added. He highlighted the social mores "Peanuts" navigated, such as Peppermint Patty protesting the school dress code to wear shorts as

a girl.

Pope said the "Peanuts" cast became so well-rounded that audiences "loved and worried about these characters as if they lived and breathed like their own children."

Despite all the zany antics, Pope said animation often is not the illusion of life, but a reflection of life itself.

With 75 years of laughter and resonance, he expects "Peanuts" to carry on as a beloved institution of American culture and artistry.

"Sparky's personal opinion was that time alone defined whether or not something was multi-generational. If 100 years from now, you're staring at it in a museum or it's still part of popular culture, then it's art," Pope said. "To draw characters that people worry and care about is a wonderful thing, and I very much look forward to continuing to do it as long as I can."



Karly Code

**Teachers Steve Gamble (center) and Steve Consley (background) instruct students in a woodworking session using Trimble's "Passion Project" week prior to Fall Break.**



Karly Code

**Faculty member Shawna Jent directs Trimble County Middle School and High School students in organizing food donations for the school district's Christmas assistance program during Trimble's "Passion Project" week prior to Fall Break.**



Karly Code

**Trimble County High school senior Andrew Purvis displays a Christmas tree decoration that he created in welding during the school's "Passion Project" week prior to Fall Break.**

## Trimble middle, high schoolers engage in passion projects'

**KARLY CODE**  
THE TRIMBLE BANNER

For the second year in a row, students at Trimble County Jr/Sr School participated in "passion projects" — hands on learning experiences in areas like welding, woodworking, pottery, auto maintenance and more.

Students participated in the passion projects for two hours on both the Monday and Tuesday before Thanksgiving Break.

Brent Taylor, engineering teacher and athletic director, led the 3D printing group where students had access to free software that allows them to create their own designs, or they could search a database for free designs to create on a 3D printer. In addition to printing individual projects, such as a U of L Cardinal ornament, students were printing motors for paper airplanes and other items.

Ella Aponte, chemistry teacher, led students in a cooking class — the

chemistry of cooking — with students making spaghetti and Caesar salad on the first day and burrito bowls with homemade guacamole and queso the second day.

Shawna Jent, youth services and FRYSC coordinator, helped students organize canned food donations brought to that point to Trimble County's three schools to be distributed Dec. 12 during the Christmas assistance program.

Ali Maldonado, interim assistant principal, said the school received feedback from the students on what areas of focus the students would like included. She said students have responded positively to the program both years, so now the plan is to include passion projects in the spring as well prior to Spring Break.

"It gives students opportunities to do hands-on activities that they enjoy and that hopefully they can use in the future," said Maldonado.

## State school assessments being revised to meet federal standards

BY PAXTON MEDIA GROUP

Kentucky school superintendents are being asked to weigh in on a proposed revision of the state's educational assessment and accountability systems.

Commissioner of Education Robbie Fletcher and members of the Kentucky Department of Education presented information about Model Framework 4.0 during a webcast for superintendents. Fletcher said he wants input before the 2026 General Assembly session.

"We wanted to go through the Model Framework one more time to make sure everyone has a clear picture of what's being proposed," Fletcher said in a news release.

The model includes a local accountability system and state

accountability that meet federal requirements, according to the state Department of Education.

Local accountability would include flexible options for districts to set their own indicators in collaboration with their communities. Required indicators include writing, social studies and vibrant learning experiences, but each could have options for flexibility within them.

One of the goals of the new accountability system, Fletcher said would be to emphasize vibrant learning experiences that spark curiosity, motivation and engagement, while cultivating enthusiasm for lifelong learning. He said students would be given the opportunity to demonstrate skills in a variety of ways, including

project-based learning, internships and apprenticeships.

"We want students to have that opportunity to (be) more than just a test score as part of an accountability model," Fletcher said.

Fletcher said the new accountability model also focuses on collaboration, including collaboration with the community, other districts and partners across the state, including KDE and state lawmakers. Districts would have the ability to incorporate local innovation into their systems that reflect local values.

Fletcher said several districts already have begun work on local accountability with these ideas in mind.

During the webcast, Fletcher also went into the

timeline for implementation if the assessment and accountability framework is put into state statute. It would be split into three phases, he said, starting with a pilot phase with a group of districts to design and implement local accountability systems, focusing on initiating key components, gathering feedback, identifying challenges and refining processes.

Once the pilot phase is complete, Kentucky would move into an expansion phase and eventually a sustainability phase. Fletcher also noted that regardless of what happens with the proposed framework in the next legislative session, districts still have the opportunity to implement a local accountability model within the current system.



## LEGAL NOTICE

From the Chairperson of the Trimble County Board of Adjustments, and in accordance with KRS 424, please take notice that the Trimble County Board of Adjustments will conduct a public hearing on an appeal by Nathan and Bonnie Wentworth regarding the Planning and Zoning Administrator's determination that a retail wig shop is not a permitted or conditional use of property located at 1752 McCord Lane Milton, KY 40045 (A-2 zone district). The hearing will be held on December 18, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. at the Trimble County Fiscal Court Building, 123 Church Street, Bedford, KY 40006. For more information, call (502) 255-7196.