

First New Syndicate in 20 years

Joe Martin started his syndicate Neatly Chiseled Features on October 31, 2005 in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. The last new one was the Creators Syndicate, began 20 years ago.

Marie Martin, Joe's wife and partner in the endeavor, is President. Janet Deaver-Pack joined the staff in Sales, Marketing, and Writing. She began assisting Marie with reducing and scanning the cartoons, has become the resident "cat expert", and is in charge of selling collections of Joe's comics. Fluffy and Snuggles, the Martin's cats (who loaned their names to the main characters in the "Cats With Hands" comic) lend their support by purring and sitting next to the computers. The team works from a loft office in the Martin's house (a historic 1901 stable-turned-library which the Martins transformed into their residence) near the south shore of Geneva Lake.

Since its inception, Neatly Chiseled Features has expanded to include Matt McGuinness, originally IT Director, has recently stepped into the General Manager position. Mark Marousek is the newest team member, and in addition to being our Sales Director, he also applies his talents in our Graphic Art department.

Neatly Chiseled Features is the only syndicate in existence that is not static: it evolves with Joe Martin's ideas and the needs of its newspaper clients. Joe is currently co-authoring an unusual panel with renowned psychologist Dr. Jon Carlson called "On The Edge". It is humor and advice combined, published weekly on newspaper Health pages and dedicated to help people manage daily challenges and irritations.

A subscription to "Comics by Email" is available for those wishing to start every day with a laugh. For \$11.95 per year, individuals can receive "Mr. Boffo", "Willy 'n Ethel", "Cats With Hands", and the weekly "On The Edge" and "Picks of the Week". The syndicate sends out hundreds of comics every morning, and claims subscribers across the United States and Europe.

When an editor at the "London Daily Mail" asked if Joe could provide animated comics for their online news site, his answer was "Yes". Joe and Marie advertised for Flash animators, and pulled together a team from Wisconsin, Illinois, and New York. The animations became available in November 2006, first published by the "London Daily Mail". The "Boston Globe" soon became a client, followed by many other online web sites. Joe draws and writes the cartoons as usual, then Marie emails them to the animators, who add the action, voices, and theme music. Occasionally the animation is funnier than the static cartoon, such as "Dopey Cat". View this and Joe's other animated comics with Flash 8 (a free downloadable program) at www.mrboffo.com under "Animations".

Joe is also having his cartoons translated into Spanish, both the static comics and the animations. Other languages are under consideration, such as Chinese and French. As leader of the first new syndicate in 20 years, Joe Martin is determined to take Neatly Chiseled Features into new realms of creative endeavor. Check this site regularly for updates.