

OpeningREMARKS

DRAWING ON CREATIVITY

WHEN I WAS A KID, TWO CREATIVE FORCES TUGGED AT ME: WHEN I FIRST LEARNED TO read, it was the *Peanuts* gang of Charles Schulz; later, the tales of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle put me on the trail of Sherlock Holmes. I was enchanted enough by each that I entertained thoughts of becoming a cartoonist or a detective. This recollection surfaced when I heard Robb Armstrong '85, the creator of *Jump Start*, give a hilarious presentation on his life as a cartoonist. Appearing as part of an Orange Central exhibition and discussion among alumni cartoonists, Armstrong talked about drawing *Peanuts* characters as a youngster. "If you can draw a circle, you can draw like everything," he said, stepping to an easel, marker in hand, and spinning out a circle on the board. "That's Charlie Brown's head."

Needless to say, I'm still working on mastering circles and my sleuthing skills usually involve trying to figure out where the dog made off to with the television clicker. Fortunately, as a teenager, I discovered writing as a way to entertain myself and set out to earn a living at it. While structuring sentences can be difficult, one summer spent in a hot, dusty warehouse taping boxes together and reading shipping orders assured me that writing trumped anything involving heavy lifting, although lugging around a typewriter back then was a hefty task.

Throughout my adult life, I've been fascinated with the creative process: what inspires people and how they pursue their visions. In working on this issue of the magazine, I enjoyed talking with sculpture professor Robert Wysocki about his passion for creating natural landforms outside their common realms, including his current explorations of lava. I came to admire the work of Stephen Mahan, director of the Photography and Literacy Project, who shares his passion for photography and writing with Syracuse city school students, devoting countless hours to drawing out their creativity. I was also intrigued to learn how Arents Award recipient Bill Viola '73, H'95 discovered his love for video art at Syracuse and unleashed it, taking him to the highest levels in the world of art.

These days, I find myself back at the drawing board—this time with my 6-year-old daughter. She loves drawing and recruits me to join in the fun. Now if the dog doesn't steal her markers, I just might have a go at Charlie Brown's head.



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