

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Exhibition at the Charles M. Schulz Museum explores the real-life story behind Charlie Brown's unrequited love

Behind Peanuts: The Little Red-Haired Girl
January 31–August 4, 2019



Charles Schulz and Donna Johnson Wold, April 1950. Photo © Schulz Family Intellectual Family Trust

SANTA ROSA, Calif. January 8, 2019—Of the more than 70 characters Charles Schulz created for his comic strip *Peanuts*, perhaps none are as mysterious as Charlie Brown's love interest. A new exhibition at the Charles M. Schulz Museum explores one of the great curiosities of the comic pages: who is the Little Red-Haired Girl? On view from January 31 through August 4, 2019, *Behind Peanuts: The Little Red-Haired Girl* shares the story behind the story—including the real-life inspiration for the beloved character—through original art, photographs, and personal interviews.

First introduced on November 19, 1961, the Little Red-Haired Girl is the classmate crush of Charlie Brown, whose countless attempts to woo her continuously backfire, lending to the relatable storyline of first love angst and disappointment. She would continue to be the object of Charlie Brown's affection throughout the run of the strip, though she is never named and seen only once in silhouette. The exhibition celebrates Schulz's clever development of her off-panel presence—an element that kept *Peanuts* fans guessing over the years.

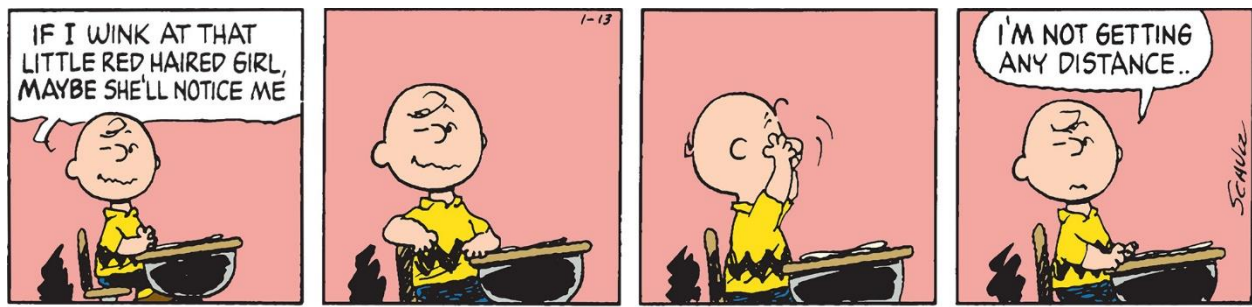
"I think the [Little Red-Haired Girl] is a lot like the inside of Snoopy's doghouse," Schulz said. "Each of us can imagine what she must look like much better than I could ever draw her."

Behind Peanuts: The Little Red-Haired Girl will also tell the story of Schulz's own first love, Donna Johnson Wold, a red-haired coworker Schulz courted while working at Art Instruction Schools in Minneapolis in 1949 and 1950. After a six-month courtship, Wold turned down Schulz's marriage proposal in favor of another suitor, and as Schulz later recounted, this devastating experience would become the main inspiration for Charlie Brown's unrequited love.

The exhibition features several personal relics from Wold and Schulz's courtship, including a piano-shaped music box and drawings that he gifted to her in 1950, and a rhinestone compact that Schulz gave to Wold upon his return from selling *Peanuts* to United Features Syndicate. All are on loan from Wold's family and exhibited for the first time.

"For a long time, I thought she was a composite . . . but then when I saw a couple inside jokes in the paper, I knew I was the Little Red-Haired Girl," Wold shares in a video oral history recorded in 2014, shortly before she passed away in 2016. Visitors will have an opportunity to see the video, in addition to the comic strip that Wold attributes as the ultimate clue.

Other highlights include Schulz's copy of the Hank Williams record album *Honkey-tonkin'*, which he also credits as inspiring the Little Red-Haired Girl storyline, and an interactive area for visitors to write a note to someone they admire. Additionally, on February 14, the Schulz Museum will hold its annual Little Red-Haired Girls Day, providing free admission to red-haired girls or boys of all ages in celebration of Valentine's Day.



Peanuts strip first published on January 13, 1987

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Thursday, February 14, 11:00 am–5:00 pm
Calling all Little Red-Haired Girls (and Boys)!

Little (or not so little) red-haired girls and boys receive free admission in celebration of Valentine's Day and Charlie Brown's affection for a certain Little Red-Haired Girl.

Saturday, February 16, 2:00 pm
***Peanuts* Family Album**

While Charlie Brown and Snoopy are well known, it might surprise some to learn that Charles Schulz created over 70 original characters for *Peanuts*. [Andrew Farago](#), author of *The Complete Peanuts Family Album* and curator at San Francisco's Cartoon Art Museum, joins a panel of special guests to look back at some of their favorite forgotten *Peanuts* characters. Cost: included with general admission.

For a complete listing of upcoming events and programs, visit schulzmuseum.org/learn/calendar-of-events.

ALSO ON VIEW

Then Came the Dog (through March 10, 2019)

Explore the evolution and life of Snoopy, between his highs as the Head Beagle to his lows of being left at the altar. Journey from Charles Schulz's backyard to Snoopy's and step into the wildly imaginative life of this self-proclaimed "World-Famous Beagle."

Without Words (through May 20, 2019)

With the stroke of his pen Charles Schulz could evoke action, emotion, and hilarity—at times, telling a complete story using no words at all. In this exhibition of 70 original comic strips, see examples of the artful techniques Schulz employed to tell his stories, without words.

Peace, Love, and Woodstock (March 17–September 8, 2019)

Woodstock may be the smallest *Peanuts* character, but he has a huge presence in the strip. In this exhibition, take a trip through the life of Woodstock—from namesake to nest—in celebration of the 1969 music festival's 50th anniversary. *Sponsored by Image 360 and Recology.*

ABOUT

The Charles M. Schulz Museum and Research Center opened in August 2002 to fulfill its mission of preserving, displaying, and interpreting the art of Charles M. Schulz. The Schulz Museum presents changing exhibitions and programming that build an understanding of cartoonists and cartoon art; illustrate the scope of Schulz's multi-faceted career; communicate the stories, inspirations, and influences of Charles Schulz; and celebrate the life of Charles Schulz and the *Peanuts* characters.

LOCATION

The Charles M. Schulz Museum and Research Center is 50 miles north of San Francisco by car on Highway 101. It is located at 2301 Hardies Lane, Santa Rosa, CA 95403.

HOURS

Monday to Friday*: 11:00 am–5:00 pm

Saturday and Sunday: 10:00 am–5:00 pm

*Closed Tuesdays from Labor Day through Memorial Day

ADMISSION FEES

Museum Members, children 3 and under: Free

Adults: \$12.00

Seniors 62 and over (with ID): \$8.00

Children 4-18 and college students (with ID): \$5.00

CONTACT

For images, media tours, and interview requests, contact Stephanie King, marketing director, at stephanie@schulzmuseum.org or (707) 284-1268.

Charles M. Schulz Museum and Research Center

2301 Hardies Lane

Santa Rosa, CA 95403

(707) 579-4452

schulzmuseum.org

Facebook, Instagram, Twitter: @schulzmuseum

###